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PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

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Demand for San Francisco Public Schools Continues to Increase

March 7, 2008 (San Francisco) – Letters to 13,250 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 are an encouraging sign that San Francisco families are choosing public schools. This year, 308 more applications were received by SFUSD than last year.

“The increase in applications demonstrates what I have seen myself when I visit our classrooms – good things are happening in San Francisco public schools,” said Superintendent Carlos Garcia.

The range of top-requested schools has broadened in recent years. Several schools saw triple and double digit increases this year including Leonard R. Flynn Elementary, SF Community K-8, and International Studies Academy High School.

“This is a promising trend,” said Darlene Lim, Executive Director of the SFUSD Educational Placement Center (EPC). “Each of our schools is unique. When our enrollment counselors walk families through their choices, families are surprised and excited about the different options available to their child, including language immersion at the elementary level and career academies at the high school level.”

Mrs. Lim recognized Parents for Public Schools (PPS) for their role in broadening parents’ awareness of the variety of good school options through their GoPublic! campaign. PPS, a network of parents working together to build quality schools for all San Francisco children, has recruited and trained parent ambassadors at most SFUSD schools and has organized multi-lingual events to provide parent to parent advising about the enrollment process.

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Because of the slight increase in applications, the number of families who received one of their first choices dropped slightly. This year, 82 percent of families were assigned to one of their seven choices; last year it was 87 percent.

With a choice based enrollment system, a challenge for the district has been assuring that all parents understand the importance of on-time enrollment. Those families who get their applications in for the first assignment cycle are much more likely to get a school of their choice. In the past, the majority of Asian and White families who enrolled got their applications in by Round One while almost half of African-American and Latino families did not.

In order to assure that more families understood the application process and deadlines, the district held over 150 outreach events and conducted a public information campaign to encourage Latino and African-American families to turn in their school applications on time. The district has analyzed the results of last year's efforts, and they are promising. For Kindergarten applications, 66 percent of African-American families and 81 percent of Latino families submitted an application on time, up from 50 percent and 68 percent, respectively, the previous school year.

"I am just thrilled to see that our outreach efforts are showing results. We want every family to know about and participate in the school choice process. This is one way we can assure diverse schools," said School Board Vice-President Kim-Shree Maufas.

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 Street.

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