Dec. 14 - Students meeting at Wetlands Watch at PV High School to plan out environmental action.

Dec. 10 - Director of Human Services for Santa Cruz County, Ellen Timberlake, announced her retirement after an amazing career in which she championed the needs of the underserved and disenfranchised members of our community. Her leadership, genius, and zeal will be missed!

CSBA 2019
Dec 6 - Four County Board of Education members, Sage Leibenson, and myself traveled to San Diego to participate in the California School Board Association Annual Education Conference where we participated in engaging workshops and networked with other COE’s and districts.

First Electric School Bus

Dec. 10 - Live Oak School District and Santa Cruz City Schools both acquired the first electric school buses in Santa Cruz County. The vehicles form a part of the districts' efforts to reduce their carbon footprint and find sustainable solutions to protect the environment.

County Board Action
This month, the Santa Cruz County Board of Education will conduct their annual organization of the Board, receive a presentation about the COE’s First Interim Financial Report and a proposal for a new Data Storage, Backup, and Recovery Plan.

The Board will also consider and decide on the following:
- 2019-2020 Budget Calendar
- Petition to Renew PCS Charter School
- Petition for Material Revision of PCS Charter School

Upcoming Events
- Jan. 15 Alt. Ed Graduations, Portuguese Hall
- Jan. 21. COE Strategic Plan Event, Watsonville Civic Plaza
- Jan. 24, Santa Cruz County Civics Summit
- Jan. 28 - COE Strategic Plan Event, MAH, Santa Cruz
Alternative Education

Many of our Court and Community sites celebrated Thanksgiving with their students and families at annual school gatherings. These special events build community and connection between our students, staff, and families. Court and Community School staff are continuing their focus on NGSS science and mathematics through professional development, in partnership with the Educational Services Department. On December 4th, Alternative Education staff continued their equity and peer coaching work through guided discussions, which included listening and talking about the podcast series, Seeing White. We have roughly 80 students finishing their final credits in preparation for our January graduation ceremonies, January 14th and 15th. Ceremonies on the 14th will be held at Sequoia Schools at 10:00am and 1:30pm. Ceremonies on the 15th will be held at the Portuguese Hall at 9am & 1pm.

Career Advancement Charter:

The CAC has had six graduates so far (2019-2020 school year). Five of our graduates are registered for Cabrillo, beginning January 2020. The CAC has an average total enrollment of 120 with 95+% attendance rates. The CAC is moving forward with implementation of their new academic achievement tool called “CASAS” (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System). We are now pre-testing and post-testing all CAC students in order to measure job skills literacy growth in English and Math. On December 6th, the CAC will have a table at the "Watsonville Cabrillo College Registration Fair." On December 10th, the CAC will have a table at the Live Oak “Cradle to Career” event.

Tech+

The Tech+ continues to focus on innovation and building capacity in staff and students’ technical skills. All staff will be moving from Microsoft’s email system hosted on local servers to Gmail which is cost-free in the cloud for all educational institutions. We join ALL CA county districts in the implementation of Gmail! All staff (and Board) will only be using Gmail on 12/30 at 1 PM. We have close to 30 early adopters exclusively on Gmail. Training continues for all staff! We are also happy to welcome a new staff member, Bob Burns, our new Network Support Specialist. He joins us from UCSC and compliments the team. The team also received a scholarship from Extron to update the Computer Lab. The Santa Cruz COE main computer lab now is equipped with wireless streaming, ceiling speakers, and wireless microphones paid for completely by Extron. Our data and communication team have been working closely with Student Support Services to develop an overview of student responses from the California Healthy Kids Survey -- look for information soon! Finally, did you know last week was Computer Science Education Week? Students all over the county participated in the Hour of Code! The photo below showcases students in 2nd grade at Happy Valley Elementary using commands to program movement of an animated character at code.org.

Community Hero Xaloc Cabanas

Nov. 26 - We are proud to share that Xaloc Cabanas was selected as a Community Hero by United Way and was honored at the Community Assessment Project celebration in Watsonville. We are proud of his hard work and his commitment to our youth.

Cypress Charter School:

Cypress held their first Open School Night on December 5th. More than 20 families were in attendance. 8 current students volunteered to answer questions and show prospective families around. We also had a group of parents on hand to share their perspective on the benefits of a Cypress Education. Santa Cruz Bicycles will be donating 6 bikes for students to use as part of a Cypress cycling club, which will be supervised by English teacher and bicycle enthusiast, Amanda Pinther. Finals week at Cypress begins 12/16. We have designed our finals schedule to model college finals which will consist of two finals per day. We’ve also arranged for donations of food and warm beverages to serve at break to keep the students fueled throughout the week.

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Supt's Update - December

Division Updates

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Supt's Update - December

The Student Support Services Department hosted a Real DUI in Schools event at our very own Sequoia High School. Judge Denine Guy presided over two real defendants being sentenced, engaging court staff including the DA, Public Defender, Clerk, Sheriff’s Bailiff and CHP. The group doubled as a career panel as Judge Guy spoke of each role and the job prospects therein. Most impactful moment was when the defendants addressed the students directly about their own mistakes leading up to their DUI and the consequences that had followed. In a final segment, a victim of a hit and run, now paralyzed from from the chest down, relayed in a heart-wrenching story one of the worst outcomes to driving under the influence.

Student Support Services

Student Leadership Network
Dec 10 - The Santa Cruz COE has launched a network of students from over 12 high schools across Santa Cruz County to begin working on efforts to protect and sustain our environment. Their first order of business is to plan the fist environmental summit planned for May 1st, 2020.

We were joined locally by colleagues from several key partner agencies, such as CASA, Encompass and The Diversity Center. Hopefully we can share gems gathered within the new COE workplace wellness program, as well as continue to support all our partners in the county in taking good care of themselves as they take good care of others.

Career Technical Education Partnership (CTEP)
The Career Technical Education Partnership is collaborating with some of the local secondary school districts and tech businesses to create a pathway in Information and Communication Technologies. The goal is to provide a four year course sequence that prepares high school students for continuing study at Cabrillo College, a four year college or university, and/or employment.

Educational Services
Our Educational Services team has been conducting district LCAP interviews to identify needs across districts and for individual districts, so that we can provide more timely and relevant services to support schools and students. The new LCAP template will be released this January, and our team will be there to support districts as they create their new three-year plans. Other work in the department includes continued work on the EL Roadmap and the Dual Language Network, the start of a Grading Practices Network to discuss equity in grading across the county, and preparation for our next round of science support to districts in anticipation of our BaySci convening #2.

Special Service Week

The Student Support Services Department was honored to be selected by the 1440 Foundation to attend the leadership and resilience workshops as part of their Special Service Week training program offered nationally once a year. Four key staff members attended: Michael Paynter, Martine Watkins, Kim Corneille and Dwaine Tait.

Human Resources
WELLNESS is considered an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, personal flourishing. Wellness is intentional, self-directed, and holistic. It includes lifestyle (day-to-day choices that can improve our physical health), our environment, and mental and spiritual well-being. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education is proud to offer a Wellness Program that will be be driven by staff feedback. Employees are being surveyed this month and the program will be reviewed at the December 12th COE all meeting.