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PRESS ADVISORY

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School District Maintains Musical Instruments and Arts Education Programs

Students Learn How to Care for Clarinet;

Community Maintains Arts Education Programs amidst Budget Cuts

(Chula Vista, CA) Sweetwater Union High School District (SUHSD) not only owns an inventory of musical instruments, but has a repair technician on staff to maintain them and train student interns to repair and care for everything from guitars to clarinets.

"Some years ago, we realized we could save money if we maintained our instruments," says SUHSD Director of Visual and Performing, Russ Sperling, "It not only gives our students concrete technical skills, but it also instills a sense of ownership about the instruments and the music."

This lesson is not lost on parents and education officials. Although the South Bay's arts education programs are healthy compared to most -- it is one of only two districts in San Diego county to employ a full time Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator who supports the works of arts educators in the schools -- local leaders are nonetheless working to raise awareness about the value of arts education.

"We are taking a proactive approach. Our message is, let's not wait until there's a crisis to talk about how important the art education is to our students and our community," says Mayor of Chula Vista, Cheryl Cox.

On April 9, 2010, 7:30-9:30 a.m., a group of civic and business leaders, parents, educators, and representatives of local arts organizations will gather to discuss the state of arts education in South Bay schools and what it means to the community. The meeting is spearheaded by the California Alliance for Arts Education and hosted by the Mayor of Chula Vista, Cheryl Cox, and Superintendent of SUHSD, Dr. Jesus Gandara.

Like most school districts in California, SUHSD has felt the state's financial woes, but unlike many, their program arts education programs will survive budget cuts. Superintendent of the SUHSD, Dr. Jesus Gandara, has stated that although cuts are unavoidable, the arts will not be cut any more than any other subject.

"There's a longstanding appreciation for the value of arts education in our community," says Superintendent Gandara, "We're hoping this local Alliance will build on that support."

The organizing effort in the South Bay is part of an initiative by the California Alliance for Arts Education to build support for arts education in local communities throughout the state. At the event, the Alliance will present evidence of the benefits students draw from arts education, including better school attendance, overall improvement in performance in all academic disciplines, lower dropout rates, and the development of skills such as critical thinking, flexibility and innovation required for future economic success.

"We know the arts are fundamental to a well-rounded education and help students develop vital 21st century workforce skills that will serve them for decades to come," says Laurie Schell, Executive Director of the California Alliance for Arts Education.

"Learning the value of the instruments is part of the lesson here," says Sperling, "A clarinet that is oiled regularly will play better music and last longer."

Press interested in attending, contact:
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