The following matters and events have occurred since the report of September 16, 2010:

**2010-2011 First Interim Report**
The County Office of Education received a letter giving the office a positive certification for its multi-year commitments. A copy is provided.

**Annual Science Fair**
The Annual Science Fair held last weekend was once again an outstanding success. 429 students submitted 350 projects with 40 projects going to the State Science Fair and two going to the International Science Fair. Both of these competitions will take place in Los Angeles this year. We are working on having the students for the two projects that are going to Internationals to present at the next Board meeting. Thanks to Adam Wade and Ellen Hickey for all their hard work along with other members of the Educational Services team.

**Annual Spelling Bee**
Approximately 125 students participated in the annual Spelling Bee. In the elementary division the winners were:

- Vrendan Aseremo, Mar Vista Elementary First Place
- Nora Griffith, Mission Hill Middle School Second Place
- Sierra Myer, Monte Vista Christian Third Place

Junior Division:
- Andrew Miller, Ocean Grove Charter First Place
- Kai Tamken, Georgiana Bruce Kirby Second Place
- Jack Scott, Georgiana Bruce Kirby Third Place

Thanks to Debi Puente, her staff, and all the volunteers that made this event possible.

**First 5 Commission**
County Supervisor Mark Stone recommended my reappointment to the First 5 Commission. The appointment was approved on March 15th and I will be serving for another year.

**Together for Kindergarten**
The second annual Together for Kindergarten forum was held on February 28th featuring Senator Joe Simitian as the keynote speaker. He spoke on the legislation he sponsored, SB1381 Kindergarten Readiness Act changing the deadline for birthdays for entering Kindergarteners. About 300 early childhood educators, elementary school leaders and teachers attended this successful event.

**Greg Caput, Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors**
Greg Caput, supervisor from the Watsonville area, visited our office to acquire a general understanding of the services offered by our office. We supplied him with documentation from our departments, as well as, a tour of the office.
**WASC Review**
I am serving as the lead for a WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) review for Foothill High School, an alternative high school in the Eastside Unified High School District of San Jose. I have already made the preliminary visit to the school to meet with the principal and teachers with the review itself scheduled for March 27-30th.

**CTE Summit (Career Technical Education)**
I attended the annual Career Technical Education Summit, a meeting of business and education leaders to celebrate the collaboration that serves the high school students of our county and assists them in exploring their career and education options before they graduate high school.

**Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative**
A celebration was held on February 17th to commemorate the success of the Santa Cruz initiative as a model site for the largest and most successful juvenile justice reform effort in this country’s history. It is a county-wide collaborative effort with over 100 jurisdictions nationally following the lead of our county.

**Possibility Corps**
This partnership with UCSC takes advantage of a program of mentorship and community service for college students. The UCSC students are volunteering in our alternative education classrooms.

**Senator Sam Blakeslee – Gang & Youth Violence Meeting**
Along with Superintendents Dorma Baker and Sharon Smith, I attended a meeting convened by Senator Sam Blakeslee to discuss youth and gang violence. Monterey County law enforcement representatives, their District Attorney Dean Flippo, Salinas Mayor Dennis Donohue, Watsonville Police Chief Manny Solano, Monterey County Superintendent of Schools Nancy Kotowski and other invited guests discussed ways to keep our students and communities safe. There was uniform agreement from law enforcement and the education community regarding concerns for funding cuts that may affect successful programs that fight youth and gang violence. Senator Blakeslee was asked to keep these programs in mind as the legislature continues the budget review process.

**Special Education Art Show and Reception**
March 23rd, the Special Education Art Show sponsored by Balance 4 Kids was once again a success with students, parents, and staff attending the annual art show and reception in the Tech Center. The room was bright with artwork all around. Attendees voted for their favorites and students received recognition for their works of art.

**Student Program Staff Meetings**
Over the past month, I attended staff meetings for Regional Occupational Programs, Special Education and Alternative Education to share information on the future of the County Office of Education, to listen to staff concerns, and answer questions.

**Workforce Investment Board Meeting**
I attended the quarterly Workforce Investment Board meeting where the Strategic Plan was discussed and approved along with reports on the Summer Youth Employment Program, rapid response activities, and economic development strategy. They also presented former County Supervisor and WIB Board member Tony Campos a letter of appreciation.
**Early Retirement Program**
The County Office of Education offered an early retirement option to employees 55 years or older and eligible under STR or PERS for retirement. We had 5 employees take advantage of the program. The program will cost the office around $63,000 but cost savings in the next year should be even more. (1 teacher, 1 administrator, 3 classified) We are pleased to announce that no permanent classified or certificated employees received notification of layoff this year.

**MBEC, Monterey Bay Educational Consortium**
The Monterey Bay Educational Consortium, consisting of representatives of Cabrillo College, UCSC, CSUMB, and school districts including Pajaro Valley Unified and Santa Cruz City Schools, met on February 25th. UCSC Chancellor George Blumenthal, Santa Cruz City Schools Superintendent Gary Bloom, Cabrillo President Brian King and I authored a letter to the members of our state legislature to encourage allowing the voters to determine whether or not to postpone tax cuts as a way to address the state’s budget woes. A copy of the letter is provided.

**Inside Education**
This month’s Inside Education meeting covered Alternative Education. The morning began with an overview of the County Office’s many programs. The cohort then visited Costanoa Continuation School, Santa Cruz City Schools and Renaissance High School, Pajaro Valley Unified. They were served a lunch made by our ROP Culinary Arts Class students while visiting Costanoa Continuation School.

**Diane Ravitch, Research Professor, New York University**
Professor Diane Ravitch addressed educators at California State University Monterey Bay. Her message, “Will Education Reform Improve our Schools?” focused on Race to the Top and the role of testing and how teaching to the test are affecting the education of our students.

**CISC Leadership Symposium**
I was honored to introduce newly elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson for his keynote address at the annual CISC Leadership Symposium held at Asilomar. Dr. Thelma Melendez, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education of the U. S. Department of Education was the other keynote speaker at the annual event. Associate Superintendent Theresa Rouse, as chair of the planning committee, provided outstanding leadership for this year’s event.

**Santa Cruz County Symphony Youth Concert Series**
I attended the Youth Concert at the Civic Auditorium presented by the Santa Cruz County Symphony on February 28th. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education is supporting the efforts to reach our youth with this wonderful opportunity. The Symphony also presented a youth concert at Henry J. Mello Center for the Performing Arts in Watsonville. After the concert children are invited to “Meet the Instruments” where they approach the stage and see the instruments up close and are able to ask questions of the players.

**Read Across America**
Each year on March 2nd, the birthday of Dr. Seuss, many schools and libraries hold reading events where community leaders and others take the time to celebrate reading by reading to youngsters in elementary schools and libraries. This year I was delighted to be able to read to 1st and 2nd graders at San Lorenzo Valley Elementary School.
JCCASAC Juvenile Court, Community & Alternative School Administrators of California – Sandy Mast & Gary Vincent

I met with Sandy Mast, Director, Alternative Education and Secretary for JCCASAC along with Gary Vincent, Vice Chair, JCCASAC to discuss how I might assist them by acting as a liaison between JCCASAC and CCSESA (California County Superintendents Educational Services Agency) in regards to policy issues.

SPIN Quiz Night

I attended the annual fundraiser for the Special Parents Information Network. This group serves as a resource to help families and special needs students to achieve their full potential through information, and support. It is an evening of trivia, food and silent auction.

KION 46 & Fox 35

Talks are continuing with KION 46 and Fox 35 in an effort to build positive community awareness of programs enriching the students’ experiences in Santa Cruz County through a comprehensive media campaign.

Region IV and Region V Torlakson Meeting

Superintendents from the San Francisco Bay Area and our local region joined State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson for a regional forum to discuss his vision for education and for feedback on the needs of local school districts.

Brain Rules for Educators

We hosted, at no cost to attendees, a presentation by John Medina, author of Brain Rules and developmental molecular biologist, and director of the Brain Center for Applied Learning Research, Seattle Pacific University. I was honored to introduce Mr. Medina to present his powerful ideas that can transform our schools and encourage life-long learning.

OJJDP (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategies & Programs

A partnership has been formed between the County of Santa Cruz, the Sheriff’s Office and our office to apply for a grant that will address the youth and gang violence in the county. I met with Sheriff Phil Wowak and District Attorney Bob Lee to discuss the

Redistricting

Cindy O’Conner represented us at a meeting in Sacramento

Board Retreat

I would like to seek guidance from the Board on rescheduling our Board Retreat.

Monthly and Regularly Scheduled Periodic Meetings

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