PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

Ruth Asawa SF School of the Arts Named
2011 California Distinguished School

April 14, 2011 (San Francisco) - Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts (SOTA) has been selected as a 2011 California Distinguished School.

“This reflects the incredible students that attend Ruth Asawa SF School of the Arts. It’s a measure of their success and of the teachers who make the school what it is,” said SOTA’s principal Carmelo Sgarlato.

The California School Recognition Program is now in its 25th year and honors the state’s most exemplary and inspiring public schools with the California Distinguished School Award. The 97 schools identified for 2011 join more than 5,300 public schools that have been designated or re-designated a Distinguished School since the program began in 1986.

“These schools are being recognized for attaining high levels of performance and sustained growth, and for making significant progress in closing the academic achievement gap,” said State Superintendent Tom Torlakson. “They have succeeded despite a bleak economic environment and have endeavored to maintain their momentum and focus.”

San Francisco public schools that have been selected in recent years include Sunset, Lafayette and Ulloa Elementary, Roosevelt Middle, Lowell and Wallenberg High Schools.

Schools were identified for eligibility on the basis of their Academic Performance Index and Adequate Yearly Progress results, which are the state and federal accountability models, respectively.

The applicants were also identified by their success in narrowing the achievement gap that exists between higher-performing and lower-performing students. All applicants underwent a stringent selection process conducted by the California Department of Education. Each applicant was required to describe two Signature Practices that have led to an increase in student achievement and a narrowing of the achievement gap. Finalists received a site visit to validate the Signature Practices.

Schools earning the Distinguished School title agree to share their Signature Practices with other schools and serve as mentors to other educators who want to replicate their work. An updated searchable database of these Signature Practices will be available later this spring by the California Department of Education:

The 2011 California Distinguished Schools will be honored during an awards ceremony and dinner at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim on May 20, 2011.

##