The following matters and events have occurred since the report of December 17, 2009:

**COE All-staff Meeting**
During this week’s all-staff meeting, the results of the recent all-staff workplace survey were presented to and discussed with staff. As is our custom, recognition awards were presented to employees nominated for recognition in several categories by their peers.

**Charter School Petitioner**
I met with Theresa Robinson who presented a proposed charter to the Board a few months past at her request to further discuss the concerns of administration and the Board regarding the proposed charter. Ms. Robinson was seeking input on proposal areas that were recommended for improvement. She did not express thoughts of resubmitting the proposal to the Board.

**Leadership Santa Cruz Education Day**
Leadership Santa Cruz conducted their annual Education Day on February 5th. Following my briefing on public schools’ current challenges and opportunities, participants visited Harbor High School to learn of our Regional Occupational Program classes on campus, Pacific Collegiate Charter School, Watsonville Charter School of the Arts and Delta Charter High School on the Cabrillo campus. The afternoon session consisted of a panel discussion featuring the district superintendents from Mountain Elementary School District, Pajaro Valley Unified School District and Santa Cruz City Schools District. UCSC Chancellor Blumenthal and Brian King, President of Cabrillo College discussed the roles of their institutions with the group. A tour of the UCSC Arboretum closed the session.

**Inside Education February Session**
Inside Education introduced participants yesterday to education in the County’s middle schools. Following the introductory overview of the challenges and opportunities in educating middle school aged students, participants visited Aptos Junior High School and New Brighton Middle School for first-hand observation and comments by the principals of both schools.

**Superintendents’ Council**
There were two items on last week’s Council agenda that I want to bring to the Board’s attention. I reported in January that the district superintendents and I had met with representatives of local law enforcement and judicial officials and representatives to address the issue of student safety on campus and on the street’s of our communities. Last week, the superintendents agreed to form a North County BASTA (Broad-based Apprehension, Suppression, Treatment Alternatives) modeled on the same program currently operated in...
south County communities. The second item was a presentation made by a regional representative of the U.S. Census Bureau regarding the schools’ role in promoting participation in the upcoming decennial census and the importance of the census results effect upon funding allocations and representation.

**New Teacher Symposium**
Cynthia Balthaser, Program Director, Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley New Teacher Project, and I presented at the New Teacher Center’s 12th National Symposium this month. Our presentation, titled Promoting Equity: Quality Mentoring in Hard-to-Staff Schools, focused on the fact that students in hard-to-staff schools are in most need of highly qualified teachers and how the successful collaborative partnership between the COE and the Santa Cruz/Silicon Valley New Teacher Project tackled the issue of mentoring special education and alternative education teachers.

**Mock Trial Competition**
Santa Cruz High Schools, long a powerhouse in the event, emerged victorious from last weekend’s Mock Trial competition. Mock Trial is an outstanding event in terms of student performance and a valuable civic lesson. The number of participating high school teams has grown in the past few years to now include south County schools which is very rewarding to the students involved, the schools, district and the COE. This was the first year Watsonville High entered a team and a number of team members won individual awards.

**CCSESA Quarterly Meeting**
In addition to various committee reports, a presentation was made by the executive director of California Forward regarding that organization’s recommendations for improving the budget and state and local financing mechanisms in California. The director of the District/County Intervention Collaborative presented a plan for the dissemination of District Academic Support and Assistance (DAIT) findings.

**ACSA Symposium**
The ACSA Symposium conducted immediately following the CCSESA quarterly meeting, centered on the necessity that education administrators focus on leadership to take the current environment from crisis to opportunity by examining the challenges, exploration of solutions and developing new prospects.

**Watsonville Adult Education Advisory Committee**
I met with Brian King, President, Cabrillo College, and Nancy Bilicich, Director, PVUSD Adult Education Programs to discuss how our collaborative efforts might strategize a plan to successfully maintain adult education services in the districts. Adult Education programs have been severely affected as a result of the state budget. I believe that County Office’s ROP and Alternative Education Program services can be utilized to support districts in educating adults.
Workforce Investment Board Retreat
The focus of the WIB retreat was to profile the people that make up the current and future workforce, project growth industries, identify factors that impact economic vitality and develop policies that will support economic growth and workforce development. Key to education was promoting growth in business that provide jobs at all education levels, promote career ladder education and training programs, and improve the skills and education of job seekers.

Asilomar Conference
I was privileged to introduce Michael Fullan, Special Advisor to the Premier and Minister of Education in Ontario, Canada, and author of several leadership and change books and articles, to the attendees at the annual Asilomar Conference. The conference is a statewide professional development opportunity for Curriculum and Instruction administrators. Fullan’s book, Motion Leadership, the Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy was recent required reading for COE managers followed by discussion at our February monthly managers’ meeting.

Legislative Advocacy
I spoke with representatives of the California Legislative Education Project / Capitol Impact, a group composed of legislative staffers in both parties and houses who spend much of their time on education issues. The group of staffers are interested in visiting the COE and one school district to find out what the state should or shouldn’t be doing to assist educators in doing our jobs best. We have scheduled a visit for September 27.

United Way Strategic Planning Retreat
The United Way executive board spent a day addressing strategies to advance the common good in Santa Cruz County by creating opportunities for a good life for all. Focus was on preparing youth for success in school and life, family financial stability and good health. The goal is to prevent problems and to focus on long-term goals for community change.

Gail Rich Awards
It was a rewarding experience to have been a participant in the selection of the first Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate. This appointment will do much to advance the literary arts in the schools of Santa Cruz County and I look forward to working with both the Cultural Council and Poet Laureate Gary Young as we continue to integrate the arts into the curriculum. Gary is a lecturer in the UCSC Literature Department.

Survivor Healing Center
I met with representatives of the Survivor Healing Center regarding issues of teen victims of abuse and how the schools, school counselors and the Center might collaborate to address the problem.
Addressing Student Asthma Issues
I met with Dr. Schmirer of the Palo Alto Medical Foundation to discuss possible collaboration between the medical community and schools to shed light on adolescent asthma victims. Focus is on developing a unified message for students and school staffs in developing trainings to prevent the current regularity of incidents of student sufferers from requiring admittance to emergency rooms.

Community TV Black History Month Presentation
Last weekend I appeared on a Community TV segment introducing Black History Month as it applies to Santa Cruz County. Throughout the month, a series of interviews and documentaries addressing the African-American culture in Santa Cruz County and the historical experiences of families who had origins elsewhere but have settled in Santa Cruz.

Together for Kindergarten Forum
I remind the Board trustees who may wish to attend of the February 24th Together for Kindergarten Forum, an event designed to bring early educators, kindergarten and other teachers and administrators to jointly develop activities to support kindergarten readiness. Featured speakers are former State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, and Lynne Mobilio of Applied Survey Research.

Start the Day for Students / Take Action Event
On March 4, 2010, school administrators throughout the state will unite by organizing local events in school communities to call attention to the devastating cuts to public schools.

The goal of the event is to mobilize communities against further cuts to schools and to raise media awareness about the substantial cuts that schools and students have suffered.

In Santa Cruz County, we have planned our event for the preceding day, Wednesday, March 3. School district superintendents, board trustees, teacher union leaders and local community officials will lead a public protest on behalf of students against the governor’s budget proposal. The event will be conducted at 3:00 p.m., on the steps of the County Government building.

Monthly Meetings
Children’s Network Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance
Migrant Head Start