The following matters and events have occurred since the report of December 18, 2008.

**Letters of Acknowledgement**
I am in receipt of an email written by the parent of a student enrolled in the Alternative Education Oasis Program. The parent describes Oasis as a “life saver” for her son, an at-risk student his first two years in high school. Now having finished a year and a half at Oasis, he has gone from a 2.0 GPA to a 3.6 GPA. He is now, with the assistance of Oasis staff, applying for college admission. The parent expressed appreciation for the whole-student education he has received at Oasis.

I also received a copy of a letter of appreciation written to Pam Crowell, Executive Assistant, Educational Services, from the Middle and High School Improvement Office administrator, at the California Department of Education. The letter expresses thanks to Pam for her contribution to making the last statewide California Middle Grades Partnership Network meeting a success.

**Alternative Education Graduations**
The Alternative Education Program will conduct two mid-year graduation ceremonies on Wednesday, January 21st. The 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. ceremonies will be conducted in the Tech Center at the COE. All Board members are invited to attend these celebrations of our graduating students as your calendars allow.

**Community TV Proposal**
At the Board’s request, staff and I met with representatives from Santa Cruz Community TV to review options available for TV coverage of Board meetings. Community TV has responded with three options for consideration.

Each recorded meeting would be cablecast at least once on Community Television and possibly twice.

**Shared Use of Facility with Santa Cruz City Schools District**
The Santa Cruz City Schools District submitted a request to use the County Office of Education Board Room in which to conduct District board meetings which, I am pleased to report, we have been able to schedule beginning with the District’s February 11 meeting.

**Child Death Review Team**
I was invited to join the local branch of the Child Death Review Team (CDRT) a state organization the purpose of which is to investigate, provide services and prevent child deaths. The focus of the program was originally on child abuse and neglect but has evolved to include natural causes, unintentional injury, homicide and suicide deaths among youth. At the meeting, the team reviewed five local incidents of death. The goal is to formulate prevention initiatives.
**Superintendents Council Meeting**
The State budget projections, the effect upon education in general and districts in particular was the main topic of discussion. The district superintendents and I intend to fully investigate new and creative collaborations to maintain services to students.

**Santa Cruz New Teacher Center**
The New Teacher Center intends to establish itself as a non-profit organization effective July 1, 2009.

**Regional Occupational Program**
Bryan Wall, ROP Director, and I met with Watsonville Mayor Antonio Rivas to discuss the potential of forming a cosmetology class in partnership with the City and the Watsonville Institute of Cosmetology.

**Boards Workshop**
Thank you to all Board members for attending the workshop presented last week for board members throughout the County. The workshop, presented by Bob Henry, of Counsel, Lozano Smith, was well attended and based on feedback, appreciated by trustees who attended.

**Youth Resources Bank Fundraising Event**
I attended the Youth Resources Bank fundraiser last Saturday evening conducted at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center. The Youth Resource Bank provides children with immediate needs in an immediate way ranging from highchairs to health services. The Youth Resource Bank was founded by Judge Tom Black and Lynn Miller, then division director of probation in Santa Cruz County, based upon their observations of children in need of dental and other health needs. The Saturday event, a concert and auction, raised over $20,000.

**American Red Cross: Exploring Humanitarian Law Program**
I met with Jill Hofmann of the Carmel chapter of the American Red Cross, who introduced me to that agency’s Exploring Humanitarian Law Program. Exploring Humanitarian Law is a teacher curriculum with educational modules for young people, the goal of which is to expose learners ages 13 to 18 to issues of humanitarian law and principles of respect for life and human dignity. The program meets national education standards for social studies. The County Office of Education will collaborate with district superintendents on possible introduction and implementation of the program.

On Friday, March 6, the County Office of Education and the American Red Cross will co-sponsor a Children of War Symposium to be conducted in two sessions at two high schools in the county. Speakers will be Geoffrey Loane, International Committee of Red Cross, Dr. Neil Boothby, Professor in Public Health, University of Colombia, Dorothy Oteto, previously Child of War, and Dr. Ashis Brahma, the only doctor for the Darfur refugee camp in Chad for two years.

**System Improvement Planning Steering Committee**
The System Improvement Planning Steering Committee is a comprehensive effort to improve the entire process for foster youth and is a part of Child Protective Services. Michael Paynter, Coordinator, COE Foster Youth Program, Mark Holguin, Family and Children’s Services, and I presented to member agencies this week our SIP strategies to improve the stability and quality of education and student success for youth in the county who are in foster care. Focus areas are: implementation of a transportation system to enable children in foster care to remain in their school of origin; an assessment tool on the educational needs of foster youth; increase access to tutoring and other support services; defining the roles and responsibilities of all agencies in ensuring stable education placements; provide information to school boards and school personnel on issues foster children face in the educational system, and; develop an interagency data sharing procedure.

**United Way – Go for Health**
I met with Angela Ricchio, Coordinator of Jovenes Sanos, a Watsonville-based advocacy program for high school-aged youth that raises community awareness about childhood obesity and diabetes and advocates for and implements policies that promote healthy nutrition, physical activity and overall wellness among youth in Watsonville. The COE will collaborate with Ms. Ricchio and districts to introduce the Just Run! Program into Santa Cruz County schools. Just Run! is a web-based program designed to assist schools in the promotion of fitness and healthy lifestyle choices while combating childhood obesity and related illness.

**Education Partnership Center 10 Year Anniversary**
I attended the Education Partnership Center anniversary event at UCSC last week. Following recognition of EPC founders by Chancellor Blumenthal, awards were presented to several EPC partners from the educational and business communities.

**Santa Cruz COE, Inside Education**
The fifth session of Inside Education will be conducted Thursday, January 22nd. Staff and I invite Board members to join us if possible. Inside Education participants will be introduced to the charter school petition process and make site visits to Pacific Collegiate Charter School and Delta Charter School.

**Governor’s Budget Proposal**
Barney Finlay, Associate Superintendent, Business Services Division provided the Board with an update on recent developments relative to the Governor’s State Budget Proposal.

**Monthly Meetings Attended**
- First 5 Commission
- Steinbeck Board of Directors
- Superintendents’ Council
- New Teacher Project Steering Committee
- Pre-school Steering Committee
- United Way Board of Directors
- Children’s Network