

PRESS RELEASE – ORANGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

For immediate release

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STRONG TEST SCORES AND A BALANCED BUDGET GO HAND IN HAND AT ORANGE UNIFIED

ORANGE, Calif., September 23, 2011 – At the September 15th Board of Education meeting, the Board approved the 2010-11 Unaudited Actuals and the 2011-12 Revised Budget. Additionally, the Board heard a presentation regarding the District's student achievement results. Both items are particularly noteworthy as they reflect how well Orange Unified School District is doing both financially and academically despite the fiscal uncertainty that continues to prevail throughout the state and nation as a whole.

Joe Sorrera, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, reported that the District is solvent and has a balanced budget for 2011-12. Although the funded revenue limit has been reduced from \$6,495 to \$5,212 per student – a \$35 million loss to the District – the District received a “positive” certification from the Orange County Department of Education. As a point of reference, 1 in 7 school districts in the state and 10 in 28 school districts in Orange County received either a “qualified” or “negative” certification. As Mr. Sorrera emphasized, “Our District's certification is “positive,” we are fiscally solvent, we have cash, and barring any unforeseen budget cuts from the State, we will be able to meet our current and future obligations.”

Good news to follow good news, Dr. Gunn Marie Hansen, Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services, presented an insightful Accountability Progress Report covering multiple items within the testing accountability framework including the Academic Performance Index (API) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The awe-inspiring data of the District illustrates how well OUSD students are doing academically. Orange Unified saw a 17-point gain in API scores, the highest increase among all unified school districts in Orange County and well above the state average. Furthermore, Prospect Elementary's API grew 69 points, the greatest growth for a single school in Orange County. Ninety-five percent of OUSD schools met the school-wide API growth target. Concurrently, the five-year growth on the API was significant. All schools are above 700 with 83% above 750. A dramatic increase was also evident in the number of schools in the 900 range. Dr. Hansen stated that meeting state standards “is extremely challenging and we continue to do very well.” She added, “We are very excited that we have shown tremendous growth in the District in accelerating student achievement.”

Following the presentations, Board President, Rick Ledesma, remarked on the decisions that have been made over the past two years and the direction OUSD has taken to get to where it is today – fiscally solvent with improved student achievement. He stated, “Tonight was an example of the perfect equation. When it comes to school district management and student achievement, we have been good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars and have provided educational services and support to the students in such a manner that they have increased their test scores..... through the many challenges, this District has remained strong fiscally and will continue to achieve educationally.” Mr. Ledesma concluded by recognizing those who “truly did more with less” – the teachers. He further expressed his gratitude and appreciation to all support staff and administrators who have worked so diligently to improve student achievement under very difficult circumstances.