San Francisco’s Graduate and Dropout Rates Improving

June 27, 2012 (San Francisco) – Data released today from the California Department of Education show the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) graduation rate is now 82.2 percent. This is a 4.9 percent gain in its graduation rate, which was 77.3 percent in 2009-2010.

In addition, SFUSD has a higher rate than the state average (76.3 percent) for students who started high school in 2007 and graduated in 2011. The 2010-2011 and revised 2009-2010 cohort data provides four-year graduate and dropout rates for all California school districts.

SFUSD also saw a decrease in its dropout rate from 11.3 percent in 2009-10 to 10.4 percent in 2010-11. The state dropout rate in 2010-2011 was higher than the district’s (14.4 percent). Of the complete SFUSD class of 2011, 7.4 percent of the students who began high school in 2007 are still enrolled with the potential to graduate.

“These numbers show that more of our students are finishing high school in four years and that most of those students who didn’t graduate in four years are persisting and staying enrolled with the potential of graduating,” said Superintendent Carlos Garcia. “No matter what it takes, we are committed to making sure students graduate from high school.”

The district, with the help of the City’s Department of Children, Youth and Families, has focused on improving early interventions for students who are most at risk of dropping out. Just last night the Board of Education voted to increase opportunities for students who are credit deficient. In 2010, SFUSD started using a set of indicators for an Early Warning System (EWS) that identifies students who, as early as eighth or ninth grade are at risk of not graduating, in order to provide them with extra supports to help move them back on track. The district is implementing a three-part monitoring system that identifies students at the end of the first semester of eighth grade who may benefit from participation in a summer program to transition into high school, helps high schools identify incoming ninth grade students who might benefit from additional supports, and monitors students during ninth grade to ensure that they stay on track for high school graduation. Alternative options for SFUSD students who are not succeeding in traditional high schools have also improved with high schools such as the Principal Center Collaborative and Downtown revamping their approach to better meet different learning styles.

While below the district average, Latino students showed a strong gain of 8.4 percent in their graduation rate, in 2009-2010 it was 59.4 percent and in 2010-2011 it increased to 67.8 percent. African American students showed a 7 percent gain in their graduation rate (57 percent in 2009-2010 and 64 percent in 2010-2011). Socioeconomically disadvantaged students are near the district average with an 81.7 percent graduation rate in 2010-2011, up from 76.3 percent in 2009-2010. Finally, English language learners posted a 70.6 percent graduation rate, up from 65.5 percent in 2009-2010.
Graduation and dropout rates are based on information from the state’s California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). Now with two years of cohort data to compare, the cohort rates will be used to determine whether schools have met their targets for increasing the graduation rate for the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reporting under the federal accountability system.

More information can be found on the California Department of Education’s Dataquest web site at: http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/.