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***El Segundo Bridged the Gap!***

*Community donates \$250,000 for El Segundo Schools through Ed Foundation's ambitious, year-long fundraising campaign*

EL SEGUNDO, Calif., - May 27, 2005 – Through a steady stream of community contributions, the El Segundo Educational Foundation (ESEF) has achieved its goal to grant a quarter of a million dollars to the El Segundo Unified School District (ESUSD) for the 2004-2005 school year.

Last spring the foundation began an appeal to local businesses and residents for support of its campaign to *Bridge the Gap* between ESUSD's state funding and the amount required to maintain the district's high standard of education. At Tuesday's school board meeting, ESEF Chairman, Richard Lundquist, presented the foundation's check for \$250,000 to ESUSD Superintendent Bruce Auld, representing donations from more than 435 companies, families, and individuals.

"Reaching our ambitious goal to *Bridge the Gap* is a testament to the value this community places on quality public education," Lundquist said. "The Foundation is a conduit for the community's contributions to El Segundo schools. Once again, businesses and residents really came through for our students. Everyone's generosity is truly commendable."

Superintendent Auld said a recent trend shows school districts have come to rely more and more on private donations to fund basic necessities no longer affordable with state funds alone. "Budget cuts made in the ESUSD two years prior to the recent decreases in state funding, combined with the steady community support through the El Segundo Educational Foundation, are the reasons our district isn't in dire straights today," Auld said. "We are grateful to each and every donor, large and small. Together, you really made a difference for our 3200 students."

The *Bridge the Gap* grant was earmarked for new state-required Language Arts textbooks for kindergarten through eighth graders, a modernized sound system and refurbished grand piano for the El Segundo High School auditorium, equipment for the high school's new science building, and other technology requirements within the ESUSD.

*Bridge the Gap* followed on the heels of the foundation's successful *Pledge to the Arts!* campaign, which raised an impressive \$140,000 to fund the specialized elementary art and music programs during the 2003-2004 school year.

"In spite of severe budget shortfalls, the ESUSD has continued to weather the state's financial storm through this community's generosity," Auld said. "It's hard to predict when the state's finances will turn around, resulting in adequate funding for all California schools. In the mean time, we're fortunate to have such an amazing community that has shouldered the burden so our students don't have to."

Throughout the year, the ESEF has tracked *Bridge the Gap* donations on colorful signs located at each school by filling in bridge planks as each \$25,000 milestone was reached. All ten planks have been filled in and the bridge is complete, signaling the end to another successful campaign.

Tax-deductible contributions to the El Segundo Educational Foundation can be made online at [www.elsegundousd.com/esef](http://www.elsegundousd.com/esef), or mailed to ESEF, P.O. Box 591, El Segundo, CA 90245. Sign up to receive the ESEF's quarterly e-mail newsletter by contacting [Leslie@CharitablePartners.com](mailto:Leslie@CharitablePartners.com).

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NOTE TO EDITORS: The colorful Bridge the Gap signs at each school make a great photo op, with or without students in the picture. ESUSD will supply a BTG photo upon request.