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Ed. Foundation close to saving elementary art and music programs

Additional \$15,000 needed for Pledge to the Arts campaign

EL SEGUNDO, Calif., - November 14, 2003 – The El Segundo Educational Foundation is within \$15,000 of reaching the \$140,000 goal in its Pledge to the Arts campaign to save the specialized art and music classes taken by more than 1200 elementary students in the El Segundo Unified School District (ESUSD). The Foundation undertook the ambitious task of generating community support for the fine arts programs after learning at its June board meeting that the state budget crisis would force the District to eliminate the art and music classes at Center and Richmond Street schools for the 2003-2004 school year.

“Four months ago the District was facing some difficult decisions about cutting educational programs,” said ESUSD superintendent Bruce Auld. “Through the Foundation’s pledge, and because of El Segundo’s tremendous commitment to its schools, we’re \$125,000 closer to saving these valuable programs for our children.”

The budget cuts would have eliminated two positions in ESUSD, including the specialized art instructor and one of the two music instructors who teach the district's kindergarten through fifth grade students.

In more than 30 years as an educator, Auld says he has never seen a community pull together for its schools like El Segundo has. “I admit to having been a little dubious at first about the feasibility of raising such a huge sum in such a short period of time,” Auld said. After seeing firsthand the level of commitment from El Segundo’s parents, teachers, residents, and businesses, he is quite confident the community will pull together to donate the remaining \$15,000 before the December 31 deadline.

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Foundation's "Pledge to the Arts!" Update

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Studies show students who receive regular fine arts instruction beginning at an early age are better all-around students than those who don't. Through art and music education, younger students develop math, reading, phonetic awareness, spatial relations, music appreciation, and other skills.

Auld maintains there are direct correlations between the balanced curriculum taught in El Segundo classrooms and student performance. "It's no coincidence our schools have among the highest API scores in the state and are California Distinguished Schools," he said.

The El Segundo Educational Foundation urges the community to make donations today to save El Segundo's elementary art and music programs. Many companies match employee charitable contributions, which is an easy and effective way to double a "Pledge to the Arts!" Donations can be mailed to ESEF, PO Box 591, El Segundo, or dropped off at the District Office, 641 Sheldon Street.

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PHOTO CAPTION

Third graders from Ms Read's class watch as their art instructor Lisa Parrish fills in the \$100,000 mark in the El Segundo Educational Foundation's Pledge to the Arts palette at Center Street Elementary School. The community has donated all but \$15,000 of the \$140,000 needed to save art and music classes taken by the district's 1200 kindergarten through fifth graders.