

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

06 CV 15173 (SCR)

VILLAGE OF PORT CHESTER,

Defendant.

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DECLARATION OF DR. CHARLES D. COLETTI

CHARLES D. COLETTI, Ph.D., pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. Sec. 1746, declares as follows:

1. I reside at 65 Lafayette Drive in the Village of Port Chester, NY, where I have lived for the past 31 years.

2. Before retiring last year, I served for 35 years as an administrator in the Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District (the "Port Chester Public Schools").

3. For the last 11 years of my tenure, from 1995 to 2006, I served as Superintendent of Schools for the District.

4. Prior to that time, from 1982 to 1995, I served as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

5. I received a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Teaching from Fordham University in 1985, and an Advanced Certificate in School Administration and Management (Professional Diploma) from Fairfield University in 1972.

6. Since retiring from Port Chester, I have been employed as an associate professor of graduate education at Mercy College, and continue to serve as a New York Education Department evaluator for bi-lingual education in New York State.

7. In 2006, as Superintendent, I was the chief operating officer for a public school system with an annual budget of approximately \$55 million. In 2006, the district served approximately 3,500 students enrolled in a 9-12 High School, 6-8 Middle School and four K-5 elementary schools – the Kennedy School, the King Street School, the Park Avenue School and the Edison School.

8. As Superintendent, I worked closely with the duly-elected members of the School Board of Trustees, who set policy and provided leadership to the District.

9. The Port Chester Public School System is one of the most highly-regarded, respected and successful school systems of its kind in the country, and has received national and state recognition for its innovative programs and high levels of student achievement.

10. For example, in 2005, the Middle School was only one of twelve in the United States to have received a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award under the rigorous No Child Left Behind competition. This means that New York State had first recognized the Port Chester Middle School as a “successful middle school” in the State, and that the Office of Education in Washington then identified it as a “national model of successful schooling.” As such, the Port Chester Schools have achieved both State and national recognition for innovative, supportive and successful programs.

11. In addition, the Port Chester School District was named by the evaluation department of the prestigious Standard & Poor’s Corporation as one of New York’s

Outperforming School Districts in 2002-2003. This means Port Chester's student population demonstrated significantly high levels of English literacy and math proficiency when compared to similar schools and comparable students. This is even more significant given the demographic that approximately 70 percent of Port Chester's students are Hispanic and approximately 25 percent of the students in this population are English Language Learners (ELL), one of the highest rates for any district in New York State.

12. The Port Chester Schools have always taken great pride in developing innovative and successful bi-lingual programs and language acquisition strategies for its newly arrived Hispanic students.

13. In fact, in 1987, the district was asked by the New York State Education Department's Bureau of Bilingual Education to pioneer a dual language program for both English proficient (EP) and Limited English Proficient students (LEP). This unique honor vindicated and confirmed the development of local programming in English and native language literacy and served as a model for other school districts. One of the characteristics of dual language is that students are served in the mainstream classroom, without resorting to the stigmatizing effects of "pull out" approaches. We have taken the time and effort to marshal the resources necessary to advance these great programs, and to provide equal and high quality instruction to all students.

14. As a demonstration of "equity" and "parity" for all students, in 2006 the district expended approximately \$14,500 on each student attending its schools. This was true no matter which school a student attended, whether it was the Edison and Kennedy Schools (where Hispanic students account for in excess of 90 percent of the student body) or the

King Street and Park Avenue Schools (where Hispanic students account for approximately 60 percent of the student body) or the Middle and High Schools (where Hispanic students account for approximately 70 percent of the student body).

15. We have also hired and retained numerous high-caliber, fully-certified bi-lingual teachers, as well as a Director of Bi-lingual/ESL education, and currently employ the highest percentage of English and Spanish speaking teachers in the state for a district our size. In addition, the Principals of our Edison and Park Avenue Schools are both Hispanic.

16. The results of these efforts are readily and remarkably apparent, in that the testing rates in the schools are some of the highest in the state. For example, all four of our elementary schools demonstrate English and Math performance above the state norm for these exams, and all four elementary schools score at or above the medial for Westchester County, one of the most affluent regions in the United States.

17. Furthermore, many of our top students who participate in AP coursework are Hispanic, and several of our valedictorians over the years have been Hispanic.

18. Beyond academic programs, we have also established for all students, including Hispanic students, numerous social services programs – such as after school and before school tutorials, special summer school programs, and Saturday Academy and Vacation Language Institutes – to insure that our Hispanic students compete and perform at their highest levels.

19. In addition to programs for our students, we have worked diligently to engage the parents and families of our students. For example, we have cultivated ties with an active and committed group of PTA's, we send all school announcements and newsletters home

in both Spanish and English, and we have even purchased hundreds of earphones that automatically translate English to Spanish so that non-English speaking parents can participate more fully at our PTA and Principal meetings at the school level.

20. For many years, our School District motto, which appears on our letterhead, has been "Success For Every Student." This motto permeates everything we do in Port Chester and represents a commitment on our part to have every student, regardless of ethnic or language background, achieve academic success in Port Chester Schools. I am proud that through the hard work of everyone in our schools, this motto has become reality.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated: January 15, 2007
Port Chester, NY



Charles D. Coletti, Ph.D.