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## **GROUNDBREAKING STUDY PROVES MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION STRENGTHENS EDUCATION IN AMERICA**

### **Alliance for a Media Literate America and Just Think Announce Significant Increases in Core Academic Skills**

**San Francisco, CA - November 16th, 2007** – Results of a major new study prove that media literacy education increases core learning for all students. The research further indicated that special education and disengaged students made particularly significant gains. The three-year **Media Education, Arts and Literacy (MEAL)** project reached approximately 444 students in two low-income middle schools in San Francisco through a major grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Conducted as a collaboration between the AMLA and the Just Think Foundation of San Francisco, which designed and delivered teacher training and curriculum, the study presented evidence from standardized tests including the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking in which students' critical and creative thinking skills measurably increased following their participation.

National Middle School Principal of the Year, Jim Dierke states, "A decade ago we were promised by our leaders that we would teach with 21<sup>st</sup> century tools. It wasn't until our partnership with Just Think that those tools turned into practices. Just Think provided the key to adapt the way we teach our students to learn."

Just Think's 40-hour professional development program was implemented at Visitacion Valley Middle School and Marina Middle School, both in the San Francisco Unified School District. During the training, 16 middle school educators developed media literacy lessons and then integrated them into their 23 classrooms. Throughout this process teachers received ongoing one-on-one technical support and academic coaching from Just Think. Integration of media literacy lessons in the classroom resulted in measurable improvement in both creative and critical thinking skills by the 324 student participants who were tested.

"The results of the evaluation clearly indicate that those students exposed to the MEAL curriculum showed significant increases in their acquisition of knowledge in core curriculum areas—and even shifts in attitudes toward learning," reported educational researcher Michael Cohen.

Elana Yonah Rosen, Executive Director of Just Think, noted, "The MEAL study may be the tipping point for media literacy education. The understanding that young people are more accustomed to My Space and iPods than they are to pen and paper insists on new modes of teaching. This is quantifiable evidence that media literacy education is essential to meet the learning needs of *all* twenty-first century children."

The AMLA's "Core Principles of Media Literacy Education" ([www.amlainfo.org/coreprinciples](http://www.amlainfo.org/coreprinciples)) provides guidelines for integrating media literacy with educational standards in classrooms from kindergarten through college.

#### **About the Partners:**

**Alliance for a Media Literate America (AMLA)** is the leading voice for inquiry-based media literacy education in the United States. It is a professional membership organization reaching over a thousand media educators in schools, after-school programs, public health agencies and community-based groups. [www.amlainfo.org](http://www.amlainfo.org)

**The Just Think Foundation** has delivered programming, led teacher training and developed cutting-edge media education curriculum for over a decade. [www.justthink.org](http://www.justthink.org)

**The Michael Cohen Group** is an internationally acknowledged evaluation research group. [www.mcgrg.com](http://www.mcgrg.com)

In addition to downloading the MEAL case study and resources from the AMLA website, educators may order it for free on CD/DVD from Just Think Foundation, 39 Mesa St., #106, San Francisco, CA 94129 / 415-561-2900 / [meal@justthink.org](mailto:meal@justthink.org)

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