FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, August 2, 2013

School Board Places Measure on Ballot
to Upgrade Classrooms and Instructional Technology, Relieve School Overcrowding

FOSTER CITY —At its Thursday, August 1, 2013 Board Meeting, the San Mateo-Foster City Board of Trustees voted to place a local school improvement bond measure on the November 2013 ballot.

If approved by local voters, the $130 million bond measure would provide local funding to upgrade classrooms, libraries and middle school science labs; relieve school overcrowding; update classroom computers and instructional technology to meet higher 21st-century academic standards; provide art and music rooms; and improve energy efficiency to save nearly $1 million per year, which could be used to support academic programs and retain teachers.

All funds from the measure would stay in San Mateo and Foster City schools and could not be taken by the State or be used to pay for administrators’ salaries. The measure would qualify local schools for millions in state matching funds to maximize bond dollars and upgrade, repair and improve classrooms, labs, libraries and technology. A citizen oversight committee would review all expenditures to ensure funds are used for voter-approved purposes.

Several residents attended the meeting to urge the Board to place the measure on the ballot.

Carole Groom, San Mateo County Supervisor, did not attend the meeting, but sent a statement of support to the Board, urging them to move forward with the measure. “We have excellent public schools in our community that make our neighborhoods desirable places to live and protect property values. By relieving school overcrowding, providing up-to-date technology, upgrading classrooms, labs and libraries, and providing art and music rooms, this measure will help keep our San Mateo and Foster City schools among the best in the state.”

Yvonne Ryzak, a business owner and former school district parent stated, “As a local business owner, I look at the financial reasons that this measure is good for our schools and community. All funds from the measure stay local and can’t be taken by State, giving our schools local control. The bond also makes our schools eligible for millions in state matching funds, which wouldn’t otherwise be available. It includes citizen oversight and a provision against using funds for administrators’ salaries. I feel confident the funds will be used wisely and go directly to voter-approved projects that will improve our schools.”

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Cynthia S. Simms, Ph.D.
Pam Frisella, Mayor of Foster City, who also was unable to attend the meeting, urged the Board to move forward through a written statement. “We all know that good schools not only benefit local students, but they also benefit the community. Our excellent elementary and middle schools help keep our property values strong.”

Daniela Relaford, a San Mateo resident and Parkside Elementary parent, stated that she volunteered to Co-Chair the campaign to pass the measure. “I’m concerned that student enrollment is increasing substantially in the district, and will continue to rise as more families move to San Mateo seeking an excellent education for their children. I discovered that our schools were originally built to house 300 students, but many now serve over 500 children. The time to act is now.”

Doug Stoveland, a Foster City resident, parent of two San Mateo High School students and Co-Chair of the campaign urged community support for the bond measure and said, “Dealing with school overcrowding, putting technology in the hands of our students and providing funds to keep that technology current, keeping our science labs and libraries relevant and up to date, ensuring that there is always a place for music and the arts in our children’s educational experience, and gaining energy efficiencies that each year will keep additional funds in the district that would otherwise be paid out to the utility companies. Wow, each of these is a lofty and noble goal…I urge all residents to get involved.”

San Mateo Trustee, Lory Lawson expressed her gratitude for the community support at the meeting as she cast her vote to place the measure on the ballot. “As a Board, we have grappled with these very important issues in our District. How can we relieve overcrowding in our schools? How can we ensure that our students are prepared for success in high school and future careers in a high tech world? How can we make all of our schools safe and modern learning environments? This measure is the answer and I’m so pleased to see all of the community support here tonight.”

The bond measure will appear on the November 5, 2013 ballot. All voters in the San Mateo-Foster City School District will be eligible to vote on the measure. It requires a 55 percent yes vote to pass.

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The San Mateo-Foster City School District operates 20 elementary and middle schools serving over 12,000 students in preschool through 8th grade. For more information, please visit the district website at www.smfc.k12.ca.us.