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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LINDA GREENBERG SHARES RETIREMENT PLANS

Foundation Board honors her service; initiates succession plans

(SANTA MONICA, CA) – Yesterday, Santa Monica Education Foundation Executive Director Linda Greenberg [announced her plans to retire](#) after 28 years of service.

Board President Alison Havel shared her gratitude for Greenberg’s leadership through the years.

“It has truly been a gift to have a leader like Linda at the helm for so many years. Her passion and dedication inspire all of us who work to support the Ed Foundation’s mission. Linda’s record of accomplishments with the Ed Foundation is remarkable and we owe her a debt of gratitude for all she has done to support Santa Monica public schools.”

Twenty-eight Years of Impact

The impact of the Ed Foundation in ensuring equitable opportunities for all students has grown exponentially over the past 28 years. Greenberg has overseen the Ed Foundation’s evolution from a nascent organization raising less than \$100,000 per year to a mature non-profit with an annual operating budget of more than \$3.2 million. The Ed Foundation now provides vital funding each year for educational and extracurricular personnel and programs to benefit every student in Santa Monica public schools, generated through annual fundraising campaigns and endowment earnings.

Greenberg served as Board President when the Ed Foundation launched the *Bells and Books of Knowledge* campaign in 1998 that raised \$1 million for the Academic Endowment. Donors to that effort were recognized through sculptures on the Third Street Promenade in Downtown Santa Monica, which are still there today. That was followed in the early 2000s by the *For The Arts* campaign, which raised \$2 million for the Ed Foundation’s Arts Endowment, a fund that

now provides more than \$150,000 annually in support of visual and performing arts programs. When a state budget crisis resulted in potential cuts to personnel and programs, Greenberg was at the forefront of the *Save Our Schools* campaign, working with volunteer leaders to mount an emergency effort that raised \$1.6 million in just 60 days.

Faced with glaring inequities of programming and the prospect of additional cuts, the Board of Education voted in November 2011 to create a centralized fundraising model. Greenberg led the effort to collaborate with school, parent and community leaders, working to ensure understanding of the new centralized fundraising policy and support for fundraising priorities. In the new model, PTAs and Booster Clubs at each school can fundraise for equipment, materials and student experiences like field trips and assemblies. The Ed Foundation is charged with fundraising for additional personnel and programs.

In 2012, the Ed Foundation received the largest gift in its history, a \$4.8 million bequest from the Peggy Bergmann Estate. That gift created the Peggy Bergmann Arts Endowment Fund, in memory of Lenore Bergmann and John Elmer Bergmann, for the purpose of providing semi-private music instruction and instruments for economically disadvantaged students. Funds from that gift also supported the Ed Foundation's first annual campaign in its new role as the centralized fundraising arm of the district.

Ed Foundation-funded programs were first implemented in the 2014-2015 school year, and that work has continued to provide critical support to schools in the form of funding for staff and programs ever since. Funds raised support arts education, STEM programs, elementary instructional assistants and "stretch grants" for each school to use at their discretion for needs of their student population, including additional health staff and social-emotional programs for students.

Under Greenberg's leadership, the Ed Foundation has substantially grown and diversified its donor base in support of the centralized fundraising model. Today, funds are raised community-wide, from parents, non-parent community members, businesses, property owners, and civic organizations/foundations. Together, these annual gifts provide meaningful additional funding for staff and programs in all of Santa Monica's public schools, in addition to the funding generated through the Ed Foundation's endowments.

Most recently, Greenberg has guided the Ed Foundation through the challenges of fundraising during a pandemic, helping to ensure that staff and programs would remain in place despite the move to remote instruction. With the support of the Ed Foundation staff and Board, she also raised funds to meet the needs of those most vulnerable during the pandemic, including

tutoring services for the district's economically disadvantaged students and homeless and foster youth. And she has helped set the stage for a future Athletics Endowment campaign.

SMMUSD Superintendent Reacts

Dr. Ben Drati, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Superintendent, expressed his appreciation for Greenberg's unceasing passion and advocacy for Santa Monica's public schools, and for the students and families they serve.

"Linda Greenberg's legacy cannot be easily measured. For example, her efforts have helped make possible the world-renowned visual and performing arts program we are witnessing today in Santa Monica and Malibu," Drati stated. "There are literally thousands of students she has touched through her advocacy and work in providing all students access to instruments, art materials, and best exposure to visual and performing arts instruction."

Drati specifically pointed to Greenberg's commitment to equity of opportunity for all students as one of her defining traits.

"Perhaps the most impressive aspect of her contribution has been the courageous, sometimes difficult, and most certainly honorable and socially just task of ensuring that all students, no matter their socioeconomic status, address, or school of attendance, were provided an opportunity to experience all that our programs had to offer in shaping a person," Drati continued. "I know I speak for many when I say we will miss her in her role and I will personally continue to engage with her in the form of ongoing friendship, and occasional counsel if she will provide it."

Ed Foundation Board Shares Transition Plans

Greenberg's specific retirement date has yet to be finalized, as she has committed to remain in her role as the Ed Foundation Board launches a search for her eventual successor.

"We are so grateful that Linda's commitment to the Ed Foundation continues even as she plans to retire," Havel stated. "By remaining aboard as we launch our search, she affords us the opportunity to ensure a thoughtful, inclusive and diligent process to identify the next Executive Director."

Toward that end, the Ed Foundation Board has formed a search committee and has a goal of retaining an executive search firm by mid-May, with plans for a search to commence shortly thereafter.

“We will ensure a process by which the community, including parent and district leaders, has an opportunity to participate and have their voices heard as we launch this very important search,” Havel stated.

“First and foremost,” Havel continued, “we cannot thank Linda enough for all she has done for our schools and our community over the years. We know she will remain a vital and passionate advocate for Santa Monica public schools, and we look forward to honoring and celebrating her career and litany of achievements in the near future.”

About the Santa Monica Education Foundation

Established in 1982 in response to devastating federal and state education budget cuts, the Santa Monica Education Foundation was organized by a dedicated group of parents, community leaders, and local business owners to enhance and supplement school curriculum. The mission of the Education Foundation is to engage the community to invest in a vibrant educational experience for all students in the Santa Monica public schools. For more about the Ed Foundation, visit www.smedfoundation.org.

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