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Master Agreement with School District, Staff Expansion Latest Achievements for Education Foundation

SMMUSD Board of Education unanimously approves operating agreement and naming policy; SMMEF expands staff to support District needs

SANTA MONICA, CA, February 25, 2013 -- At last Thursday's Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education meeting, a new Master Agreement between the District and the Foundation was formally approved, putting into place a formalized set of procedures governing the relationship between the District and its non-profit auxiliary, the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation (SMMEF). Also adopted was the District's first-ever Naming Rights Policy, a donor recognition tool allowing for naming of facilities, endowed funds, and programs within the 16-school district. Both the Master Agreement and the Naming Policy were approved by unanimous votes of the Board.

Concurrently, SMMEF is growing its staff as a direct response to the increased fundraising needs of the District. Two new positions have been created, and new fundraising professionals have just been hired to fill those positions.

Ed Lin has joined the Foundation as Director of Major Gifts. He comes to SMMEF from The Harmony Project in Los Angeles, where he served as Director of Development for a nonprofit organization benefiting low-income, at-risk youth through music enrichment. Lin has spent the past five years as a fundraising professional after a prior 15-year career as a corporate attorney. He is a graduate of UCLA and Loyola Law School.

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A second position, Director of Annual Giving and Leadership Gifts, has also been created. Jessica Ureña will begin her work April 1. She is currently Director of Individual Giving and Operations at Marymount College, where she has worked since 2008. Her prior experience includes stints as a fundraising professional with The Nimoy Foundation, Autism Speaks, The Sundance Institute, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. She is a graduate of the University of Southern California.

The SMMUSD adopted a centralized fundraising policy in 2011 that is being phased in over a three-year period. In an effort to ensure equity of opportunity for students throughout the district, the policy requires that all fundraising for staff positions and professional development occur through the District-wide foundation rather than through individual schools' PTAs. As a result, the annual fundraising goal for SMMEF will be \$4 million per year, commencing with the 2014-15 school year, and the work to meet that annual goal has already begun as the Foundation increases its capacity for fundraising to support the District's priorities.

"We're very excited to formalize in writing an operating agreement with the Education Foundation that articulates how we will work together as the centralized fundraising policy takes effect," said District Superintendent Sandra Lyon. "This agreement underscores the vital role the Foundation has fulfilled with the District for the past 30 years, and the even greater importance the Foundation now has as we all work together to sustain programs and staff in the face of declining public funding for our schools."

SMMEF has made great strides as it builds toward its \$4 million per year fundraising goal. Already in 2012-13, SMMEF has secured the largest gift in its 30-year history, a \$4.8 million bequest from the estate of late Peggy Bergmann, and with four months to go its 2012-13 annual fund drive has already exceeded all previous highs.

"These are just steps in the process," says SMMEF Executive Director Linda Greenberg Gross. "We're working hard to increase our fundraising activity and success now so we're in a position to succeed every year going forward in meeting our new goals. I'm excited by what we've done so far, but I'm even more excited about where we're headed."

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About the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation

Established in 1982 in response to devastating federal and state education budget cuts, the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation (SMMEF) was organized by a dedicated group of parents, community leaders, and local business owners to enhance and supplement the curriculum of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. The Foundation's mission is to ensure equity and access to a vibrant educational experience for all students. Dollars raised by the Foundation are distributed equitably throughout the entire District. The Foundations works hand-in-hand with the District to allocate funds in ways that result in the greatest impact. The Foundation supports programs in academics, the arts, and athletics throughout the 16-school Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.

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