PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

District Receives $1M in Technology Grant to Help Students Stay on Track to Graduate

November 30, 2010 (San Francisco) – The San Francisco Unified School District has been awarded $1 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA) Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education Through Technology Competitive Grant Program.

The money will be used to improve SFUSD’s ninth grade “Plan Ahead” college and career readiness course with the addition of technology tools (interactive boards/projectors, student response systems, document cameras, several laptops), and training for teachers.

Plan Ahead is a new mandatory curriculum for SFUSD students. Developed with SFUSD by the Gap and the Pearson foundations, the 18-week course was introduced in all high schools this fall, and is expected to serve 4,500 students annually. Students explore questions about themselves, identify their own strengths and interests, and begin to shape their career aspirations. The program is taught by SFUSD teachers and supported by school counselors.

With these funds, the district will now be able to extend the Plan Ahead curriculum to a digital online platform and create student data-based digital portfolios and web reports that demonstrate a student’s understanding of graduation requirements, plans for college, career options and mastery of academic and 21st century standards.

A portion of the funds will go toward the purchase of a data-based Dropout Prevention Early Warning System, which will be informed by district student data gathered as early as preschool that will be “pushed” to all of the students’ teachers, counselors and administrators. The data will be used to identify the need for additional training, interventions, best practices, and opportunities for replication in other grade levels and districts.

The competitive federal grant was awarded to the state of California for $36 million. Other winning districts include Alameda, Fresno, Long Beach, LAUSD, Elk Grove, and San Diego.

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