Re: Superintendent’s Monthly Report  
February 21, 2008

**State Budget**
The information and actions coming from the Legislature and the Governor the past few weeks has caused great concern to educators, students and parents. As of last Friday, it appears there will be a $500 million loss to education in this school year. That cut will affect districts in that the money had already been included in the 2007-2008 budgets. The Governor’s proposed budget for 2008-2009 would slash over $4 billion for education.

The districts superintendents, Barney Finlay and the Superintendent have conducted meetings to strategize on how we can locally make a case to the Governor and legislators to prevent this erosion to education funding. All eleven superintendents will conduct a press conference on March 10, on the steps of Santa Cruz High School to get our message to the public.

The district administrators have individually issued statements and Mrs. Finlay and Watkins were interviewed by the Sentinel last Friday to give our perspective.

Mr. Finlay has been in constant communication with the districts and will conduct a workshop on Monday the 25th at 6:00 here at the COE Tech Center, to review with district and COE board trustees the responsibilities of districts, the COE and the state under AB 1200.

**Alternative Education Graduation**
On January 22, the Alternative Education Program graduated thirty students in a ceremony at the COE. Congratulations to the students and their families. Thank you to the teachers, support staff, and board trustees who contributed to their success and in celebration of their graduation.

**Mock Trial**
The Mock Trial competition has taken place over the past two weeks with the finals last Monday, February 18, at the County Courthouse. Superintendent Watkins presented awards to Santa Cruz City High first place and Soquel High second following a very close finals competition. Mock Trial is an exemplary program providing students with a hands-on
experience in civics and law. Mock Trial, like other competitions sponsored by the COE in partnership with business and civic organizations, are to be fostered, valued and made known to the community.

Science Fair
The Science Fair is approaching and volunteers are still needed to assist in registration, security, hospitality and student support. To date, there are 471 entrants which represents a significant increase over the 325 participants last year.

ROP Funding for Green Careers
The Helen and Will Webster Foundation has provided $32,000.00 in funding to the Regional Occupational Program to establish a Green Careers pathway.

Outdoor Science Education School
The Superintendent received a letter of appreciation from the parent of a sixth grader at Rio Del Mar Elementary who spent a week at the Outdoor Science School. Her son, a sophomore at Aptos High School, spent a week as a cabin leader at the School. The letter praises the learning opportunity provided to her children at the School.

The Outdoor Science Education School received the California Outdoor School Administrators Program Observation Summary, an equivalent of a WASC report. The report commends the program and Director Heather MacDougall in all aspects including, staffing, communication, curriculum, enthusiasm, dedication and positive change.

Child Development Resource Center
CDRC received a Categorical Programs Monitoring Report from the California Department of Education. Program monitoring is completed and reported every four years. CDRC received high commendation particularly in providing resources to the community, publication outreach, team cohesiveness, outstanding observation of referrals, and meeting the needs of clientele.

Project Impact (projected teacher shortage)
The COE is exploring the feasibility of operating our own teacher credentialing program for interns under the auspices of the San Joaquin County Office of Education. San Joaquin COE has operated a very successful intern program for nearly ten years and they are willing to allow us to partner with them to serve the needs of prospective Santa Cruz County teachers. Nancy Serigstad and Traci Hart have met with San Joaquin COE staff.

Monterey Bay Education Consortium
Associate Superintendent Alice Talnack attended the MBEC meeting at which time she presented the COE proposal to form an Education Leadership Series proposal and a Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force.

Board Site Visits
Attached you will find your copy of scheduled Board site visits which will take place the morning of March 20th, prior to the regular monthly Board meeting. Alice will provide details.

**Workforce Investment Board Retreat**
Virginia Hamilton, Executive Director, California Workforce Association, facilitated discussion on how to increase use and effectiveness of Career Centers to meet the needs for employers and job seekers. The discussion included raising the level of the workforce employability by increasing strategic communication and collaboration among educator trainers and employers, and using WIB as a catalyst for economic development in emerging tech businesses. Ms. Hamilton will present to COE managers at our March monthly meeting.

**Tour of County Emergency Services Facility**
Superintendent Watkins was invited to tour the County Emergency Services Center located at DeLaveaga and visited a few days following the early January storms. The state-of-the-art facility serves schools throughout the county and is a centerpiece of operations in the Emergency Response Crisis Management plan being coordinated by Jo Ann Allen of the COE with all public agencies and schools in the county.

**Pajaro Valley Community Awards Auction**
The Superintendent attended the dinner and auction event whereat Pat Johns, former ROP assistant director, was honored as the Pajaro Valley Woman of the Year for her dedication to the Agriculture History Project.

**Countywide Boards Event**
John Mockler’s presentation to all boards trustees was well received as it presented the language to expose the positives about public education which are too often disguised by test data and other statistics. John’s slide presentation has been provided to all districts.

**CCSESA Quarterly Meeting**
John Mockler who presented at our countywide boards workshop presented a report on the state budget. The Education Coalition, of which CCSESA is a partner, has prepared a media campaign focused on the state budget. The Director of Teacher Development for San Joaquin COE presented information on the Project Impact program as reported above. State Superintendent Jack O’Connell reviewed his State of Education address plans to close the achievement gap. Discussion of professional learning communities centered on quality teacher efforts, and special education support in after-school programs.

**ACSA Superintendents Symposium**
Superintendent Watkins attended the four-day symposium whereat focus was on the state budget and closing the achievement gap. Other sessions were devoted to career technical education, leadership and both state and federal political issues.

**Go for Health Recognition Ceremony**
On February 6th, the Santa Cruz County United Way’s Go For Health! Collaborative joined with the COE for the First Annual School Wellness Policy Recognition Award. The
Wellness Recognition Award event brought together principals, teachers, and school staff from throughout the county who have excelled at implementing the goals of their school wellness plans. Award categories included, Best Garden, Best Nutrition Promotion, Best Food Service, Healthiest Concessions, Most Creative Physical Education Program, Most Collaborative Wellness Committee, and Most Passionate Wellness Coordinator.

**State Superintendent Jack O’Connell Visit**
Superintendent Watkins toured Bay View Elementary School with Jack O’Connell. Bay View is a school which is now in “Safe Harbor”. They are an exemplary example of a school moving away from Program Improvement status.

**Senator Tom Torlakson School Tour**
Senator Torlakson toured Harbor High ROP programs earlier this month, accompanied by student tour guides, the school principal, Bryan Wall, Assistant Director, ROP and the Superintendent.

**Sen. Joe Simitian Education Forum**
Superintendent Watkins attended Senator Simitian’s monthly education forum at his Santa Cruz office which focused on the State budget crisis.

**Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Luncheon**
The Superintendent attended the CASA luncheon where former foster youth who have had their lives changed with the assistance of a CASA advocate spoke of the plight of foster youth.

**Martin Luther King Event at the Civic Auditorium**
Mr. Watkins spoke to students and families on Martin Luther King Day.

**Regularly Scheduled Monthly Meetings**
New Teacher Project Steering Committee
CASA
Migrant Head Start Executive Committee
Steinbeck Board Meeting
Special Education Council
Superintendents Council
PVPSA