Teacher Layoffs Proceed, District Projects $83 million Deficit
SFUSD Requests State Mediator for Negotiations with Teachers Union

May 8, 2012 (San Francisco) - With budget shortfalls, and no agreements in sight with the teachers union on furlough days and other measures that could save jobs, the S.F. Board of Education has approved sending final layoff notices for 210 full time instructional positions and eight administrative positions.

By State law, if a district is doing layoffs, they are required to notify certificated staff -- including teachers and principals -- by March 15 of every year and issue final layoff notices by May 15, 2012. SFUSD projects a shortfall of $83.3 million over the next two years if Governor Brown’s tax proposal passes, or a shortfall of $119.4 million over the next two years if the proposal doesn’t pass. SFUSD is required to submit a balanced budget to the state by June 30.

“The State has put us in a deplorable financial situation,” said Superintendent Carlos A. Garcia. “These are extremely frustrating times for all of us. Though we wish we didn’t have to lay off any employee, the children in our highest need schools and communities are going to suffer the most if we cannot reach an agreement with our teacher’s union that will help bring back as many laid off employees as possible.”

Superintendent’s Zone Schools Will Suffer Largest Portion of Layoffs
One out of three teachers who will receive a layoff notice works in a Superintendent’s Zone school.

After an initial proposal to skip teachers in Superintendent Zone schools, the Board ultimately maintained seniority and credentialing as the guiding factors in the layoffs.

Previously, the Board of Education voted to skip teachers who work in the 14 schools in the Superintendent’s Zone. The United Educators of San Francisco opposed the Board’s decisions and appealed before the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) for the State of California.

On May 7, 2012 the OAH issued an advisory ruling that the district failed to establish all of the necessary elements set forth in Education Code section 44955, subdivision (d)(1), in order to justify deviating from seniority with respect to the junior certificated employees in the Superintendent’s Zone schools.

Background on the Superintendent’s Zone
In 2010, Superintendent Garcia created a Superintendent’s Zone of 14 schools located primarily in the
Bayview and Mission neighborhoods to focus more resources on closing the achievement gap in some of the city’s historically lowest-performing schools. Nine out of the 14 schools in the Superintendent’s Zone received federal School Improvement Grants (SIG) in 2011, which they were eligible for given their identification as “persistently low achieving schools” (lowest 5 percent of schools statewide).

After only one year, schools the Superintendent’s Zone showed greater academic gains than the district as a whole.

SFUSD has made significant investments in recruiting, selecting, and developing employees in the Superintendent’s Zone, including investing $1.3 million in professional development for all Superintendent’s Zone teachers and nearly $6 million in instructional coaches, academic acceleration teachers, and equity release teachers. Teachers in the zone were provided eight hours per month of early release days.


**Negotiations Stall; District Requests Mediator**

Over the past two school years, to help minimize layoffs, all employees took four unpaid furlough days and most managers took five. The district has been negotiating with the teachers union regarding deficit reduction proposals since January, including a continuation of four furlough days for another two years. As in most school districts, the majority of expenses go to school personnel.

After its eight meeting when no deficit reduction agreements had been reached, the district asked UESF to join in declaring impasse. UESF opted not to join SFUSD in declaring impasse, so the district has unilaterally filed for an impasse and requested the help of a mediator. The Public Employment and Relations Board (PERB) has indicated they will decide by Thursday whether or not to appoint a mediator. The last three contract settlements between UESF and SFUSD have occurred with the assistance of a mediator.