The following matters and events have occurred since the report of April 15, 2010:

**Race to the Top**
Districts and county offices of education were notified only this past Tuesday afternoon that the State was soliciting participation in the State’s application for second-round Race to the Top funding. Considering the stringent guidelines and timetables established by the U.S. Department of Education for local education agencies’ boards, administrators and teachers unions to review and consider the memorandum of understanding necessary to join the state’s application, we determined to not participate. The information was received Tuesday and the deadline to submit a signed MOU was Wednesday.

**Inside Education**
The 2009-2010 Inside Education Series conducted the last session of the year yesterday. Following an overview of Alternative Education programs provided by Sandy Mast, Senior Director of County Office of Education Alternative Education, site visits were made to Renaissance High School and Branciforte Small Schools Campus. The cohort returned to the COE to debrief the year’s activities. I want to thank all COE staff who contributed to making the series a success and, in particular, to Cheryl Morris who creatively and indefatigably coordinated every detail.

**Watsonville Rotary Club**
I appreciate the opportunity given to me to represent the County Office of Education and school districts throughout the county by making presentations to organizations like the Watsonville Rotary. As this Board is very aware, community outreach is a priority and important aspect of education. The Watsonville Rotary appearance provided the opportunity to utilize the newly produced Inside Education video which features community participants’ visits to COE and districts’ programs.

**Scotts Valley Rotary Club Student Recognition Awards**
My thanks to the Scotts Valley Rotarians for inviting me to attend that organization’s Student Recognition Awards ceremony on May 3rd. Public acknowledgement of students’ outstanding achievement such as this is a vital element of community participation. The added element of scholarship awards, as is the case with the Scotts Valley Rotary, becomes ever more important to recipients as the costs associated with obtaining a higher education become increasingly demanding on family finances.
**Santa Cruz County School Boards Association**

I also presented to the School Boards Association last week focusing on the role and many of the services and programs provided by the County Office of Education directly to or in collaboration with the school districts. I feel it is extremely important that district board trustees are knowledgeable about our role and the many programs we offer that assist their districts in ensuring that all students have equal access to educational opportunities.

**Community TV – NCLB**

I participated as a panelist on a segment of Community TV’s *What’s Happening in Education* series which focused on the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, Race to the Top and other education issues. Joining with me as panelists were Gary Bloom, Superintendent, Santa Cruz City Schools District, Ken Wagman, City Schools Board Trustee, and Sandra Nichols, Pajaro Valley Unified School District Board Trustee.

**Broad-based Apprehension, Suppression, Treatment, and Alternatives (BASTA)**

In my March report to the Board, I informed you that district superintendents and I invited law enforcement and legal officers throughout the county to meet to discuss the possibility of forming a north county BASTA to collaboratively address the increased violence in the county and take action to keep schools and the communities safe. Participants met again last week to continue the discussion. It was determined to combine with the existing south county BASTA to form one collaborative, a direction we will pursue.

**San Andreas Regional Center (SARC)**

Deputy Superintendent Mike James and I continue to meet with representatives of the special education San Andreas Regional Center to collaboratively ensure that preschool-aged special needs children receive services that appropriately transition them from programs provided by SARC to their public education in Special Education programs in Santa Cruz County.

**International Science Fair Awards**

Science Fair Coordinator Nancy Serigstad informed us last Friday from the International Science Fair in Rohnert Park that Santa Cruz County students have again placed Santa Cruz in the forefront of participants. Shamik Mascharak, Santa Cruz High School, earned 1st place in the Chemistry category and Alex Rankert, San Lorenzo Valley High School, captured 4th in Animal Sciences. Congratulations to both and to all students from the County who participated.

**Math Contest**

Awards will be presented May 20, to students who participated in the Math Contest earlier this month.

**Scrabble Tournament**

I’m pleased to acknowledge and thank Trustee Jack Dilles for bringing the first Scrabble Tournament to fruition and adding another academic competition in which students are participants.
Santa Cruz Reading Association’s Student Authors’ Fair
The annual Student Authors’ Fair was again held at the 41st Avenue Mall on a Saturday this past month. This highly visible community showcase of student literacy is a commendable event.

Reading Association Awards
I personally thank the Santa Cruz Reading Association for recognizing me with a Literacy Educator Award at their annual awards ceremony conducted here at the County Office of Education last month. The COE’s collaboration with and sponsorship of the Reading Association has been and continues to be a productive and rewarding partnership.

Poetry Contest
Poetry Santa Cruz conducted their 17th Annual High School Poetry Reading and Awards Ceremony in the Tech Center Tuesday evening. High school students’ art was on display in the Tech Center for viewing prior to the reading. This year, 462 poems were submitted from which first, second, third prize winners and four honorable mention poems were selected. An Anthology containing 49 poems selected by the judges has been compiled and is available for purchase from Poetry Santa Cruz. Our co-sponsorship of the event demonstrates our active participation in promoting the arts in education.

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association
I attended the recent CCSESA Board of Directors Meeting in Sacramento. We discussed several state budgetary issues and proposed measures that both directly and indirectly negatively affect education.

Technology Information Center for Administrative Leadership (TICAL) Conference
It was a rewarding experience to welcome this year’s cadre of administrators attending the Regional TICAL CUE (Computer Using Administrators) Conference as they addressed technology use in schools. I had the opportunity to meet and talk with the keynote speaker, Jong Zhao, author of highly successful books on the subject.

Region V Arts Forum
The Region V Counties, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Monterey, and San Benito, hosted the forum at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History. Olga de Santa Anna, Mintie White Principal, Ron Jessee, San Diego COE, Francisca Sanchez, San Francisco USD were presenters in a format that facilitated conversation. Dr. Victoria Stevens, a nationally known researcher, facilitated discussion focused on how arts education can support overall student achievement.

Valencia Elementary School Playground Dedication
I attended the dedication of a new playground for special needs students at Valencia School. The COE had participated in the two-year fundraising campaign lead by the Home and School Club, that raised $200,000 to construct the handicapped-accessible playground that provides for children of all abilities.
Addressing Chronic Absence
I met with representatives of Applied Survey Research to discuss chronic absence and how it effects student success or failure.

Santa Cruz Education Foundation Eddy Awards Ceremony
I attended the 2010 Eddy Awards event sponsored by the Foundation. The organization annually recognizes outstanding commitment by educators and staff as well as excellence in programs and community supporters in Santa Cruz City Schools District schools.

Association of California Schools Administrators (ACSA) Region 10 Awards Event
The Region 10 ACSA event honored outstanding administrators in a number of job categories as well as special awards to community partners and media for their promotion of education in the region.

Children’s Hospice and Palliative Care Coalition Fundraiser
I participated as a clothing model in the Coalition’s fundraising event which supports the Children’s Hospice at Dominican Hospital.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center
I appreciate the opportunity made available to me to serve on the leadership committee of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation to assist in support of the Santa Cruz Exploration Center and the recognition of Santa Cruz as the gateway to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

iSpot
I met with Lori Butterworth representing iSpot, a local non-profit with the mission of igniting the interest of high school teens to participate in community service opportunities that thoughtfully find solutions to problems facing our communities.

Earth Day
The annual Santa Cruz Earth Day fair is a growing and successful event in the County. I was honored to serve as a judge of the projects submitted to this year’s event.

Homeless Services Center Fundraiser
I supported the Homeless Services Center’s Annual Soupline Supper and Benefit Auction as a “celebrity server”. In its eleventh year, the event features a dinner of soups and baked goods donated by Santa Cruz’s restaurants and bakeries. The event is the Center’s primary public fundraising effort.

GLBT Students Awards Event
I joined with several local government officials and educators who attended the recent annual GLBT Students Awards. Awards were presented to students who are active in several community, school and safety categories. The ceremony was a very well organized and entertaining event.
**Cabrillo Annual Networking Meeting**
Cabrillo annually hosts a networking meeting attended by superintendents, administrators and principals from throughout the County to conduct roundtable discussions on resolving common issues through collaborative action.

**Ukrainian Sister City Visit**
The County of Santa Cruz Sister Cities Program hosted a delegation from Alushta, Ukraine the end of last month. The delegation spent two days learning about our education system. The first of the two days was spent in discussion and observation of County Office of Education programs, including Alternative Education, ROP, Special Education and, at their request, a visit to Pacific Collegiate Charter School. The second day of their observation of educational entities consisted of visits to Santa Cruz City Schools District sites. I want to acknowledge participating staff particularly Brunella Deeds for coordinating the education segment with the County host agency.

**Staff Meeting and Recognition Picnic**
During an all-staff meeting last week, a presentation was made of a study done on energy conservation in the COE building, including recommendations on how all staff can play a daily role in energy conservation that affects both the environment and cost-savings at the COE.

Cabinet members funded and hosted a picnic at Harvey West Park in recognition of Teachers’ and Classified Employee’s Annual Recognition Week. Thank you, Jack and Arnie for attending.

**Special Education Fun Day**
Although I was unable to attend, I want to acknowledge the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Posse for again sponsoring and hosting the Special Education Fun Day for student with special needs and their parents.

**Coming Events**
I want to point out a few of the events that are included on your Events of Interest Calendar that are quickly approaching and that I invite you to attend if possible.

**DUI in Schools**, a segment of which is currently scheduled for showing on Community TV, will conduct the final session for this school year, on May 27, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Scotts Valley High School.

**Alternative Education Graduations** will be conducted over a period of 3 days, June 7, 8 and 9 in the Tech Center at the COE.

**Special Ed Graduation:** Nine special needs students will graduate June 10, 10:00 a.m., at the Tech Center.
### Monthly and Regularly Scheduled Periodic Meetings

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