Graduation Days: Highlights for May 22-28, 2011

Strains of Verdi’s “Aida” and the screams of 1,200 teenagers will fill the air at Balboa High as the school’s juniors rush to take their seats in the senior section of the auditorium, cheer the seniors on stage who are about to graduate, and wait for the school’s galleon to be presented to the incoming senior class president. This 80-year tradition known as the Move-Up Assembly includes a 40-foot flower garland presented to the graduating class by juniors wearing their new senior sweaters and a rousing, all-school round of the Balboa “Senior Song” and “Auld Lang Syne.”

When: Thursday, May 26 / 10:30 -11:30 a.m.
Where: Balboa High / 1000 Cayuga Ave.

Approximately 500 public high school seniors will be graduating with SFUSD’s Seal of Biliteracy. Seniors Huijun and Zihao Peng at International Studies Academy and Jean Sanchez at O’Connell High are among the first in the district to earn this new seal on their diploma by showing proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English and at least one other language. The seal also requires one of the following: a ‘pre-advanced’ or ‘intermediate high’ assessment of their second language skill, a minimum score of 4 on an AP Foreign Language exam, successful completion of the fourth year of the language course with a 3.0 GPA or above, successful completion of a subject matter course taught in a language other than English (e.g., Biology taught in Chinese, US History taught in Spanish) with a 3.0 or above, and school records or other official documents indicating that the student successfully completed five or more years in the target language where the second language was the medium of instruction. Students must also complete all graduation requirements, including all English Language Arts requirements and passing the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), and have an overall GPA of 2.0.

Call for details.

Evander Williams will be graduating from Marshall High and headed to the Academy of Art University to pursue his dream of game design. He credits the school’s Wellness Center with helping him get to college, for giving him a place to go whenever problems in life arose — including violence in his neighborhood, bullying, and the deaths of his grandmother and classmates. “The Wellness Center gave me support to keep doing what I needed to do to stay in school and I had someone to check in with every day. Without it I might not be graduating and going to college. I might be out on the streets.” Each year, Wellness Centers provide over 7,000 high school students at 15 SFUSD high schools with health education, counseling and related support in critical areas such as mental health, substance abuse, reproductive health, physical health, and nutrition. The Wellness Centers are run by the Wellness Initiative, a collaboration between the Department of Children, Youth & Their Families (DCYF), SFUSD Student Support Services Department, and the Department of Public Health (DPH).

Call for details.

Friday, May 27 is the last day of school for SFUSD. Classes for the 2011-12 school year begin Monday, August 15.

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