U.S. EDUCATION SECRETARY DUNCAN
MEETS WITH EDUCATION, COMMUNITY AND CIVIC LEADERS
TO DISCUSS SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

May 2, 2013 (San Francisco) – U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan visited Everett Middle School today to meet with San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, Superintendent Richard A. Carranza, community leaders and representatives from the nine SFUSD schools that were awarded federal School Improvement Grants in 2011. During his visit Duncan learned about the successful strategies the district has been using to achieve notable student gains.

Students in the Superintendent’s Zone schools that received School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding showed nearly double the rate of growth in English Language Arts (ELA) and triple the rate of growth in Math over the past five years when compared to the rate of growth for district schools overall. Schools with SIG had an 18.4 percentage point gain in ELA proficiency and a 26.9 percentage point gain in Math since 2008.

“We are grateful to have had the opportunity to invest federal dollars in effective strategies that have transformed some of San Francisco’s lowest-performing schools and, as importantly, have supported us in making system-wide changes that will benefit all of our schools,” said Superintendent Richard A. Carranza. “I’m proud of how much our schools have grown in a short amount of time and I’m confident that working together with our city and community partners, these schools and other San Francisco public schools will continue to become the 21st century schools of the future.”

Mayor Edwin Lee recognized school leaders in turning around historically low-performing schools and promised to champion continued local investment.

“The City and the School District have been working together to build stronger partnerships to support our students including the Mission Promise Neighborhoods and our comprehensive middle school initiative,” said Mayor Lee. “We are grateful for Secretary Duncan’s leadership so that these partnerships ensure that the good work we see today at Everett and other Superintendent’s Zone schools can continue and spread to other schools throughout our City. We continue to engage the
business community to invest in our schools because an investment in our schools is an investment in the workforce of tomorrow. Every business and every citizen can play a part in educating San Francisco’s youth.”

The district formed the Superintendent’s Zone in 2010, just prior to the SIG funds being announced, to ensure that 14 historically low-performing schools had a clear instructional framework, on-the-job professional learning and collaboration for teachers, strong use of ongoing student assessments, and coordinated support services for students and families. In the spring of 2010, SFUSD successfully applied through the California Department of Education for federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding and was awarded three-year funding in the amount of 45 million dollars for nine eligible schools in the Mission and the Bayview neighborhoods of San Francisco. With the aid of SIG funding, received by nine of the fourteen Zone schools in late fall 2011, SFUSD has been able to make even more significant investments in developing its employees, including investing millions in professional development and coaching for teachers.

“The rate of accelerated growth demonstrates what is possible when you combine a clear vision and strategy, with the additional resources necessary, for serving our historically most underserved students,” said Guadalupe Guerrero, Deputy Superintendent for Instruction, Innovation and Social Justice. “Teachers in the Zone continue to work together to develop effective and engaging instructional practices. Principals, instructional coaches and school support teams provide strong leadership focused on continuous improvement. In addition, the adoption of a community-schools approach provides for enhanced student supports and aligned community partnerships. This combination of essential school supports is resulting in significantly improved outcomes for students.”

SFUSD schools in the Zone that received SIG funds included Bryant Elementary, Cesar Chavez Elementary, Everett Middle, George Washington Carver Elementary, Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8, John Muir Elementary, John O’Connell High, Mission High and Paul Revere K-8. The SIG funding sunsets in September 2013.

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