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**Mayor Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Unified School District, and San Francisco Education Fund Kick-off Citywide "Thank A Teacher Today" Campaign By Calling on the Community to Value Teachers and Announcing Mayor's Teacher of the Month Award Recipients**

May 4, 2007, San Francisco – Today, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco Education Fund, San Francisco Giants, United Educators of San Francisco, and San Francisco PTA announced the kick-off of the second annual Thank A Teacher Today Campaign at Lafayette Elementary School. The Campaign -- which includes the announcement of the Mayor's Teacher of the Month awardees -- encourages the San Francisco community to show their appreciation for the contributions of local teachers. Lasting throughout the month of May, this Campaign blends recognition by public officials with supportive activities led by parents, community organizations, and students.

"During my weekly school visits, I meet many of the dedicated teachers who are providing quality education to our students," said Mayor Newsom. "The Teacher of the Month Award and Thank A Teacher Today Campaign allow me to commend their tireless efforts in shaping and influencing San Francisco's children," continued Newsom.

"As a former teacher, principal and supervisor of high schools in our school district for almost 40 years, I know first hand the impact a teacher can make in a student's life. There truly is nothing more fulfilling than having my former students approach me and tell me I contributed to their well-being," said Interim Superintendent Gwen Chan.

The Campaign recognizes teachers in many ways including through the Mayor's Teacher of the Month Award -- which was established by Mayor Newsom in May 2006 to recognize outstanding San Francisco public school teachers for their dedication, professionalism, and work on behalf of our City's young people. Teachers receiving the award are nominated by the community -- parents, youth, educators, administrators, and other community members -- for excellence in their classroom, their school, and their City. Six recipients representing schools across the City are receiving the Award. For more details about the nomination process, the recipients, and the Award, please visit [www.sfgov.org](http://www.sfgov.org).

The Campaign also recognizes teachers through media billboards placed throughout the City and on local mass transit, articles featuring teachers in local media and community newsletters, and celebration of teachers at the San Francisco Giants home game on Monday, May 7, 2007.

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In addition, parent and community-led activities -- such as appreciation letter campaigns, the donation of office supplies, and teacher appreciation luncheons -- will take place across the City throughout the month of May. Campaign activities are included on the attached calendar and will be featured on the website [www.ThankATeacherToday.org](http://www.ThankATeacherToday.org). Website visitors can also send a free e-card, download materials in English, Spanish, and Chinese, as well as nominate a teacher for the Mayor's Teacher of the Month Award.

Hugh Vasquez, Executive Director of the San Francisco Education Fund, believes that the community has a critical role in supporting teachers. "Support for and retention of teachers in public schools around the country is an ongoing challenge, particularly in lower-performing schools. This public call to action to recognize teachers is one important step our City can take to change that."

Community based organizations from across the City have joined in this Campaign including the following: Central American Resource Center, Chinese for Affirmative Action, Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, DonorsChoose, Excelsior Family Connections, Girl Scouts of San Francisco Bay Area, Goodwill Industries, Our Family Coalition, Parents for Public Schools-San Francisco, San Francisco Board of Education Parent Advisory Council, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, San Francisco Connect, San Francisco PTA, San Francisco Planning + Urban Research Association, San Francisco School Alliance, San Francisco School Volunteers, Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center, Support for Families, and the YMCA of San Francisco.

United Educators of San Francisco -- the union that represents San Francisco's public school teachers and para-professional aides -- likes the community involvement and spirit of the Thank A Teacher Today Campaign. "Teaching is one of the most demanding jobs in our society," said Dennis Kelly, President of UESF. "We are pleased to see the entire community come together to thank and recognize teachers for the work that they do." San Francisco Unified School District Board President Mark Sanchez notes that "teachers make hundreds of decisions each day that affect the future of the City's youth. They deserve tremendous respect and appreciation for their great dedication while working in a severely under-funded education system."

The PTA, which focuses on teacher appreciation every May, welcomes the broad reach of the Thank A Teacher Today Campaign. "This Campaign reaches significantly more people with our message that teachers deserve tremendous appreciation for all they do on behalf of our children. The San Francisco PTA is proud to be a partner in the Thank A Teacher Today Campaign," said Carl A. Barnes, President of the Second District of the California State PTA.

By the end of May, the Campaign hopes to have acknowledged teachers in every neighborhood across San Francisco. The Campaign has been funded by generous donations from the San Francisco Foundation, Silver Giving Foundation, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, and Wells Fargo Foundation.

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