February 3, 2012

**Teaching and Learning**

*Very Special Arts*

This fall, 750 students at 17 schools enjoyed the enriching experience of working with professional artists on a variety of creative projects through “I Can Do That!,” a program sponsored, in part, by Very Special Arts (VSA), the State Organization on Arts and Disability. Seventeen professional artists were hired to work with inclusive groups of students in general education and students receiving Special Education services. Each artist instructed and directed the young people in creating a high-quality performance or visual art show to present to the community. On January 26, the participating school sites came together at the winter “Very Special Festival of the Arts” at Sam Pannell Community Center to present their performances and arts displays. The festival was supported by 50 community volunteers from businesses and organizations such as Target, Wells Fargo, Hot Italian, Rotary and CVS. The event was well attended by school district staff and community members.

**Operations**

*Measure I Audits*

Crowe Horwath LLP has concluded its financial and performance audit into the district’s use of Measure I bond money approved by voters in 2002. The firm concluded that in 2010-11, SCUSD expended the funds only for the purposes approved by voters and only on the specific projects developed by the district’s Board of Trustees, which is in compliance with state law. The audit will be presented to the Bond Oversight Committee (BOC) later this month.

*New Nutrition Guidelines for School Meals Announced*

The federal government announced new school breakfast and lunch program nutrition guidelines on January 25. The guidelines will go into effect on July 1. This is the first revision of the rules in 15 years, and is intended to reduce fat and salt and increase fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains. The rules also set a maximum calorie limit on meals. SCUSD, through the work of Nutrition Services and the Healthy Foods Task Force, is already in compliance with many of these new guidelines. Nutrition Services estimates the guidelines could trigger an increase in the per-meal food expense of between 25 cents and 58 cents once fully implemented over the next few years. This will be partly offset by an increase to schools in lunch funding of 6 cents per meal in 2012-13.
**Community Engagement**

*Superintendent Torlakson, PG&E Launch Scholarship Program*

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson joined Superintendent Raymond, PG&E Corporation Foundation Executive Director Ezra Garrett and C.K. McClatchy Principal Peter Lambert this morning at McClatchy to launch the PG&E Bright Minds Scholarship program. With the program, PG&E will award up to $1 million in scholarships to high school, community college and adult students. Bright Minds winners will receive up to $30,000 per year; program finalists will receive $2,500. The scholarships will be awarded based on demonstration of community leadership, personal triumph, financial need and academic achievement. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in a full-time undergraduate program for the 2012-13 year.

*Parents Learn About Anti-Bullying Policy*

The Parent Information Exchange (PIE) meeting on Monday featured information on the district’s new anti-bullying policy, presented by SCUSD Bullying Prevention Specialist Sheila Self. Ms. Self’s presentation gave an overview of the Bullying Prevention Initiative and included discussion of the scope of bullying among children, myths about bullying and a definition of cyber-bullying. SMUD, Schools Financial Credit Union and SEIU Local 1021 supported the luncheon meeting, which was also attended by SCUSD staff. PIE brings parents and community partners together to share resources and engage in meaningful dialogue about topics that impact students and families.

The PIE meeting on February 27 will feature a presentation by Panacea Services, a nonprofit that provides free counseling and other supportive services to children ages 12 and up and families. Panacea specializes in drug and alcohol and anger management issues.

*National Mentor Month Awards Ceremony*

SCUSD and community partners co-sponsored the National Mentor Month Awards Ceremony on Wednesday, January 25, at the Charles A. Jones Skills and Business Education Center. Approximately 100 people attended the event to recognize 40 adult and student mentors. The ceremony was hosted by Dolly Vang, a student and Building Healthy Communities/Americorps member, and Sacramento City Councilmember Kevin McCarty. Sponsoring partners included: South Sacramento Coalition for Future Leaders, La Familia, Boys and Girls Club, Panacea, Hmong Women’s Heritage, People Reaching Out, Asian Resources and the City of Sacramento.

A special recognition award was given to the family of Michelle Murigi, a West Campus student who died as the result of a car accident on January 20. Michelle was a student mentor at Mark Twain Elementary in the People Reaching Out program. Michelle’s family was present to accept her award on her behalf.