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For Immediate Release

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Judge rules for Sacramento City Unified School District in layoffs case

May 10, 2011 (Sacramento) – A State of California Administrative Law Judge presiding over Sacramento City Unified School District certificated employee layoff hearings has issued a finding that agrees with the school district on most of the issues regarding its layoffs, validating most of the Board of Education’s certificated layoffs and skipping criteria (“skipping” refers to Board-approved criteria that allows staff with specialized training and/or qualifications to be “skipped” as part of the layoff process, regardless of their seniority).

Judge Catherine B. Frink’s ruling is a victory for SCUSD’s “Priority Schools,” a group of schools getting extra resources this year to help overcome poor past academic performance.

In an order issued Friday, the judge largely supported the skipping of certificated staff at nearly all of the district’s Priority Schools, noting that the “intensive” training at these schools met the legal standard for the “special training and experience” required to justify skipping certain certificated employees when layoffs are made.

In response to the findings, Superintendent Jonathan Raymond issued the following statement:

“Our Priority Schools are our ‘incubators of innovation,’ places where we invest in our teachers with quality training that elevates the level of instruction in our classrooms and improves student learning. The findings by the Administrative Law Judge validate the work that has been done and reinforce that, while there is still much to do, we are on the right track. While we would much prefer to be hiring teachers as opposed to laying them off, the budget climate in California is such that we have no choice. It is crucial that our Priority Schools and the communities that they serve, on whose backs far too many sacrifices have been made in the past, continue to make progress. Already, data shows an increase in attendance and a decrease in disciplinary actions at these schools, a clear indication of a shift in the culture at the six schools and of more progress on the horizon. Now is not the time to turn back the clock on the kids at these schools by removing the teachers who have helped students make this progress.”

Judge Frink found against the district in the case of Hiram Johnson High School, where implementing staff trainings are more complex due to the larger staff size.

The Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education will consider the Administrative Law Judge’s findings at a special meeting on Tuesday, May 10 at 5:00 p.m.