Subject: Superintendent’s Monthly Report to the Board  
April 15, 2010

The following matters and events have occurred since the report of March 18, 2009:

**Alternative Education Green Careers Program**
Natural Bridges High School and Green Careers Center presented its first Green Canteen awards to 16 high-school students who participated in a Save Our Shores curriculum on reducing plastic pollution and marine debris. The first graduating class was honored by representatives from Save Our Shores and the COE Alternative Education Program.

**Science Fair Awards**
Two hundred and twelve students received monetary awards for their entries into the County Science Fair at the awards ceremony on March 22nd. I want to offer our gratitude once again to Seagate Technology which continues to financially sponsor the Science Fair and individual students through monetary awards. Other local and federal funders are Plantronics, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the Armed Services, the Association of Women Geoscientists and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In addition to the financial support, those who volunteer as judges and assist in other ways to produce a successful fair are to be acknowledged. And I want to once again congratulate Science Fair Project Coordinator Nancy Serigstad. Nancy has expanded student participation 300% over the past five years with particular outreach to south county students. Sixty-eight Santa Cruz County students will next participate in the California State Science Fair in Los Angeles and seven finalists will be fully-funded to attend the International Science and Engineering Fair.

**ROP Fashion Show**
The always successful and highly anticipated ROP/Watsonville High Retail Merchandising Class spring fashion show was conducted late March.

**ROP Media Arts Exhibit**
The ROP Harbor High Media Arts Class sponsored an exhibit of student media arts work at Harbor High. Exhibits included computer graphic designs, video productions, photography and business and marketing projects. Students in the classes consistently produce a professional portfolio of work that is worthy of public recognition.

**Expanding Partnerships and Collaboration**
Budgetary considerations are putting pressure on districts to either cut or reduce programs. These cuts have created circumstances for the County Office of Education to partner with districts in unique ways by combining district and COE resources and expertise. Utilizing Tier III funding, the COE will collaborate with Santa Cruz City Schools and Pajaro Valley School Districts to temporarily sustain programs that may be cut due to district budget constraints. Potential partnerships include GED preparation and testing, English Language Learner support, parent/preschool cooperatives, and credit recovery summer school.

**State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) Services.**
The COE has also provided additional funding to maintain extra hours for the STRS counselors located in our office to provide service to teachers in the tri-county area through the end of the year. State funding for the local counselors was running out at a time when there is a high volume of retirees requiring retirement counseling.

**Aptos High School – California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) Testing**
I joined faculty, administrators and parents on the campus of Aptos High School yesterday morning in a rally staged for arriving students who were taking the CAHSEE test yesterday. The rally was twofold in encouraging students to participate and to provide support to their efforts.

**Masonic Lodge**
I have had more opportunities to continue our commitment to community, student and family outreach and to address education issues in general as well as to educate the public about what the County Office of Education and school districts provide to students. The first recent opportunity was an invitation to address the Santa Cruz and San Lorenzo Valley Masonic Club last week.

**Democratic Central Committee**
I was also invited to speak at the local Democratic Central Committee meeting to address education issues.

**Watsonville Rotary Speech**
Next Wednesday, April 21st, I am invited to present to the Watsonville Rotary Club. The focus will be on the Inside Education Program and outreach to businesses in the Pajaro Valley to participate in the program and to be involved in local education issues.

**California County Superintendents Educational Support Association (CCSESA)**
County superintendents met Monday and Tuesday of this week for the quarterly CCSESA meeting. Focus topics included legislative, curriculum and instruction committee reports, table groups discussions regarding regional county offices collaboratives, June elections and political activities.

**Fiscal Crisis Management and Assistance Team (FCMAT)**
At the request of the North Santa Cruz Special Education Council (SECA), a FCMAT team visited with district superintendents, SELPA representatives, parents, and COE
Special Education administrators and myself to review Special Education operations in the North Santa Cruz County Special Education Local Plan Area. The team provided a summary debrief following the review. Their summary observations and recommendations will be provided in a full report which is expected soon.

**Focus Agriculture**
Carol Polhamus, Career & Technical Education /Green Careers Project Director, has been accepted to participate in this year’s Focus Ag Class.

**San Andreas Regional Center (SARC) Special Education**
I have had meetings with the SARC regional director, the First 5 executive director and a medical community representative to strategize on ways for programs to more effectively ensure continuity and services to articulate preschool students from SARC programs into County Office of Education programs particularly addressing autism related programs.

**Leadership Santa Cruz**
Leadership Santa Cruz this month was themed Pajaro Valley Day. Lectures focused on Pajaro Valley civic issues and businesses. The group visited the Pajaro Water Treatment Plant.

**Santa Cruz Rail Line**
I attended a meeting called by County Supervisors Coonerty and Leopold regarding the proposed purchase by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission of the rail line from Davenport to Watsonville. The Transportation Commission has recommended the purchase of the line to promote freight service, tourist service and bike and hike access along the line. Funding for the project will come from State Transportation Improvement Program funds and local RTC funds. A final decision will be announced May 6th.

**Ukraine Visitors**
The County Office of Education will participate with other county offices and organizations when a delegation representing Alushta a Santa Cruz Sister City located in the Ukraine visits Santa Cruz next week. The delegation will visit several COE programs as well as Santa Cruz City Schools District programs.

**Region V 2010 Arts Forum**
Region V, of which Santa Cruz COE is a member county, will host a forum, *How Arts Education Can Support Student Achievement in Our Region*, on Friday, April 23, from 9:00 to 1:00 p.m. at the Museum of Art & History, McPherson Center, Santa Cruz. A flyer is placed at the Board’s stations.

**Earth Day Santa Cruz**
I will participate as a judge of student submissions to the Earth Day Class Project Challenge during Earth Day Santa Cruz events this coming Saturday, April 17. For those who would like to attend, the event opens at 11:00 a.m. at San Lorenzo Park adjacent to
the Santa Cruz County building. Winning student class projects will be exhibited at the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History during the month of May.

**TICAL**
I will be delivering the welcome address to attendees at the spring TICAL conference in Santa Clara, Friday, April 16. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education is the lead local education agency for the California Department of Education on the TICAL project. Technology plays an ever increasing role in leading schools and districts and this conference will assist computer-using educators to move forward in preparing students for their future.

**Scheduled Meetings Attended**

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