August, 2012

Dear SFUSD Families:

On behalf of the entire San Francisco Unified School District family, I want to thank you for being a part of our community and entrusting us with your children. We look forward to working closely with you to ensure your child’s success.

I’m proud that we’re one of the top performing urban school districts in California and the students in our district continue to make steady academic achievement gains year after year. I’m proud to assure you that we’re not just focused on most children being successful - we’re committed to every child being successful. We are being very thoughtful and very strategic about how we approach student learning. We’re going to monitor how students are learning and, if they’re learning, we’re going to help them learn even more. If they’re not learning, we’re going to go back and make sure that they master the skill set that’s necessary to get to the next level.

Throughout the district we’re asking these four fundamental questions and I encourage you to adopt these questions as well as you visit your child’s school: 1) What do we expect students to learn? 2) How will we know if they are learning? 3) What will we do when students have already learned it? and 4) How do we respond when students don’t learn?

We believe in a well-rounded education for children, one where children speak multiple languages including English, and where - in addition to strong instruction in reading, writing, science, history, geography and mathematics - our students are learning dance, music and visual and performing arts. They’re participating in physical activities and learning how to be healthy. They’re learning how to communicate and collaborate with each other.

While we strive to offer all that our children need to learn and grow, the State of California continues to spend less on public education than almost any other state in the U.S. Because of this lack of funding, we can’t do everything we wish we could. Thankfully this school year, we will be almost back to the usual 180 days, minus a half day on the last day of the year. However, if voters don’t support Proposition 30 and/or 38 in November, we’ll have to cut the school year shorter this spring and next school year. So please be sure to vote.

The challenging fiscal climate aside, I am so excited for the start of the school year! I look forward to visiting schools and seeing our students engaged in joyful learning. Nothing makes me happier.

Yours truly,

Richard Carranza
Superintendent of Schools