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For Immediate Release

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Mural project celebrates spirit of closing school

**Renowned artist Milton Bowens to help Washington Elementary
students preserve memories of Midtown campus**

April 18, 2013 (Sacramento) – The spirit of a Midtown elementary school slated for closure next fall will be expressed and preserved on Sunday (April 21) when students and staff come together to create a gigantic, multi-part mural under the direction of celebrated artist Milton Bowens.

Washington Elementary School, established in 1869, is one of seven under-enrolled elementary schools that the Sacramento City Unified School District's Board of Education voted last month to close. Students from Washington will attend either William Land in Southside Park or Theodore Judah in East Sacramento, depending on their address of residence.

As a way of easing the transition process, sixth grade teacher Kim Williams collaborated with Bowens on an innovative mural project. Students were asked to draw images capturing the school's "spirit." Bowens, a nationally recognized artist whose multi-media pieces are collected by such celebrities as LeBron James, then worked to incorporate common themes from the drawings into a cohesive, colorful design.

"It's a very cool way for the community to come together and celebrate our school and the future for our students," said Washington Principal Richard Dixon. "We were happy to find a creative project that allows us to send off our students in a meaningful way."

On Sunday morning, the design will be projected onto six panels measuring 8 feet high and 4 feet wide and an outline created. Students will then paint the panels following the outline – a sort of collaborative paint-by-numbers project.

Once completed, the mural will be split into halves of three panels each. One half will go with Washington students to William Land and the other half will be displayed at Theodore Judah. Bowens

will then work with students and staff at William Land and Theodore Judah to create new panels to make each mural “whole again,” said Dixon.

“There will be a symbolic combining of Washington with the other campuses to create a new school,” Dixon said. “It’s bittersweet but for the children it’s going to be very impactful.”

Throughout the design are images that reflect Washington’s commitment to “green” values, such as recycling. There is also a rainbow, a giant butterfly and jigsaw puzzle pieces.

Last year, Washington students earned bond money for green retrofitting through SCUSD’s Project Green initiative, which required students to conduct a “green audit” of the school.

“It is hoped that the mural will help ease the students’ transition to their new schools, as well as fulfill the vision of Project Green,” said Dixon.

WHAT: Washington Elementary Mural Project
WHEN: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, April 21
WHERE: Washington Elementary School
520 18th St., Sacramento, CA 95811

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