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For Immediate Release

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SCUSD focuses on at-risk teens with new Men's Academy

Donations from City Councilman Schenirer, Sierra Health and The California Endowment allow program expansion

May 28, 2012 (Sacramento): Sacramento City Unified School District is working to close achievement gaps and lower the drop-out rate for urban boys with its new Men's Leadership Academy at American Legion, C.K. McClatchy and John F. Kennedy high schools.

Modeled after a successful program in Long Beach, the Academy is a class offered during the school day (and for elective credit) to at-risk teens. Through community service projects and a multi-cultural curriculum, the class aims to provide students with the skills to succeed, including teamwork, leadership, problem-solving and resiliency.

At 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday (May 29), City Councilman Jay Schenirer, SCUSD Trustee Patrick Kennedy, Sacramento Police Chief Rick Braziel and SCUSD Superintendent Jonathan Raymond will visit the class at American Legion, and Schenirer will present Principal Stan Echols with a check for \$5,000. Other funders of the program include The California Endowment, which donated \$40,000, and Sierra Health Foundation, which recently committed \$25,000.

The community's investment in the program will allow SCUSD to expand the Men's Leadership Academy and allow more students to take part in the classes.

"We are very grateful to Councilman Schenirer, The California Endowment and Sierra Health for helping us help these young men reach their dreams," said Superintendent Raymond. "Every student has the potential to be important community leaders of the future. Sometimes, the difference between success and failure is extra support from caring adults, which this program provides."

By empowering young men to seize control of their futures, SCUSD hopes to impact the region's high unemployment rate by sending more students on to college and careers. The drop-out rate in Sacramento County is 19.7 percent over a four-year period, slightly above the state average of 18.2

percent. The rate is far worse for students of color. In Sacramento County, more than one of every four black or Latino students dropped out of school during the last four years. Also, boys were 35 percent more likely to drop out than girls.

The Men's Leadership Academy provides young men with successful role models and introduces them to the range of jobs awaiting those who are continuing their education beyond high school. On Thursday (May 31), SCUSD employees will be taking Men's Leadership Academy students on a field trip to UC Berkeley. For most of the kids, the trip will mark their first visit to a university campus.

"The risk of not providing these boys with the tools for success in life is too great," said Superintendent Raymond. "We must give them every opportunity to become tomorrow's leaders."

WHAT: Men's Leadership Academy Launch
WHEN: 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 29
WHERE: American Legion High School
3801 Broadway, Sacramento, CA 95817

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