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For Immediate Release

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SCUSD Wins Planning Grant for Social, Emotional Learning

District one of eight selected for national collaboration

February 9, 2012 (Sacramento): To succeed in school – and life—students need to develop academically *and* grow emotionally and socially.

Helping students acquire the life skills needed to make good decisions, build strong relationships and manage emotions is a focus of the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD). Because of this focus, SCUSD has been selected to receive funding for participation in a national initiative on social and emotional learning.

SCUSD is one of eight districts across the country selected to join a first-of-its-kind National Collaborating Districts Initiative spearheaded by CASEL – the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning – and NoVo Foundation. The initiative is designed to build the capacity for high-quality, evidence-based programming to promote social and emotional learning in preschool through 12th grade. Other districts participating include Anchorage, Austin, Cleveland, Chicago, Oakland, Nashville and Nevada’s Washoe County.

“As a high-poverty, urban district, our students face many challenges that can inhibit crucial emotional and social advancement,” said Superintendent Jonathan Raymond. “This collaboration, which provides professional and financial support, will intensify our focus on serving the ‘whole child.’”

The selected districts will work with CASEL to:

- Build knowledge about how to organize high-quality, systemic, district-wide implementation of social and emotional learning.
- Create tools and resources that districts can use to achieve systemic social and emotional learning implementation.
- Document the short- and long-term effects of such systemic efforts.
- Serve as demonstration sites that others can visit to observe systemic social and emotional learning in action.

“Our collaboration with eight school districts builds from decades of scientific research showing that social and emotional learning improves children’s relationships with others as well as their academic performance,” explained Roger P. Weissberg, PhD, president and CEO of CASEL and one of the nation’s

foremost experts on social and emotional learning. “We’re thrilled to count Sacramento City Unified among the pioneering school districts working with us to demonstrate the benefits of this approach.”

“Our collective hope is to create learning environments that give kids and teachers the tools they need to grow and succeed,” said Jennifer Buffett, president of New York-based NoVo Foundation. “An investment in the young people of Sacramento City Unified is an important piece of a big idea to empower a new, nurturing, compassionate, and cooperative generation.”

SCUSD will receive ongoing technical assistance from CASEL and financial support from NoVo Foundation for this work. A planning grant of \$125,000 has been awarded, and SCUSD now has the possibility of applying for three years of implementation grants totaling \$750,000.

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