

DECLARATION OF ANGELA J.

I, ANGELA J., declare that if called as a witness I would and could testify as follows:

1. I identify as African American and live in Oakland, California with my partner, Michael, and our three children: Cayla, Kai, and Ellori. I am a member of The Oakland REACH and the organization has helped support my family during remote learning.

2. We are a low-income family. I work two part-time jobs and a full-time job in order to help my family make ends meet. Michael suffers from a chronic illness. Cayla and Kai are eight-year-old twins. Ellori is seven years old.

3. My children all attend the same school in Oakland Unified School District (“OUSD”). Cayla and Kai are in the same third grade class. Ellori is in the first grade. My children love to learn. Cayla wants to be a doctor while Kai wants to be a scientist.

4. Since transitioning to remote learning last March, the school has largely failed to support my children. I worry that my children are losing their love of school and falling very far behind.

5. Between March 17 and the end of the 2019-2020 school year, Cayla and Kai’s second grade teacher only held class twice. The teacher did not offer any asynchronous instruction or work to make up for missed time.

6. Ellori’s experience at the beginning of the pandemic was very different. Her two kindergarten teachers facilitated a very smooth transition to remote learning. Her teachers mailed lessons to students so they didn’t have to be on the computer all day, sent a schedule and provided updates on Ellori’s progress, reached out to me via text and email, and even used FaceTime to help me learn how to use the remote learning platform.

7. The 2020-2021 school year has been overall a huge struggle for my family. I am very frustrated with the inconsistent remote learning programs offered. Ellori’s

1 first grade teacher provided a bucket of supplies to students, including notebooks,
2 pencils, and erasers, but Cayla and Kai's teacher provided no materials. While Ellori's
3 teacher commands the attention of the class and engages students, Ellori really struggles
4 to get her teacher's attention on screen. When I raised this issue with the teacher, she
5 said she can only see six students on screen at a time and cannot be responsive to the
6 majority of the class.

7 8. This year, Cayla and Kai barely see their teacher. They have a forty-five
8 minute class session with their teacher at the beginning of the day and another thirty
9 minute small group session with classmates later in the day. The forty-five minute
10 session with the teacher has absolutely no structure; it is just social time. Other than
11 these two meetings, students are provided a checklist to learn on their own. There is
12 absolutely no engagement between the teacher and the students. Even though the
13 teacher can track their work through the online learning system the class uses, she
14 doesn't provide students any feedback.

15 9. In this environment, Kai has had trouble completing his assignments. It
16 was the PE coach, not the third-grade teacher, who finally told me that my son was not
17 completing his assignments. It makes me very sad to compare my children's experience
18 this year to what I know is possible from Ellori's kindergarten experience last spring.

19 10. Learning how to use the remote platform has also been an overwhelming
20 challenge for me and my family. I had to learn on the fly how to access the remote
21 learning platform because the school did not provide any structure or guidance. Cayla
22 and Kai's third grade class switched to a different remote learning program which was
23 very hard to use. The school did not provide any assistance with the new platform either.

24 11. Communicating with the school has been nearly impossible, despite my
25 continual efforts to advocate for my children. I have written to the principal and my
26 kids' teachers to ask for lesson plans, structure, teacher assessments, and a plan to hit
27 the milestones that my children are supposed to achieve. The school has provided
28 nothing. I am the President of the Parent Teacher Association ("PTA") but the school
has cancelled almost every meeting. Even when we do meet, the school is unresponsive

1 to the feedback from parents. Last spring, when we first shut down, I tried to bring
2 families at the school together to build trust. I wanted to dedicate some time, just twenty
3 minutes, of our PTA meeting for people to share stories of what they were going
4 through. The principal completely shut me down. I feel like my kids' school and the
5 district are going through the motions of seeking family input but not listening to or
6 caring about what families have to say. The only communication I have received from
7 the school regarding the return to in-person learning was a school survey sent to parents.
8 There have been no other opportunities for families to provide any input. Even though
9 I am President of the PTA, the only way I receive information about the school's plan
10 is through another member of the PTA, who is a teacher at the school.

11 12. I can tell my children are struggling to learn and falling behind in school.
12 Kids are supposed to be doing multiplication and division in the third grade, but Cayla
13 and Kai are still struggling with subtraction, which they should have learned in the
14 second grade. They are supposed to be able to write essays, but they can barely write
15 two sentences. I think the only reason that Ellori is learning this year is because she
16 spends all her time with her older siblings, who are two grades ahead of her. But she is
17 still missing basic concepts. I worry about how far my children are going to be behind
18 whenever school returns to the classroom. I feel like my children have been written off
19 by the school and the district. It seems very likely that Cayla and Kai are going to need
20 to repeat the third grade. The learning gap is just growing bigger and bigger. I tried to
21 get a tutor but it cost over fifty dollars per hour which is too expensive for us.

22 13. Not only are my children suffering academically during remote learning,
23 but they are also suffering emotionally. Their impulse control has become a problem;
24 they get frustrated more since we are stuck in our house. The pandemic itself has had a
25 huge impact on everyone's mental health. While we are lucky that none of us have
26 become sick, we have had 3 family members pass away from COVID. The school has
27 done nothing to address students' mental health needs or create a grief group or similar
28 support system. The school needs to do something for the children who have had family
members pass away.

1 14. The Oakland REACH has been our lifeline. The team met my family where
2 we are and provided a safe space for learning for my children. The teachers built a
3 relationship with us through the Hub, the virtual summer program. Their Family
4 Liaisons have helped keep Cayla and Kai from falling further behind. Cayla even liked
5 her teacher from the Hub so much that she asked if she could have her as a third-grade
6 teacher.

7 15. Some Oakland Unified Schools have been open since March 30th. I do not
8 feel safe sending Cayla, Kai, or Ellori back. The school has not been very
9 communicative with me on how they plan to keep my children safe. If I were to send
10 Cayla, Kai, and Ellori back it would feel like my children are being used to test whether
11 reopening schools is actually safe.

12 16. I also do not feel ready to send my children back because I am not sure
13 what that will look like. As their mother, I need the school to reassure me that my
14 children will have the support they need to meet their individual needs. As of now, I
15 have not heard anything about how teachers will assess my children or how they will
16 support them. I also do not know what the attendance policy will be like or what type
17 of training teachers have had to engage in both remote and in-person teaching. It feels
18 like everyone is just rushing to open up the schools without having a clear plan in place
19 to address my concerns.

20 17. Of course, I would like Cayla, Kai, and Ellori to return so they can spend
21 social time with their friends, but I do not feel like I would have the support needed to
22 make that transition safe or proactive. In order for me to feel certain that I can send my
23 children back to school, I would have to walk through the school hallways myself and
24 see that the classrooms and facilities have been modified to make it safe. Aside from
25 my concerns over safety, I do not want to send Cayla, Kai, and Ellori back for just a
26 couple hours a day. I would rather they stay home with me where I know they are not
27 risking exposure.

28 18. If I was in charge of remote learning, I would ensure that students are better
off academically and emotionally as well as get parents more involved. I would have

1 smaller classes so teachers could have weekly check-ins with parents about their
2 student’s progress. Students would have the necessary materials – packets, books,
3 electronics, pencils, etc. – that they need to learn and stay engaged. Every day would
4 have a set schedule that students can rely on.

5 19. I would also try to empower students through physical movement
6 outdoors, music, and more holistic programs that honor their race and nationality. If
7 necessary, Saturday school would be hosted to help students get where they need to be.
8 Everything would be results and data driven. Otherwise, things just become very loose
9 and unstructured like they are now.

10 20. Finally, I would have Family Liaisons, like at The Oakland REACH, that
11 help check-in on families to make sure they are okay and ask what other supports they
12 may need. Parents need to be brought on-board, especially since now when they are the
13 teachers.

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16 I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in
17 Oakland, California on ^{04/19/2021} _____, 2021.

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Angela J.

ANGELA J.¹

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¹ Angela J. has signed this declaration using a pseudonym to protect the identities of her minor children and sensitive personal information.

1 **DECLARATION OF KELLY R.**

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3 I, KELLY R., declare that if called as a witness I could and would testify
4 competently as follows:

5 1. I identify as African American and currently live in South Los Angeles
6 with my two daughters, Alex R. and Bella R., and other family members. I am a
7 member of Community Coalition and the organization has helped support my
8 family during remote learning.

9 2. My children attend a magnet school run by the Los Angeles Unified School
10 District (“LAUSD”). Alex R. is nine years old and in 4th grade while Bella R. is seven
11 years old and in 2nd grade. Alex R. and Bella R. both want to be doctors when they grow
12 up.

13 3. I enrolled Alex and Bella into a magnet school because I want the best for
14 them. I did not want to send them to just any school because of the conditions of schools
15 here in South Los Angeles. I know that if I had not done my research they may have
16 ended up in a school with overcrowded classrooms, inexperienced teachers, and
17 inadequate supplies and facilities. I think their school is doing okay compared to the
18 majority of other schools, but I know there are resources and opportunities they are still
19 missing out on that other kids in more affluent areas have easy access to.

20 4. Since transitioning to remote learning in March 2020, the school has
21 largely failed to support my children. I worry that my children are losing their love of
22 school and falling very far behind.

23 5. While my children’s school switched to remote learning in March, the
24 transition was extremely difficult. The school did not provide a curriculum for Alex R.
25 or Bella R. to follow. Both of my children’s teachers did not have reliable internet, so
26 my children were only receiving 30-40 minutes of instruction a couple times each week.
27 Between March and June of 2020, neither of my children learned anything in school.

1 6. Even though Alex R. and Bella R. lost several months of live classes,
2 neither one of them was offered any sort of academic support by the school. It wasn't
3 until November that Bella R.'s teachers began to offer office hours. By this point, my
4 daughter had already fallen far behind and no one seemed to care.

5 7. The 2020-2021 school year has been overall a huge struggle for my family.
6 I am very frustrated with the lack of support offered for remote learning. Our family has
7 a weak Wi-Fi connection because we live under the flight path that leads the Los
8 Angeles International Airport ("LAX").

9 8. LAUSD also experiences occasional outages, which require students to
10 wait for up to a couple of hours for classes to begin. When these outages cause students
11 to lose instructional time, the school does not make up the time by adding more
12 instructional time elsewhere in the student's schedule.

13 9. Learning how to use the remote platforms has also been an overwhelming
14 challenge for me and my family. I had to adapt quickly and learn things on my own
15 because the school did not provide any structure or guidance. I would like to see more
16 support for my children as they navigate this experience. I would also like to have a
17 voice in the decision making process while school officials and state leaders decide on
18 plans for reopening schools. I think all parents have a right to be included in decisions
19 that affect their children especially now when we have become our children's teachers.

20 10. My main concern with remote learning is quickly turning into the impact
21 that this is having on Alex and Bella's mental health. But the school is not offering any
22 type of socio-emotional support or resources. I try to be there for my children and offer
23 the emotional support they would otherwise have at school, but it is not enough. Remote
24 learning for them has been an extremely isolating and negative experience. My children
25 are unmotivated and it almost feels like I am now forcing them to go to school. The
26 school has not stepped up to provide pandemic-safe opportunities for connecting with
27 classmates and teachers. They have failed to offer counseling or other wellness
28 programs to address this issue.

1 11. Unfortunately, we also had a recent death in the family. My mother-in-law
2 passed away due to COVID-19 after she was exposed in a nursing home in January.
3 My children were devastated when they found out that they lost their grandmother. I
4 hope the school has a plan to address the grief and trauma that children are experiencing
5 right now because that is going to be important when kids are ready to go back to school.
6 I would like to see schools offer individualized support for all children that need it
7 because if their mental health needs are not addressed and taken care of, it will be
8 difficult for kids to focus and get back on track.

9 12. I understand that schools are opening up again for in-person learning.
10 Although I did consider sending both Alex and Bella back, I ultimately decided against
11 it. Even though the school would require them to be tested for COVID every week, they
12 would only be going for two days a week – and those would not even be full days. I
13 don't think it's worth putting Alex and Bella through all that just to sit in a classroom a
14 few hours each week and still risk exposure. I get anxiety just thinking about all this. I
15 decided that my children will not be going back to school until I can be certain they will
16 be safe and all their needs are met.

17 13. Alex would like to go back to school but Bella does not. I know they both
18 miss their friends but I do not feel equipped to send them back just yet. I have heard
19 very little information in terms of how the school will keep my children safe. I also do
20 not know what kind of training teachers have had to do both in-person and remote
21 teaching. I have not heard about any plans for how schools plan to asses my children
22 and get a sense of where they are at in their studies. As her mother, I know that Bella is
23 struggling with math and reading – but I am not sure how her teacher would know that
24 or how they would support her.

25 14. When the district started talking about the possibility of reopening schools,
26 they sent out a survey for parents to choose between remote learning and hybrid
27 learning. The survey asked about summer school, but I have not heard further details
28 since then. If available, I would make sure Alex and Bella enroll so they don't fall
further behind.

1 15. If I were in charge of remote learning, I would provide one-on-one support
2 for students and their families. I would ensure kids are getting individualized resources
3 to support them in their academic courses as well as with their social and emotional
4 wellbeing. I would also provide enrichment courses and collaborative activities so that
5 kids can have something to look forward to. In addition, I would send home fun
6 activities like puzzles so that kids get breaks from screens. I would also implement a
7 reward system that keeps kids motivated to learn and attend classes. The rewards system
8 would gift students and families things like gift cards for groceries and gas.

9 16. I really only want what is best for my kids. I wish education leaders would
10 invest in resources for my kids and value them as much as we value getting an
11 education. Alex and Bella have dreams and aspirations and I know they will continue
12 to work hard to achieve them. I just wish we had more support right now.

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14 I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los
15 Angeles, California on 04/20/2021, 2021.

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17 *Kelly R.*

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19 KELLY R.¹
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¹ Kelly R. has signed this declaration using a pseudonym to protect the identities of her minor children and sensitive personal information.

DECLARATION OF MARIA O.

I, MARIA O., declare that if called upon as a witness I would and could testify competently as follows:

1. I identify as Latina and am currently living in South Los Angeles with my husband and our four children, who also identify as Latinx. I am a member of Community Coalition (“CoCo”) and the organization has helped support my family during remote learning.

2. All of my children are participating in remote learning during the pandemic. My oldest son is 11 years old and is in 6th grade. My oldest daughter, Matilda O. is 9 years old and is in 3rd grade, while my youngest daughter, Megan O. is 6 years old and is in kindergarten. My youngest son is 3 years old and started Head Start in the fall of 2020.

3. Remote learning during the pandemic has been very tough for my family. We are low-income and must share a one-bedroom apartment. This is hardly enough space for all my children to engage in their remote classes. It can be impossible for each of them to concentrate in this small space, especially when they see their siblings participating in their own classes. Since I am working remotely as well, this only adds to the challenges we face. I work as a clinical case manager and my schedule can make it hard for me to assist my children when they need help navigating their remote classes.

4. It has been frustrating to see how poorly my children’s schools transitioned to remote learning. For example, Megan and Matilda attend an elementary school run by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Megan is in the dual-language immersion program at the school and Matilda is in the magnet program. Although their school did provide us with laptops, they did not work. My husband and I had to let Megan and Matilda use our phone just so they could join their classes. Trying to log into school remotely without any support is challenging enough. Logging into classes by mobile phone was even worse.

1 5. Eventually, I was able to get laptops and a single hotspot from Community
2 Coalition for Megan and Matilda. Even then, that wasn't the end of our technology and
3 connectivity issues. Megan and Matilda's school did not provide us with an additional
4 wireless hotspot until early October. My oldest son also received a hotspot from his
5 school, but we have too much internet traffic in our house to maintain consistently good
6 internet service.

7 6. Getting technology and connectivity for my children was one thing.
8 Another is making sure they can use the technology and participate in their classes.
9 Megan often requires support with remote learning, which I find difficult to provide to
10 her given my own remote work responsibilities. I remember one day when Megan's
11 teacher kicked her out of a remote lesson because she thought Megan was sleeping. She
12 wasn't, but instances like these prove to me just how involved I sometimes need to be
13 to make sure my children are able to participate in their classes. I worry about other
14 students who face these challenges but do not have someone at home that can step in
15 and advocate on their behalf.

16 7. Beyond technology and connectivity issues, remote learning has led to
17 other unexpected issues for my family. Megan and Matilda's school now require us to
18 provide paper and printed supplies out of our own pockets. This is difficult given our
19 limited budget.

20 8. As a parent, I often feel left out of the decisions that the school makes for
21 my children. At the onset of the pandemic, I went to meetings at my daughters' school
22 and the school officials said they would update us on plans. In reality though, parents
23 haven't been included in the planning and it feels like we have little say in the decisions
24 the school makes.

25 9. My daughters' school has also done a poor job at keeping me informed
26 about how my children are doing with their courses. I got one progress report for Megan
27 that just said she needed to catch up on homework. That's the only basis of their
28 feedback. Now she's getting tested and I don't even know what on—I don't even know
whether it's in English or Chinese, since she in the dual-language immersion program

1 at the school. The teachers often don't notify me beforehand of upcoming assessments.
2 I wish they would. If I knew, I would offer to help Megan study, but the lack of
3 communication has left me in the dark and Megan less prepared than we would like.

4 10. While I am doing my best to support my children with their lessons at
5 home, I wish the school would provide some type of tutoring services to my daughters.
6 This would help them stay on track with the curriculum. Nobody from the school or
7 district has communicated with me about how they plan to make up for the learning loss
8 that students, including Matilda and Megan, have suffered in the last year.

9 11. I am also afraid they are missing out on so many other aspects of school
10 during the pandemic. They used to thrive socially and emotionally at school and I don't
11 see that anymore. Not being able to interact with their classmates has made remote
12 learning even more difficult for my children and I am worried this lack of interaction is
13 affecting their social development.

14 12. What worries me most about all of this are the long-term effects that
15 remote learning will have on my children. I purposely enrolled Megan into the dual
16 immersion program and Matilda into the magnet program at their school because I see
17 education as the key to a well-paying job and success in life. I thought a good school
18 could support Megan with her dreams of becoming a doctor and Matilda with her goals
19 of becoming a veterinarian and dancer. I feel COVID-19 has changed everything and
20 while I know my daughters can still pursue their dreams, I also know that they will have
21 to work much harder once they are back in the classroom.

22 13. When the pandemic started, Matilda, who has always been self-motivated,
23 told me numerous times that she missed school and wanted to go back and catch up on
24 all the material she had missed. But now that it has been more than a year into remote
25 learning, I can see that she is losing motivation. She even tells me that she wants to log
26 off early or not even go to school on some days. It hurts me to hear her say these things,
27 even if I know she can rebuild her enthusiasm if her school supports her better. I hope
28 that school staff have plans to catch up my children once the pandemic ends.

1 14. As schools start to open up again, Megan and Matilda are excited about
2 going back. Although I do have some concerns about their safety, I also worry about
3 the effect that being away from their friends is having on them. I will be sending both
4 Matilda and Megan back to school next week. I feel anxious but hopeful that I am
5 making the right decision for my kids. Thanks to everything I have learned from CoCo,
6 I feel confident in my ability to advocate for the wellbeing of my children.

7 15. I still do not know what to expect. I know that schools will try to clean
8 more and assess students for symptoms, but I wonder if this will be good enough. Aside
9 from these concerns, I am still not sure how teachers will assess Matilda and Megan to
10 see how much they need to catch up on. I wish the school was more communicative
11 about these details. I am sending my children back without really knowing how they
12 will be supported with their social and emotional wellbeing... but I can no longer see
13 them struggle to focus and stay engaged in our cramped apartment,

14 16. There are things the school could be doing now to better support students
15 and families through the transition as well as those who chose to stay home. The
16 teaching staff could improve their communications with parents, including offering
17 parent workshops when relevant. They could support students academically by offering
18 tutoring services and by creating office hours for students. They could also support
19 students socially and emotionally by working directly with mental health specialists and
20 by training teachers to spot and address depression in children. There's so much that
21 the school could and should be doing that it is not. I hope that they will improve the
22 quality of remote learning and that these improvements last even after COVID. Matilda
23 and Megan are fortunate that I have the ability to stay involved in their schooling. This
24 has allowed me to see how inadequate the education they receive is. But I know that
25 other students are not as fortunate. Our kids deserve the best opportunities and I hope
26 that the past year has done more than just bring this issues to the spotlight. I hope the
27 past year has inspired those in power to act because children like Matilda and Megan
28 deserve a high quality education, pandemic or no pandemic.

1 I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los
2 Angeles, California on ^{04/13/2021} _____, 2021.

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4 *Maria O.*

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6 MARIA O.¹
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_____ ¹ Maria O has signed this declaration using a pseudonym to protect the identities of her minor children and sensitive personal information.