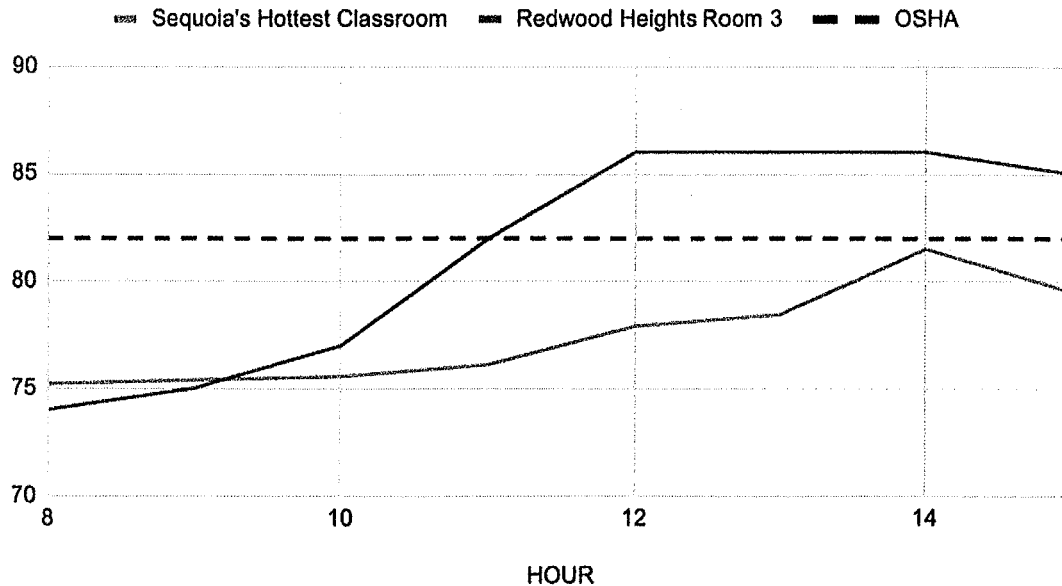


# Is it possible to cool classrooms before next August?

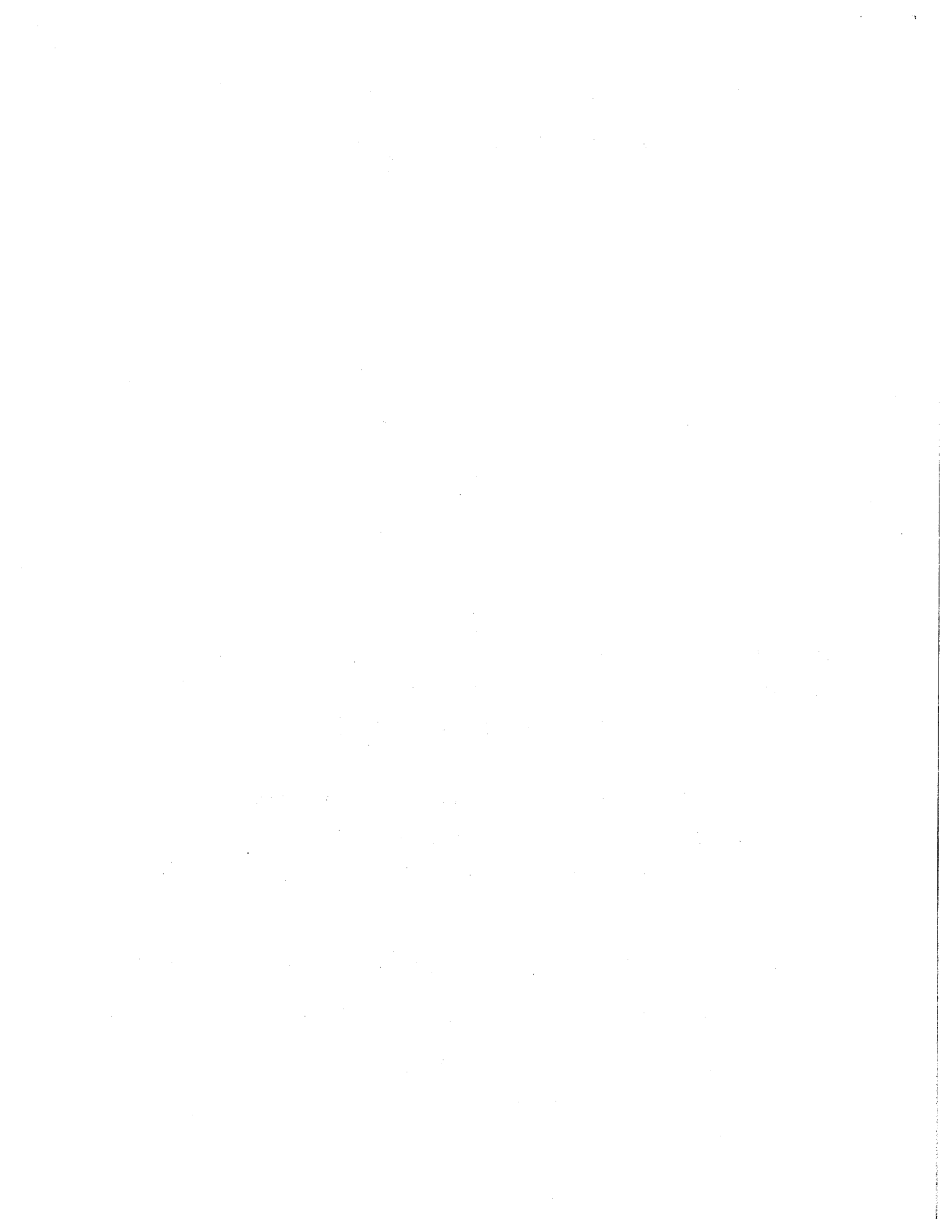
Sequoia Vs. Redwood Heights



Sequoia and Redwood Heights are both D4 schools above highway 580. Both have similar tree cover (12% of campus at Sequoia, 13% at Redwood Heights). Sequoia was built in 1926, Redwood Heights in 1948.

Why is Sequoia cooler? **Because the Parent Teacher Organization paid for and implemented cooling solutions.** They implemented these solutions in 3 weeks, for \$1000 or less per classroom.

**Board Members - Which classroom would YOU rather teach in? Which classroom would YOU rather put your kids in? What will it take for you to act?**



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**Diana P. — March 19, 2026, 6:05 PM PDT**

The first thing my son told me today was about how a **child passed out from the heat in class today** and needs to be taken away to the **hospital**. He was very disturbed by this as he mentioned it several times before we got home. When we got home, he turned a fan on and set it up right in front of his face and said **"I need to get cooled down so I don't pass out like that kid today!"** This isn't what a 9 year old should be worried about. Kids need to focus on school work and paying attention to their teachers that are also suffering in those classrooms all day. This is not a positive environment and funds **MUST** go to help alleviate that stress.

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**Katie Gesicki — March 24, 2026, 6:26 AM PDT**

My 5th grade daughter said a **classmate vomited during class because of the heat** on 3/19/26 and another **classmate developed hives** on 3/20/26.

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**Paloma Flores — Edna Brewer — March 24, 2026, 12:49 PM PDT**

My daughter attends Edna Brewer Middle School. Last week she complained of **headaches due to the hot weather**; she said it was very **difficult to focus during class, and her nose bled twice during school** because of how hot it was.

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**Nikki Dinh — Manzanita SEED — March 19, 2026, 4:41 PM PDT**

Our first grader at Manzanita SEED had a **bloody nose two times this week** because the classroom is too hot. He's sweating a lot. He drinks water and refills his bottle, but it's not enough to stay hydrated. In the morning he is stressed about finding and charging a portable fan rather than making sure his homework is done and in his backpack. Overheating is a health issue. As our climate gets hotter, we should expect more record-breaking months like this one.

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**Myesha Mebane — Skyline — March 19, 2026, 4:26 PM PDT**

Of the four high schools in Oakland with over 1,000 students, Skyline High School received a rating of poor. Most of its facilities date back to the original construction in 1961, and the continued failure to modernize or repair them raises serious concerns.

It is not just irresponsible—it is potentially negligent—to continue ignoring the deteriorating conditions at Skyline High School.

For example, **my medically complex student has been unable to attend school this week**, as well as many days in the past, due to the lack of proper temperature regulation on campus. This is not simply an inconvenience; it directly interferes with her ability to access her education. When a student is denied access due to unsafe or inadequate conditions, the district risks violating disability access laws and exposing itself to legal action. These conditions have also caused her academic performance to suffer, preventing her from reaching her personal goals.

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**Anna H — March 23, 2026, 11:18 PM PDT**

**We house OUSD's TACLE program, where some of our most vulnerable students with complex needs routinely suffer in hot classrooms.** Some of these kiddos are prone to heat-induced seizures; others are unable to regulate their own body temperature. Parents are forced to choose between letting their children learn or keeping them home to be safe.

I've spent four years on our PTA Board as Vice President and President, and I field questions from parents every year inquiring as to when OUSD will be stepping in to support our entire district community. Time and time again, I have said that I'm sure the district is working on it, and that it's a priority.

Four years in, I'm not sure I can stand by that comment. It feels like the (relatively) small DIY efforts can have an outsized impact that would be an easy win for the district, and I implore you to take action to Cool our Schools.

Thank you for your support,

Anna

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**Danielle Gerena — MLA / Oakland High School — March 19, 2026, 11:28 AM PDT**

I am a mother of three OUSD students at MLA and Oakland High School and a teacher at Life Academy. This week, my 7th grader at MLA had to take a make-up test in his school's hallway because his teacher deemed it too hot in the classroom for him to safely work inside her room. She was working in the hallway during her prep period. At Life, where I work, teachers and students must work in classrooms that are above 90 degrees or spend their own money buying and running air conditioners, which in a 100-year-old building often result in blown fuses and power outages. Our only support from the district has been email reminders to "turn off our projectors" and "have the kids drink water." I can assure you running projectors is not the source of the heat in these classrooms! Please make a responsible and timely plan to address this concern which affects the health and well-being of our children, as well as their ability to learn.

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**Erin Brandvold — Life Academy — March 19, 2026, 12:38 PM PDT**

I am a teacher at Life Academy in the Fruitvale. I am regularly teaching in a classroom that exceeds 90°. Only two of my windows open and my one in-window air conditioner flips the breaker so I lose power. Students cannot learn, nor can I effectively teach, in this environment. It is inequitable and unrealistic to expect students in the Fruitvale to be achieving their full potential in these conditions. We need cooler classrooms now!

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**Crystal Woodford — Cleveland Elementary — March 17, 2026, 3:19 PM PDT**

Cool the Schools! It is unbelievably hot in the classrooms at Cleveland Elementary. We need real support and solutions NOW as climate change will only make the experience worse for our kids. I have a 1st grader at Cleveland and he and his classmates deserve a healthy learning environment. My 1st grader struggles to hold his pencil when it's hot because he is so sweaty it slips out of his hands, which makes him discouraged, frustrated, and distracted from learning.

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**Tamara Henry — Garfield Elementary / SEED — March 14, 2026, 5:41 PM PDT**

I am a parent of two SEED students and a longtime teacher and TSA in OUSD (I currently work at Garfield). I know as a parent, a teacher, and a school leader how critical it is for us to address the heating challenges in our schools. I have had my children come home complaining of how hot it was in their classroom and of having a headache even though they drank "so much water." I have also been the teacher in the classroom trying to get 30 fourth graders to engage in "productive struggle" in math class when I myself was struggling to focus due to the extreme heat, and I've seen on a school-wide level how it impacts energy and morale when everyone feels like they're melting. Our schools are simply not designed to meet the challenges presented by climate change. With school starting in early August these days we often spend the first two months of the school year in intolerable conditions. We have to address this right away. Thank you.

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"Our classrooms get very hot on warm days. Students have a hard time concentrating. They are like wilted plants; as the temperature rises, they droop more." **Blue/Black Elementary**

"The school regularly has assembly outside on the concrete/blacktop playground. It is absolutely boiling out there during the assembly, even in the winter on sunny days and as a parent who has attended multiple assemblies I have no idea how the kids sit out there on the concrete. There is no shade on the entire playground, they desperately need to install solar shades above the play area or at minimum plant some trees so that kids have somewhere to get out of the sun during assembly and recess." **Cleveland Elementary**

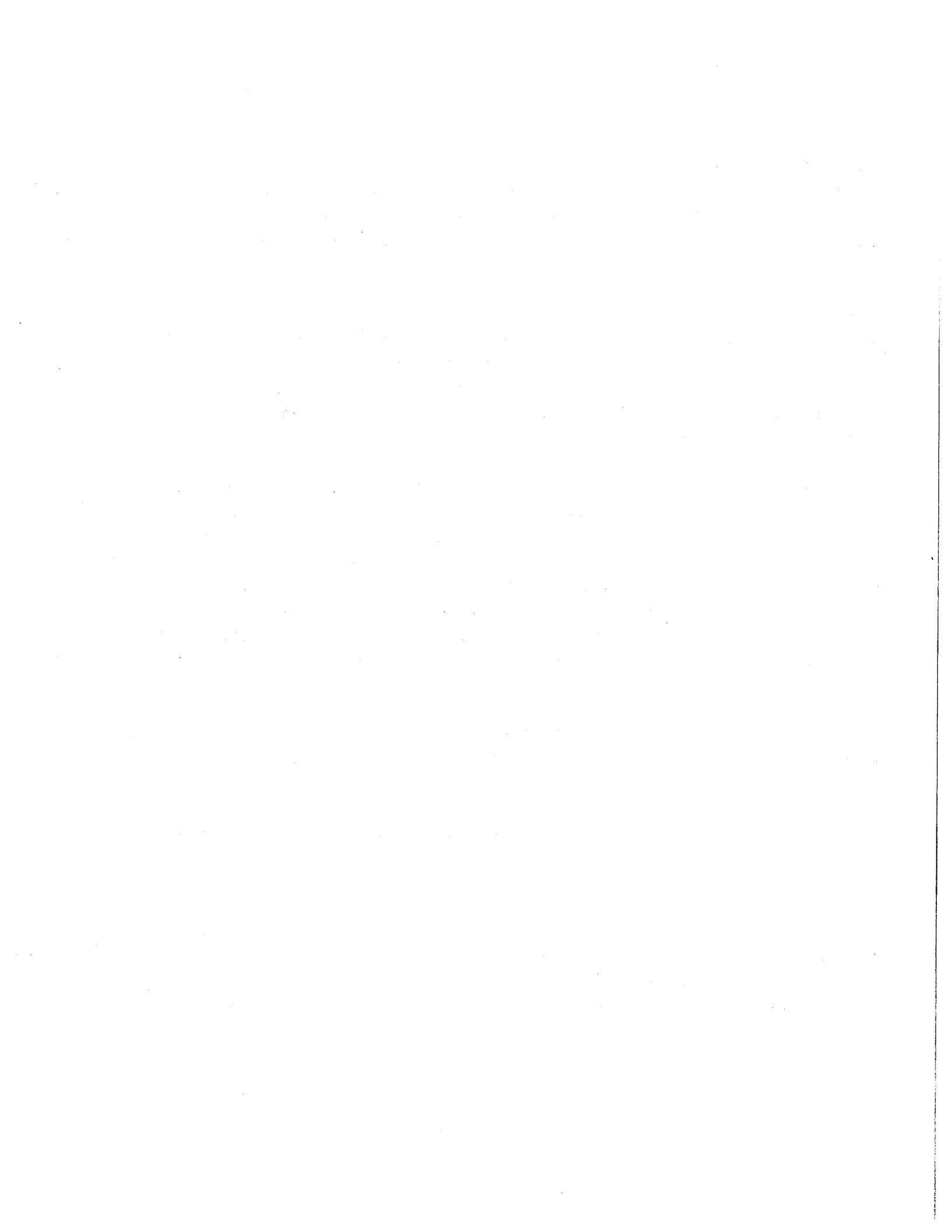
"Our children have complained about the heat in their classroom, both in warm weather and cold weather. On warm days, which are increasingly frequent with climate change, the kids in the 3rd grade class were sweating in class and the only solution provided was a large fan that drowned out the sound of the teacher's voice and made learning impossible. Our 1st grader's classroom is sometimes nearly 90 degrees during winter due to the heater. Similarly, this makes learning incredibly challenge." **Sankofa United**

"From my experience working in and visiting classrooms, temperature is not a minor comfort issue—it directly affects students' ability to focus, participate, and learn. When classrooms become excessively hot, children become restless, fatigued, and distracted, and teachers spend more time managing discomfort than facilitating learning. This is especially concerning in schools serving young children, who have fewer ways to regulate their environment or advocate for their needs. Ensuring that classrooms remain cool and safe is a basic condition for effective teaching and learning, and it is essential for protecting both student well-being and educational equity. We cannot say we care about student learning when temperature issues are not sufficiently addressed." **United Community**

"It's extremely hot when I pick up my son, and his classmates' faces are all red and look very clammy. I pack ice water for my son every day and remind him to refill his water bottle throughout the day." **Think College Now**

"My classroom is above the broiler room. When outside is 53F my room is above 80F. It's way too warm even with my fan on." **Future**

"Our school was built over 100 years ago when there were very different climate conditions. Now, we have multiple days during the school year where temperatures outside are hot, but the inside temperatures are unbearable. I've worked at my campus for 15 years and have measured temperatures of over 90 degrees in my classroom! These extreme temperatures are happening with increasing frequency. It's not good for learning and it's not good for kids." **Life Academy**



To the Oakland Unified School District Facilities Committee:

I am writing as a pediatrician who has practiced medicine and cared for Oakland's youth for over 30 years.

The evidence linking classroom temperature to academic performance is unequivocal and because of this, I urge immediate implementation of cooling solutions across OUSD classrooms

Overheated classrooms with temperatures in the 80s and 90s is both a public health concern and an educational equity issue requiring urgent action.

#### Health Impact

Children are more vulnerable to heat than adults due to less efficient thermoregulation and a reduced ability to recognize heat stress. Excessive classroom heat is associated with increased risks of respiratory distress, asthma exacerbations, dehydration, heat exhaustion, and cardiovascular strain. Beyond acute illness, chronic heat exposure is linked to impaired cognitive development, sleep disruption, and worsening mental health—factors that can have lasting effects on children's well-being.

#### Impact on Learning

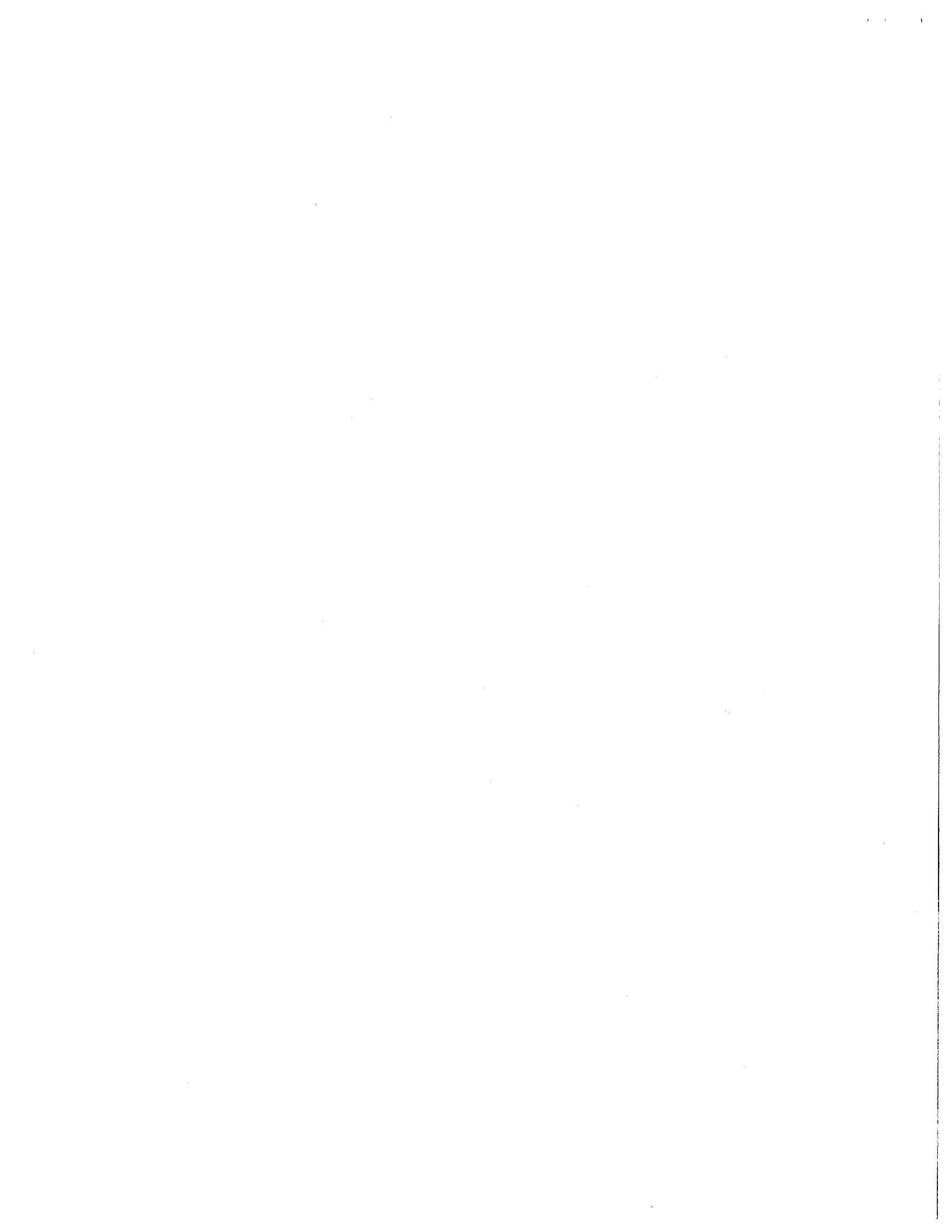
Research consistently shows that academic performance declines as classroom temperatures rise above optimal learning levels (68–72°F). Even small increases in temperature reduce memory, reasoning, and overall cognitive function. Conversely, cooling classrooms improves student performance, with the greatest benefits seen among students who are already struggling. These findings demonstrate that classroom temperature directly affects students' ability to learn and succeed.

Failing to act now means continuing to expose students to conditions that compromise both their well-being and academic success.

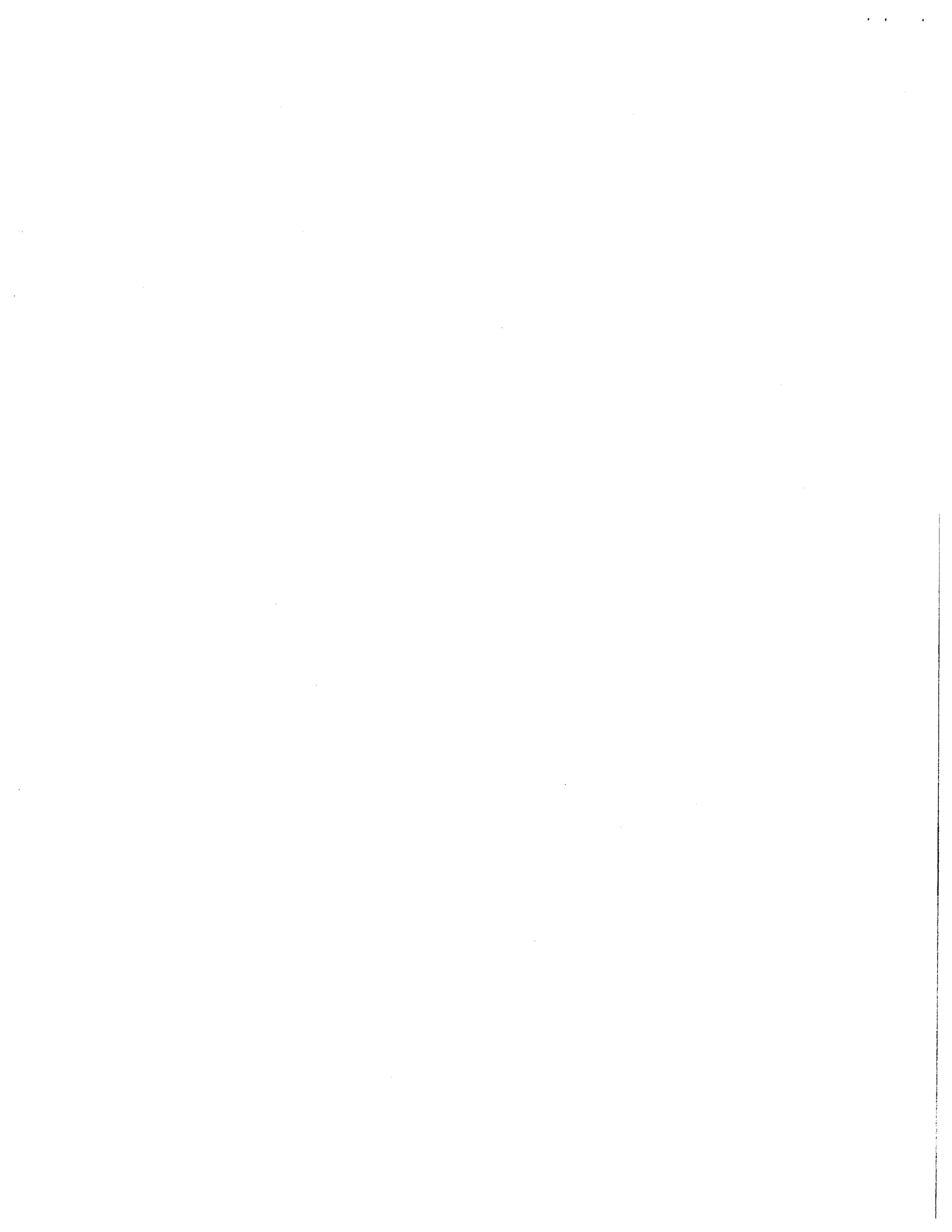
I strongly urge the Facilities Committee to take immediate action to ensure safe and equitable learning environments for all OUSD students. Their health, academic success, and future depend on it.

Respectfully,

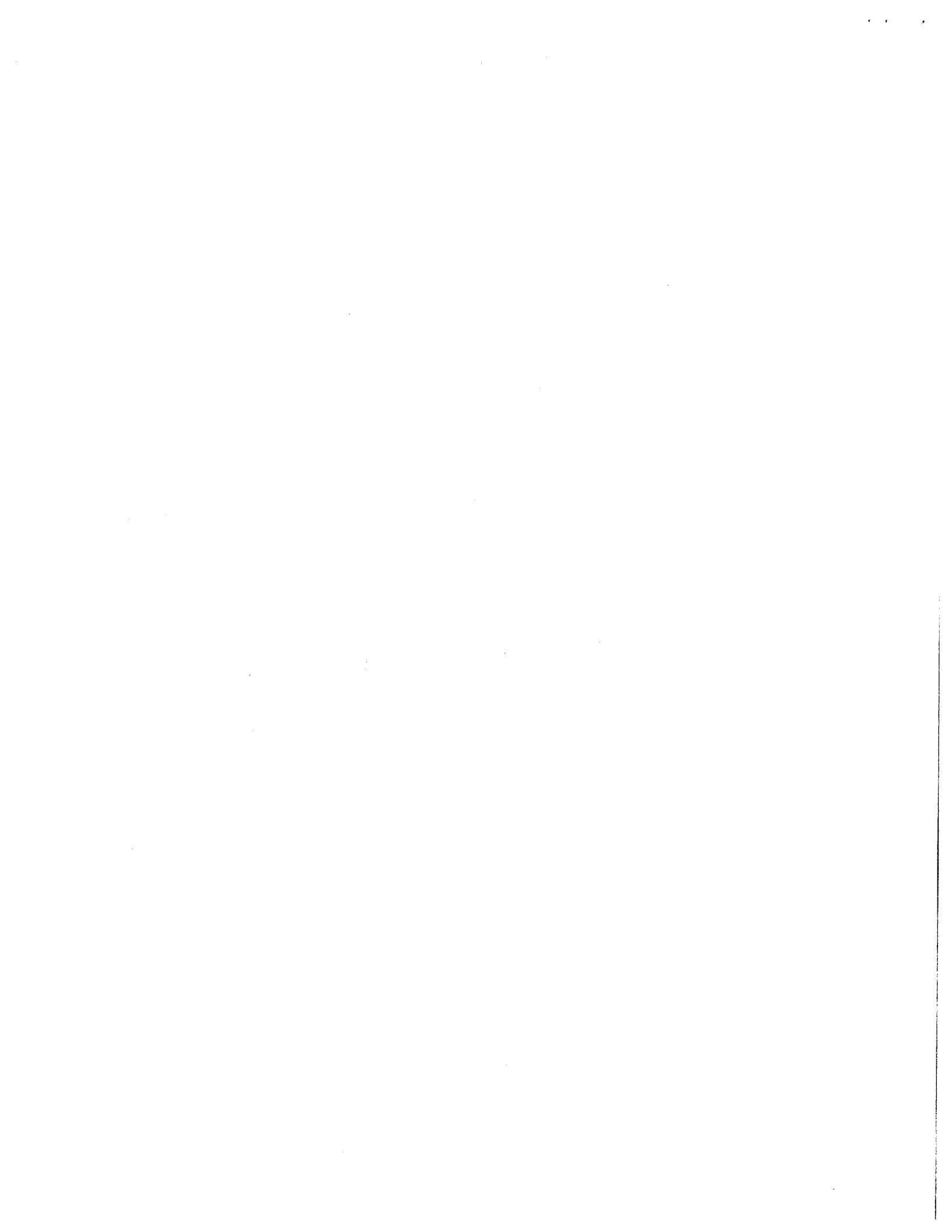
Nora Garcia-Zepeda, MD MPH





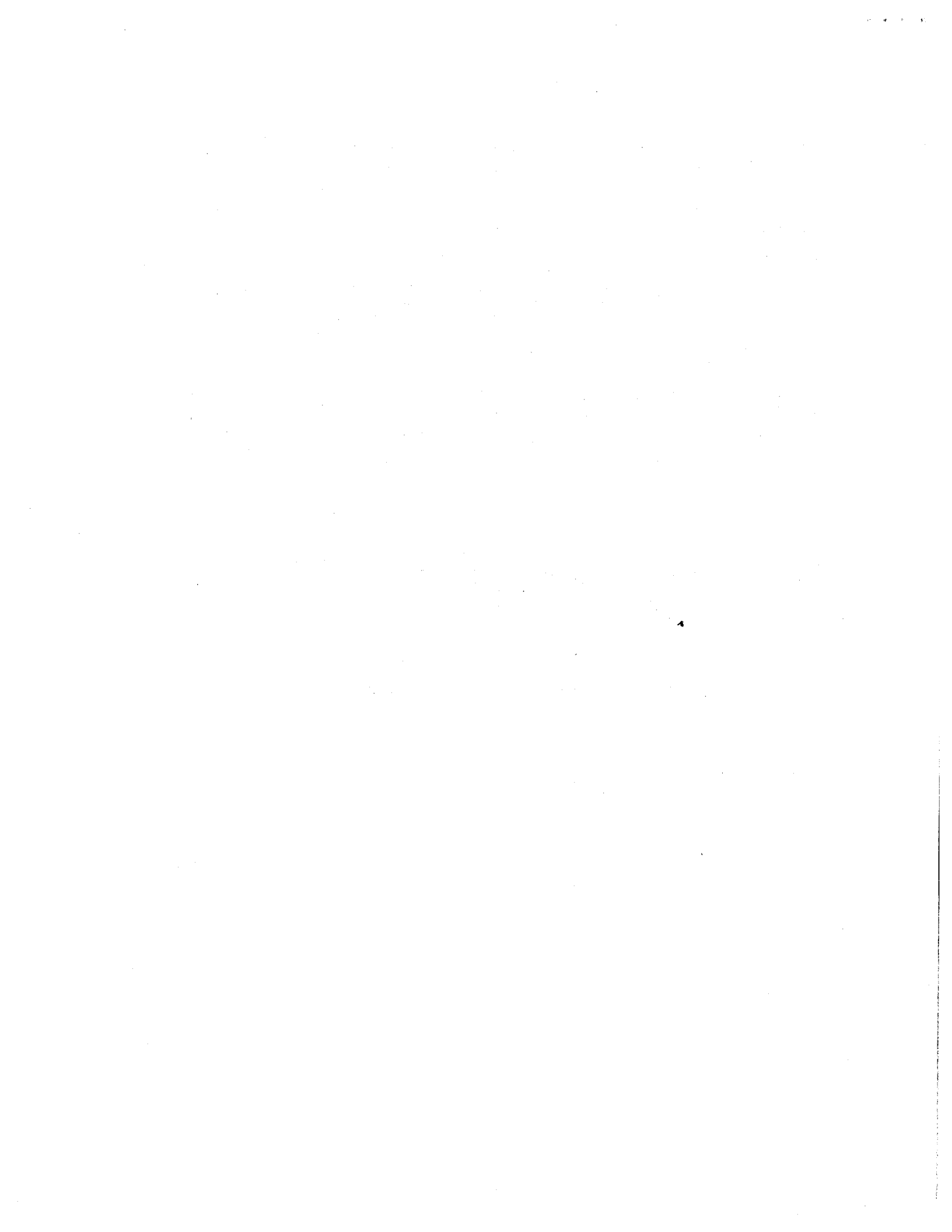






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						80	75
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USW00023230	OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, CA US	2025-08-31		84	56		
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Over 80	
Over 75	25



## AUSD Board Highlights Heat Mitigation Progress, Response to Federal Policies

by Ken Der On August 19, 2025 @ 7:47 am In News | [Comments Disabled](#)

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During its first meeting of the 2025-2026 school year on Tuesday, August 12, the Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) Board of Education heard a progress update on heat mitigation strategies in classrooms and discussed recent federal policies and decisions.



[1]

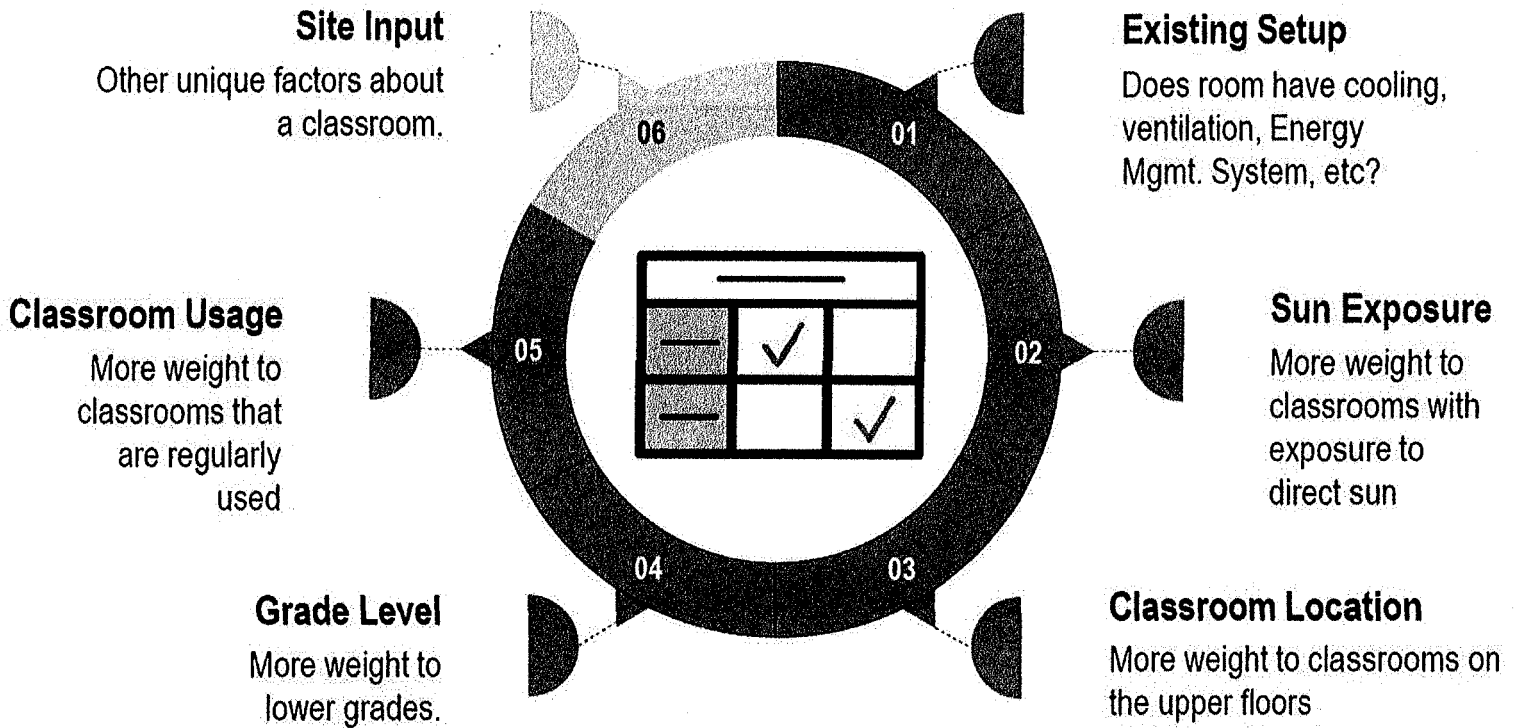
A Maya Lin Elementary School classroom with window tinting installed. Photo by AUSD.

### **Classroom heat mitigation ahead of schedule**

AUSD maintenance and facilities staff spent the summer break installing cooling solutions in classrooms across the district, following the development of a [weighted rubric and multi-year implementation plan](#) [2] in April 2025 to prioritize heat mitigation strategies in the 198 AUSD classrooms without fans or air conditioning.

The upgrades are the latest development in a process that began in October 2024, following a week of sweltering temperatures that spurred the Board and community members to consider ways to augment classroom resiliency in anticipation of future heat events.

Only nine classrooms were scheduled to receive ceiling fans this summer, but AUSD staff managed to complete installations in 54 classrooms, pulling well ahead of schedule and even exceeding the additional 28 classrooms scheduled for summer 2026. Completed classrooms are located primarily at elementary schools, including Paden, Maya Lin, Franklin, Edison, and Bay Farm.



[3]  
Rubric used to evaluate classrooms. Graphic by AUSD.

Due to such significant progress, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Shariq Khan revealed an accelerated timeline that anticipates completing fan installation inside 25 additional elementary classrooms at Bay Farm, Earhart, and Maya Lin by the end of this school year. Although the plan to address the remaining 119 classrooms is still being finalized, Khan anticipates District maintenance staff could install fans in the remaining 43 elementary classrooms, while work on 73 secondary classrooms may be contracted out, so that all of the installations can be completed by summer 2027.

Furthermore, 11 classrooms at Maya Lin and Paden have undergone a window tinting pilot. AUSD staff has prepared a survey and will time its release with a heat wave to solicit teacher feedback from classrooms with and without these mitigation measures, on topics that include comfort, air circulation, and operational concerns.

### Reassurance amid federal policy changes

Later in the meeting, Superintendent Pasquale Scuderi provided an overview of the District’s response to recent federal policy developments in immigration enforcement, federal funding, and a U.S. Supreme Court decision on parents’ ability to opt out of certain school curricula.

On immigration, Scuderi offered reassurance that no outside agency can gain access to schools without a valid judicial warrant, and that there is no knowledge of there ever being a valid warrant served for a school-based immigration action or inquiry statewide. If an immigration-related incident were to occur, AUSD has a process in place [4] in which school staff immediately hands off to the District executive team and legal counsel.

Scuderi also mentioned that \$400,000 in federal funds that were previously frozen have been released to AUSD. The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee has also recently rejected the Trump Administration's proposed cuts to education spending and maintains funding to key initiatives, such as support for low-income students and early-childhood instruction.

Finally, Scuderi explained the impacts of the Supreme Court's decision in the case of Mahmoud v. Taylor [5]. The case came after parents in Montgomery County, Maryland, sued the Board of Education after schools eliminated all notice and opt-out options for LGBTQ-themed literature in their English Language Arts curriculum. The Supreme Court concluded that Montgomery County's actions violated the parents' "free exercise of religion" under the First Amendment, and that school districts must provide opt-outs for families when they feel that certain curricula burden their parental religious exercises.

Scuderi assured that the Court's decision does not require school districts to remove inclusive materials from curricula and libraries. Neither does it necessitate an opt-out process for just any content that parents find objectionable, though there are several unresolved questions on what types of materials could trigger opt-outs, and what specific timelines and notification processes should occur for any opt-outs.

Board Vice President Ryan LaLonde warned that additional challenges may be on the horizon, especially as the Supreme Court could consider whether to overturn same-sex marriage this term.

"We think we're in this really nice bubble, but it wasn't too long ago where our community was railing against these positions for having LGBTQ curriculum within our curriculum. It only takes a federal government doing what it is, and a few people to start doing a rallying cry, and it's important that we are a blockade when that stuff happens," LaLonde said.

## **Other Notable Items**

After the Board adopted the fiscal year 2025-26 budget [6] in June, Khan returned to provide an update on the State's final adopted budget and its policy changes and new programs.

*Ken Der is a contributing writer for the Alameda Post [7]. Contact him via ken@alamedapost.com [8]. His writing is collected at AlamedaPost.com/Ken-Der [9].*

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URLs in this post:

[1] Image: [https://alamedapost.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Picture-0\\_Resized.jpg](https://alamedapost.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Picture-0_Resized.jpg)

[2] weighted rubric and multi-year implementation plan: <https://alamedapost.com/news/ausd-board-looks-ahead-new-gym-classroom-cooling-solutions/>

- [3] image: <https://alamedapost.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/1000px-1-resized-1.jpg>
- [4] process in place: <https://www.alamedaunified.org/communitysupports/immigrant-refugee-resources>
- [5] Mahmoud v. Taylor: <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2024/24-297>
- [6] adopted the fiscal year 2025-26 budget: <https://alamedapost.com/news/ausd-plans-budgets-2025-26-school-year/>
- [7] Alameda Post: <https://alamedapost.com>
- [8] ken@alamedapost.com: <mailto:ken@alamedapost.com>
- [9] AlamedaPost.com/Ken-Der: <https://alamedapost.com/ken-der/>

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