



Office of Public Outreach and Communications

555 Franklin Street, Room 305

San Francisco, CA 94102

Tel: 415.241.6565 • Fax: 415.241.6036

www.sfusd.edu

CONTACT: Gentle Blythe, 415-241-6565

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

Demand Grows for San Francisco Public Schools

March 13, 2009 (San Francisco) – Letters to 14,600 San Francisco families will be sent out today, notifying families which school their child will be admitted to next school year.

The first assignment cycle (Round One) of the SFUSD student assignment process is now complete and the results point to a trend that more San Francisco families are choosing public schools.

“This is the second year in a row that we’ve seen growth in demand. We believe it is a result of many factors, including a concerted effort on the part of the district and community partners to get the word out about all the great schools we have in this city,” said Deputy Superintendent Myong Leigh.

Darlene Lim, Executive Director of the Educational Placement Center, said that while kindergarten spots are in high demand, SFUSD guarantees a placement for every child that shows up. Lim acknowledges that this has posed a welcomed challenge.

“We’ve opened new kindergarten classes at every school that we can and will be looking to open more, if need be. To accommodate the demand while keeping within our limited financial resources, we have expanded kindergarten class size from 20 to 22. All of our kindergarten classrooms have to be on the ground floor based on fire code regulations, so we have some constraints as to how many new classrooms we can open up at our given facilities.”

Because of the slight increase in applications, the number of families who received one of their first choices dropped slightly from 63 percent last year to 61 percent this year. Seventy-eight percent of all General Education students were assigned to one of their seven choices; last year it was 87 percent of General Education students.

Schools with triple digit increases in demand included Peabody, Stevenson, Sunset and Ulloa Elementary Schools, and Roosevelt Middle School and Balboa High School.

Due to the increased demand, SFUSD announced today it will be opening a new school. The new school will offer a Cantonese Two-Way Immersion program beginning with three kindergarten classes and two first grade classes and will be located at 1351 Haight St., the former De Avila Elementary site.

Associate Superintendent Jeannie Pon explained that the district chose to open the new school as a Chinese Immersion program because of the popularity of Chinese Immersion education for both Chinese speaking and native English speaking families and the Board of Education's commitment to have all SFUSD students graduate bilingual.

"The plan is for this to be a Cantonese immersion program since Cantonese continues to be a heritage language spoken by a large proportion of our students at home. Similar to the Alice Fong Yu model, we are also considering introducing Mandarin in the mid-elementary years," Pon said.

Families who will be receiving an assignment offer to this new school requested a Chinese immersion program but were unable to be placed at other existing schools. If all the students designated in Round One accept their assignments, the schools' Kindergarten and first grade classrooms will be full.

This year, the district received 500 more applications for kindergarten than last year, 406 of which are from families who reside in San Francisco and who will receive placement offers today. The remaining applicants live outside the district and will not be placed until the summer, depending on availability.

For more information about SFUSD schools and/or to learn more about the Round Two enrollment process and/or the appeals process, go to www.sfusd.edu or visit the Educational Placement Center at 555 Franklin St.

####