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STUDENTS AT ACHIEVEMENT FIRST PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS RECEIVE A GIANT WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT FROM STAR NFL QUARTERBACK ELI MANNING

Two-time Super Bowl Winner and College Graduate Eli Manning Sends a Special Video Message to Students as they Tackle their State Tests

Link to Video: http://bit.ly/AF_Eli

BROOKLYN, N.Y. – New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning has a new, fired up group of young teammates: thousands of students from Achievement First public charter schools who received a personal message of encouragement and support from the two-time Super Bowl champion as they prepare to tackle the New York State Tests which begin tomorrow.

In a short video that was shared in classes and school assemblies today, Mr. Manning delivered an inspiring surprise message to Achievement First (AF) students, stating, “Hey there, Achievement First scholars. I’m Eli Manning of the New York Giants, and I just heard that you all are getting ready to take the state test. I know that with a little hard work and a lot of grit, you will succeed.”

Manning went on to say, “I want to wish you all great luck and great success. I know that you will all do well, and I’ll probably be checking in with all of your teachers to make sure you all are working hard and preparing for the test. Best of luck. Go get ‘em!”

Achievement First is a nationally recognized network of high-performing public charter schools. With 17 schools in New York City and 29 across New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island, it serves more than 9,500 students in historically underserved and low-income communities.

“We are so thankful to Eli Manning for his uplifting and confidence-building message to our scholars. Many of our students look up to Eli Manning as a superstar athlete and role model, but perhaps more importantly, as a college graduate. That’s the real goal we’re encouraging our students to focus on every day, and Eli Manning knows what it takes to succeed both on the field and in the classroom,” said Achievement First co-CEO and Superintendent Doug McCurry.

Manning played college football for and graduated from the University of Mississippi, where he earned a degree in marketing.

The video message served to reinforce with students that the state tests are a chance to “show what they know,” and should be viewed as an opportunity to demonstrate the learning and



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knowledge they have acquired in their classes every day as they approach the “end zone” of the school year.

McCurry continued, “Our teachers and principals have encouraged students to approach the test as they would any big game—with the seriousness it deserves and, just as importantly, with the confidence to view it not as a source of anxiety, but as an exciting opportunity and platform to show the world what they can do. Mr. Manning’s video message reinforces those twin messages: you need to work hard and stay focused, but also recognize and celebrate all the academic achievements that got you to this point and view the tests as another chance to succeed.”

With this in mind, Achievement First schools have engaged in creative activities including: Olympic-themed contests where students are striving to “go for the gold,” content-themed and teacher-led musical performances to the soundtracks of Beyoncé and One Direction, and of course, this GIANT piece of motivation from Eli Manning.

Stephanie Keenoy, principal of AF Endeavor Elementary, said, “Eli Manning knows a thing or two about what it takes to tackle a challenge and succeed, but also to have fun while you’re doing it. That’s exactly the message we want to communicate to our students: school is important and needs to be taken seriously, but learning should also be joyful, engaging and exciting.”

To learn more or to visit a school, please contact Amanda Pinto at amandapinto@achievementfirst.org or 203-726-0168.

About Achievement First

Achievement First is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that currently operates 29 public charter schools in New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The mission of Achievement First is to close the achievement gap and deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all children, regardless of race, economic status or zip code. With its college-preparatory focus, Achievement First schools are attaining breakthrough academic gains, and 100% of AF high school graduates are accepted into colleges and universities. During the 2014-15 academic year, more than 9,500 students attended AF schools, the majority of whom are from historically underserved and low-income communities. For more information, visit AchievementFirst.org.

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