

1 **Declaration of Kali Akuno-Williams**

2 I, Kali Akuno-Williams, hereby declare:

3 1. I make this declaration based on my own personal knowledge and if called to
4 testify I could and would do so competently as follows:

5 2. I work very closely with both students and teachers at Castlemont High School in
6 Oakland in my capacity as one of the sponsors for Youth Against Community Injustice-Nia
7 (YACIN) and as a community organizer for the School of Social and Community Development,
8 a new Oakland Unified School District small school. I have been sponsoring the youth
9 organization, YACIN, for four years since 1998.

10 3. During the first few weeks of the 2001-2002 school year, I attended a small
11 schools partnership meeting with the Castlemont principal and other staff members where it was
12 announced that there were 24 teacher vacancies at Castlemont High and that students in classes
13 without permanent teachers had to have day to day substitutes until they could find replacements.
14 This year is not the first year that there have been such a huge number of vacancies. Each year
15 there is a large teacher turnover and a new batch of teachers comes into the school, many of
16 whom are emergency credentialed and inexperienced. I am not sure how many of the vacancies
17 have actually been filled. In past years, the number of teacher vacancies has hovered around 10 -
18 15.

19 4. It is about two months into the 2001-2002 school year and many teachers and
20 students have not received their textbooks. During the 1998-1999, 1999-2000, and 2000-2001
21 school year, the situation with textbooks was very similar if not worse -- many students and
22 teachers at Castlemont did not receive their textbooks until three or more months into the school
23 year. Some teachers never received enough textbooks for their classes for the entire year.
24 Several of the teachers who I work closely with have gotten so tired of being without the
25 necessary materials that they pay for their materials out of their own pockets. I know this
26 because I have donated materials myself, and I work closely with an English teacher who each
27 year orders literature books at the end of June and pays for them with money out of her own
28 pocket so that they will arrive and be ready to use on the first day of school. Additionally, I have

1 seen the system that teachers have set up to photocopy and exchange curriculum so that they can
2 teach their students. You can go into virtually any teacher's classroom at Castlemont, particularly
3 in Social Studies and English, and you will see these teachers are not relying on textbook
4 instruction because they don't have enough books to actually teach what a textbook has to offer.
5 It is a serious financial strain on the teachers who get paid so little and have to pay for such basic
6 supplies from their own pocket. This contributes to the amount of teachers who leave each year -
7 - they just get fed up.

8 5. During the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years, I have seen students in classes
9 with only a security guard or a counselor because their substitute for the day had not shown up.
10 During the 2000-2001 school year, several times I was walking across campus and saw a student
11 I knew just wandering around. I would ask the student why he or she was out of class and the
12 student would tell me there is no teacher in class, just a security guard. I would go and look and
13 sure enough there would be security guards in there.

14 6. Administrators at Castlemont have locked nearly all of the bathrooms on campus
15 during the school day for the past three plus years. If the students wanted to use the restroom,
16 they either had to leave campus, hold it all day, or get lucky and find that one bathroom was
17 open. During the 2000-2001 school year, the students finally got fed up. Members of YACIN
18 led a protest and sit-in at a staff meeting demanding that the bathrooms be opened up so that
19 students could use them. As a result of their protest, this year, for the first time, more of the
20 bathrooms have been opened up for the students to use. All of the bathrooms still are not open,
21 but the situation has gotten better.

22 7. During the 2001-2002 school year, all of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders
23 share one lunch period and there are not enough facilities to feed all the students. If a student
24 does not get out of class quickly, then they will not be able to eat lunch. I know this because the
25 students come to me and tell me that this year the lines are so long that they can't get to the front
26 to get their lunch before the period ends and so they often go to class hungry.

27 8. Castlemont is a failing school. Each year at Castlemont 85% of the incoming
28 freshman class drops out or is pushed out before the end of the year by the policies and

1 procedures in place at Castlemont High School. There are many factors that contribute to this
2 high drop out rate including: random searches, placement of students in classes that they don't
3 need to be in or that are too difficult, lack of skilled teachers, textbooks, and basic materials. As
4 a result, hundreds of students each year are left to the streets with only an eighth grade education.

5 9. The PSAA accountability system has produced perverse incentives for
6 administrators. This is evident in the creation of the 8 1/2 grade. Students who are failing or
7 doing poorly in eighth grade are placed in 8 1/2 grade. Currently, there are 400 students of this
8 type who would be ninth graders at Castlemont High School. These students are not on campus
9 but are in portables somewhere in the district. By keeping these low performing students out of
10 the ninth grade, Castlemont will most likely see a boost in its SAT 9 scores this year. The
11 progress of these excluded students will never show up on any state system because the Oakland
12 Unified School District has created an entirely different categories for low performing students
13 not measured by the test. The administrators are cheating the system. To further explain the
14 8 1/2 grade, I have attached an OUSD memo. The state must intervene and put into place a
15 complete accountability system that prevents individual districts from sacrificing students just so
16 they can get higher scores.

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19 I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the United
20 States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 26 day of October, 2001 in Oakland,
21 California.

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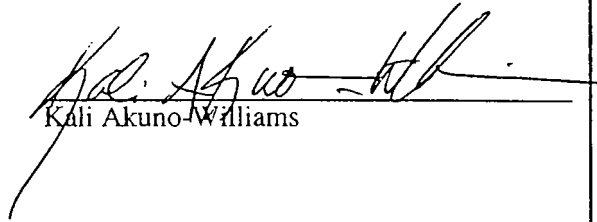
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