



For Immediate Release

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**The Fleet Inquiry Institute Partners with the San Diego Unified
School District Balboa Park Program**

320 5th Grade Teachers and 10,000 Students to be Reached by New Program

SAN DIEGO, Calif., February 22, 2010 – The Reuben H. Fleet Science Center announces a new teacher professional development partnership with the Balboa Park Program (BPP) that will reach every 5th grade teacher in San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD). Over the course of the year this partnership between the Science Center’s Fleet Inquiry Institute (FII) and BPP will reach over 320 teachers including special education, impacting a total of 10,000 students.

Every week 5th grade students from multiple schools attend BPP where they explore museums throughout Balboa Park, connect with students from various backgrounds and cultures, reflect on their identity and experiences, and find the courage to positively affect our world. Now, during these afternoons their teachers also come together to find a teaching technique that positively affects the learning experiences their students have in the classroom. Cristina Trecha, the Fleet Inquiry Institute’s Project Director shares, “What I find most powerful for the teachers is the opportunity and time to focus on student learning, hands-on science, and inquiry-based pedagogy.” Every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday afternoon teachers attending BPP gather at the Fleet to explore innovative ways to modify current classroom curriculum to make it more student-centered.

The professional development provided during this time gives teachers a unique opportunity to collaborate with their school site colleagues, peers from throughout the district, and Science Center staff to experience the process of inquiry as a learner and explore the act of questioning, an act that is integral to the process of science. The focus of this partnership is to support teachers in group explorations of how to more

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effectively teach standards-based curriculum to all students including English language learners and students with special needs.

This weekly program launched on January 4, 2010 and according to Tina Chin, the Balboa Park Program Administrator, she is already receiving positive feedback from participants: “This was a great opportunity to experience the learning perspective from a different view...it opens your eyes. It is easier to inspire higher order thinking when these process skill levels are laid out more explicitly,” said Leigh Monika, a 5th grade teacher at Dingeman Elementary. Chin believes that, “this partnership adds a renewed connection for San Diego Unified teachers to Balboa Park.”

The Fleet Inquiry Institute was established at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center in 2002 to transform science education in the local community. As a science museum with extensive educational programs that directly serve over 100,000 students each year, the Fleet has extensive experience in the development and delivery of science curricula that engages and motivates students through inquiry-based learning.

For additional information on the FII model and inquiry-based learning, please visit: http://www.rhfleet.org/media/pressreleases/FII_Overview.pdf.

About the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center

With exhibits to touch, IMAX[®] films to watch and motion simulator rides to experience, the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center (“the Fleet”) offers an educational, entertaining experience for visitors of all ages. Located at 1875 El Prado, two blocks south of the San Diego Zoo on Park Blvd, the Fleet is a non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the public understanding and enjoyment of science and technology. For information regarding current admission prices, please call (619) 238-1233 or visit our Web site at www.rhfleet.org.

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