The following matters and events have occurred since the report of February 19, 2009:

**County Office of Education 2008-2009 First Interim Report**
I received a letter from State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O’Connell, concurring with the assessment that, based on then current projections at the time of submission, the COE will be able to meet its financial obligation for the current subsequent two fiscal years and a positive certification was appropriate. The consequences of the state budget were not known at the time the First Interim Report was prepared and the State will take that into consideration when reviewing the Second Interim Report which the Board will receive later in this meeting.

**Earth Day**
I have met with the local Earth Day organizers to promote a Class Project Challenge into schools countywide. The project provides the opportunity for a class working together as a team to identify an environmental problem affecting the Santa Cruz County community. Students will develop and implement solutions and create a display to communicate their goals and results of their project. Projects will be presented at the 2nd annual Earth Day Santa Cruz Celebration on Saturday, April 18 at San Lorenzo Park.

**Special Education Community Advisory Committee Arts Reception**
The third annual Special Education Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Balance4Kids Art Show and reception which celebrates the artistic talents of students with special needs in Santa Cruz County drew an appreciative crowd of approximately one hundred parents, students, teachers and others the evening of February 24. Prior to the reception in the Tech Center, the art was exhibited on the walls of the County Office of Education facility throughout February. Students had been free to interpret the theme, *Under the Sun*, as they liked. March is Arts in Education month.

**St. Francis School, Watsonville, WASC Accreditation**
I have been invited to participate as a team member on the Western Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation team three year review of St. Francis School. Although a private school, I believe it is important that we have an understanding of all the practices of all schools in the County. The team will visit the school on April 30.
March 19, 2009

**Inside Education, February Session**
Prior to visiting New Brighton and Branciforte Middle Schools for hands-on experiences, Inside Education participants were made familiar with the challenges and opportunities that students, teachers and administrators encounter in the middle school environment. Andy Shapiro, New Brighton Middle School teacher and Sentinel education column writer, spoke on the topic: *Middle School Problems and Promise*. Participants were hosted by Rob Martin, Principal, New Brighton Middle School, and Kris Munro, Principal, Branciforte Middle School.

**Superintendents’ Retreat**
District superintendents and I met for a half-day retreat on Friday, February 27. The focus was on dealing with the effects of the State budget on district operations, planning for the future in a worsening economy, and solving problems through enhanced district, County Office of Education, and community collaborations. State Assemblyman Bill Monning spent some time with us providing us his insight into the situation in Sacramento.

**San Lorenzo Valley Reading Celebration**
The San Lorenzo Valley School District invited me to participate as a reader at their annual Read-a-Thon at SLV Elementary School.

**Autism Task Force**
I attended the most recent Autism Task Force meeting where discussion focused on continuing services to students beyond the zero-to-five age group, as that group of students age.

**On Cue Magazine Article**

**PCS Diversity Meeting**
Trustee Dilles and I attended the public forum addressing school enrollment diversity issues at Pacific Collegiate School.

**Pajaro Valley Education Coalition**
I met with Lupe Rivas of the Pajaro Valley Education Coalition to address concerns about the drop-out rate in Watsonville area schools and how the County Office of Education and PVEC can work together to ensure students complete their education careers.

**2010 U.S. Census**
Mike James, Deputy Superintendent, attended an initial planning meeting with local government representatives and representatives of the U.S. Census Bureau. The meeting focused on strategies to produce a locally accurate 2010 census ensuring representation of all ethnic and economic groups particularly in the Pajaro Valley.
March 19, 2009

**Second Harvest Annual Awards Banquet**
I was privileged to present the awards for outstanding schools participating in the 2008 food drive. The Ted Jefferson awards, so named in honor of Ted who was a former County Office of Education Alternative Education teacher, went to Empire Academy, Live Oak School District and the Pajaro Valley Unified School District for all around district participation.

**Children of War Symposiums**
Children of War Symposium is a service offered by the American Red Cross to educate the public on the psychological and physical effects of war on children by five renowned international speakers. These speakers, who have firsthand knowledge of the plight of children, shared their experiences during the time they lived and worked in war zones around the world during presentations at Pajaro Valley and Santa Cruz City High Schools on March 6. The presentations were co-sponsored by the County Office of Education and the American Red Cross. Feedback from the Red Cross is that the distinguished panelists reported the questions and comments from students were extremely deep.

**Interview with Sentinel**
On Tuesday of last week, a representative of the State Chapter of the California Teachers Association, the president of a local Parent and Teachers Association, and I, representing the State Education Coalition, met with the Editorial Board of the Sentinel to discuss the state of education and, in particular, in Santa Cruz County. An editorial appeared in the Wednesday edition of the Sentinel.

**Whole Foods Market Leadership Meeting**
I attended a meeting sponsored by the Whole Foods Market leadership group as they prepare to open their new store in Santa Cruz. The meeting provided an opportunity to learn about Whole Foods’ plan for community involvement, including public schools. Next Generation awards, which acknowledge schools who made the largest gains in participation, went to Brook Knoll Elementary and Watsonville High School. The County Office of Education was awarded a Gold Can award for contributing 10,362 lbs. of food.

**Santa Cruz County Poet Laureate**
The Cultural Council of Santa Cruz County as the designated local arts agency in the County invited the County Office of Education to partner with Poetry Santa Cruz, the County Public Libraries, Santa Cruz County Arts Commission, Santa Cruz high school districts, Cabrillo College and the County Office of Education to establish an honorary post of County Poet Laureate. Over the course of a two-year term, the Poet Laureate will provide public readings, educates civic and state leaders about the value of poetry and creative expression, and undertake a significant cultural project. One of the goals of the project must be to bring the poetic arts to students who might otherwise have little opportunity to be exposed to poetry.
Arts Collaborative Meeting
On Monday of this week, the Cultural Council convened a meeting of forty representatives of local arts organizations and educators from throughout the county to begin a conversation about the possibilities of forming an arts learning alliance in Santa Cruz County. A representative from Alameda County’s *Arts is Education*, a nationally recognized model of a successful arts alliance, presented on why Alameda County formed an alliance, their process and what they are now doing. The group discussed the merits of forming an alliance in Santa Cruz County.

Regions 4 and 5 Meeting
Last Friday I attended a meeting of County Superintendents Regions 4 and 5. The agenda focused on budgetary issues, education advocacy and how county offices in the regions can collaborate to regionally provide services to students.

Peace in Schools Meeting
I attended the Youth Empowerment and Safe Community Workshop sponsored by the Santa Cruz City School District Alternative Family Education unit this past Saturday. Many community members, city council members and members of the Santa Cruz Police Department. The event, prompted by the stabbing of a teen on the campus playground, involved the participation of students who were given different topics to discuss and brainstorm ideas that will contribute to stopping violence.

Student Safety Meeting
I met with Alan Burt, County Sheriff’s Office to discuss collaboration between the Sheriff’s Office and schools to promote safety around county beaches particularly during the graduations season. Presentations will be made at local high schools.

Career Technology Education
Rock Pfotenauer and Laura Grinder, Career Education, Cabrillo College, Bryan Wall, rOP director, and I are in the process of planning the First annual Career Technology Education Summit scheduled for the afternoon of April 1st. The Summit will bring together superintendents, college administrators, industry and business partners, Workforce Investment Board representatives and Educators in Industry members. The focus will be to share where CTE programs and systems currently are, responses to the economic crisis, 2009-10 CTE programs and goals and professional development, and planning effective, efficient joint ventures.
Spelling Bee
The County Spelling Bee was conducted at UCSC on Sunday the 9th. Claire Grishaw-Jones, an 8th grader at Mission Hill Middle School, was first-place speller in the junior/middle school division. This was her second first-place finish. Andrew Miller, Ocean Grove Charter School finished in first in the elementary school division. These individuals progress to the State Spelling Competition at Sonoma State University on May 16. Thank you, as always to Trustee Levine for coordinating the event, and to Trustees Dilles and Mann for volunteering to perform the duties of judges.

Science Fair this Weekend/Awards Ceremony on March 30
The annual Santa Cruz County Science Fair, sponsored by Seagate Technology and the County Office of Education, is this coming Saturday. The event has attracted so many student participants that it has outgrown facilities available at UCSC and will be conducted at the Civic Auditorium. Student entries will be judged beginning at 9:00 a.m. throughout the day. Exhibits will open for public viewing from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

The awards ceremony will be held on Monday, March 30, 7:00 p.m., again at the Civic Auditorium.

DUI In Schools Assembly
The County Office of Education, Real DUI Court in Schools program will conduct a hearing and assembly at Costanoa High School, next Tuesday, March 24, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The assembly is facilitated by students and provides teens an opportunity to witness a real, adult DUI sentencing hearing followed by testimonial speakers, and interactive discussion with judges, defendants, lawyers and the testimonial speaker.

Senator Simitian Presentation
Trustees are reminded that State Senator Joe Simitian will present to a countywide audience next Thursday, March 26, 6:00 p.m., here at the County Office of Education. The Senator will address the future of California schools in confronting both the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings Attended
First 5 Child Abuse Prevention Council
Child Welfare Steering Committee Youth Resource Bank
United Way Board Children’s Network
Child Care Planning Council Superintendents’ Council
Pajaro Valley Prevention Services