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I, Sandra Almaraz, hereby declare:

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

2. I am a 12th grade student at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles. Manual Arts is a multitrack, year-round school with three tracks. I am on the A track. I am in the Magnet Program. I am 17 years old, and I have been at Manual Arts High School since the 9th grade.

3. In my Physics honors class this year there were nine books for a class of more than 40 students. Two months into the semester we got 11 more books so now we have 20, but we still have to share. Because there were only nine, and now are only 20, books for the whole class I do not have my own book to bring home and work on homework with. The worst part about having only nine books was that we had to work in groups where one student read from the book to the other students and then the book was passed around the group so that everyone could look at it. Because we have to work in groups like this the class moves very slowly, we have been working on the same chapter for the last two months, and we often have to review material for students who need more time and cannot keep up without their own books.

4. In my 10th grade European History class during the 1999-2000 school year there were only enough books for students to use in class and no one had a book to take home. History in particular is a class that requires a lot of reading and preparation from the book and I really needed to have a book to take home for that class.

5. Many of the books at Manual Arts are in poor condition. In my 11th grade AP U.S. History class during the 2000-2001 school year the books were really old, they had writing all over them, the bindings were broken, and pages were coming out. In 9th and 10th grade most of my books had graffiti in them and had ripped and torn pages. My friend got an assignment in her Math class this year and when she went to do the assignment she found out that those pages were missing from her book. In my 11th grade English class the books had gotten wet and were really moldy. I have seen biology books that were almost completely covered in writing. All of

1 the class dictionaries I have seen have writing on the pages.

2         6. I am in the Magnet Program and we have the best books and materials in the  
3 school because I talk to people in the regular program and have seen their books. I know people  
4 in the regular program who say that about half of their classes don't have enough books for  
5 everyone to have their own or that they don't even get books until the end of the semester. I know  
6 students in the regular program at Manual Arts who have books that have broken bindings, the  
7 pages are coming out, they are smelly and wrinkled because they have been wet, and have  
8 writing all over them.

9         7. When we get new books or books in good shape its like wow, that is really  
10 surprising. Not having any books, or getting books in very bad shape is really hurting my  
11 education. I am trying to go to school to learn and school is hard enough without having to deal  
12 with problems like this. I can't do as well as I could with better materials. The teachers expect  
13 less of us because we have bad materials and other students blame the materials when they aren't  
14 learning. I shouldn't have to deal with not having a book or being given books that are in horrible  
15 shape.

16         8. Manual Arts is overcrowded. There are more than 40 students in my honors  
17 Physics class this year and there were more than 40 students in my 10th grade Biology class.  
18 These two classes were so full that there weren't enough desks for everyone and kids had to sit at  
19 the lab tables during class. My friend told me that her 11th and 12th grade Spanish classes had  
20 more than 50 students in each class. She told me that kids had to sit on the floor and others  
21 offered to go borrow desks from other classrooms every day so that they could stay in the class.  
22 The hallways and stairways are so crowded in between classes that people are running into each  
23 other and sometimes I'm late to class because it is so hard to get around campus. It is very rare to  
24 see a good, regular sized class and the overcrowding has been getting worse every year. Manual  
25 Arts is not a good learning environment and is not comfortable because it is so overcrowded.

26         9. The bathrooms at Manual Arts are smelly, dirty, have wet floors, are covered in  
27 graffiti and are not cleaned. Sometimes the toilets are clogged up. This year there is only one  
28 girls bathroom open and my teacher said that was because there was no money to pay custodians

1 to clean the other restrooms. About half of the time in my whole three and a half years at Manual  
2 Arts there has only been one bathroom open. They close different ones at different times and  
3 sometimes I have to walk around the whole campus until I find an open one. In the beginning of  
4 the day there is usually toilet paper but about 90% of the time there is no toilet paper in the  
5 bathrooms in the afternoon. In the afternoon I have to ask other people for toilet paper. There are  
6 never any paper towels. One out of four soap dispensers usually has a little bit of soap left. Some  
7 of the bathrooms have no mirrors and the mirrors in the rest are so written on and messed up that  
8 you can't use them. During nutrition and lunch there are lines for the bathroom and you have to  
9 take the whole period to get in the restroom because there are so few open. Because the  
10 bathrooms are so bad I don't want to use them. I usually try to hold it until I get home and I only  
11 go when I really, really have to go. I usually hold it until I get home at least one time a week.

12 10. Manual Arts is a multitrack year round school because they need to fit more  
13 students in the school. I am on A track and we go to school for four months, have a two month  
14 break, go back to school for four months and then have another two month break. This schedule  
15 made it much harder for me to take the Calculus, U.S. History, Chemistry and Spanish AP tests  
16 because we would only be back in class for a month and half before the test and had to really  
17 cram during that time. My AP classes meet while we are off track but it is not the same as regular  
18 school because there is no homework and it is only for four weeks, half of the break. During  
19 these off track, intersession classes the teacher has to find an empty room to teach the class in  
20 every day. In my AP U.S. history intersession class we used a different classroom almost every  
21 day and one day I couldn't even find the classroom to go to class. I had intersession classes in  
22 conference rooms and computer labs where there was no place to write and no chalkboard. Most  
23 teachers don't give work over the breaks and we have to spend the first part of the next class  
24 reviewing what we learned before, especially in math.

25 11. In my 10th grade Biology class in the 1999-2000 school year there was a big rat in  
26 the classroom the class period before mine and so the girls sat through that class with our feet off  
27 the floor on our desks. People were screaming and scared. A couple of times a year I see dead  
28 roaches at school and in two of my classrooms we have had ant problems.

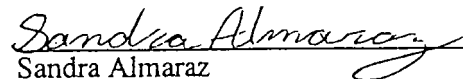
1           12.     In my honors Physics class this year the chalkboard and the overhead projector  
2 don't work and so I can't see what the teacher is trying to teach. Most of my classes have had very  
3 old chalkboards that have graffiti on them and I can't see the board or learn the material and  
4 spend part of the class asking my neighbors what's going on and trying to catch up.

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7           I declare under penalty of perjury of the laws of the State of California and the United  
8 States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 4 day of November, 2001 in Los  
9 Angeles, California.

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Sandra Almaraz

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