Subject: Superintendent’s Monthly Report to the Board
May 21, 2009

The following matters and events have occurred since the report of April 16, 2009:

**CCSESA and California Alliance for Arts Education**
I had the fortunate experience to be a panelist at the CCSESA and California Alliance for Arts Education statewide conference in April. The conference theme was Arts to the Core – building a Future for Arts Education in California. This statewide collaboration is forefront in promoting arts education as core curriculum. (reference attached letter).

**CCSESA Regions IV and V Arts Education Initiative**
This morning I was one of the Bay area county superintendents who engaged in a roundtable discussion of the importance of arts integration into core education. The regional collaborative, co-sponsored by CCSESA and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, first met last September to create a new and unified approach to current education policy that uses the arts as a means to engage students with other content areas. Today we addressed how to move forward to develop the public and political will to move from an era of strict accountability to an era of responsibility.

**Cultural Council of Santa Cruz**
I met with Alberto Rafael, Director, Cultural Council of Santa Cruz, to continue discussions relative to collaborations and accessing resources to ensure the arts continue to be available to the students in Santa Cruz County schools despite the absence of state funding.

**River Arts Festival**
In further promotion of the overall arts initiatives, I participated as a judge for the Kinetic Art Cruz event held in conjunction with the River Arts Festival last Sunday. The Kinetic Art Cruz combined art and environmentally friendly, human powered, alternative transportation. I had the honor to present the winning school entry to Monarch School which won a $500 award for their entry.

**Chrysalis Open House**
I attended an open house at the Special Education Department’s Chrysalis Program which showcased the exemplary services provided to students with special needs.

**Inside Education**
The April session of Inside Education focused on early childhood education and childcare. The group met at the Cabrillo Children’s Center where Susan True, director of First five spoke about the importance of the 0-5 developmental years and what children
need to thrive and be ready for kindergarten. Jean Gallegger Heil, chair of Cabrillo’s Early Childhood Education Department, addressed early care and education workforce and Cabrillo’s Child Resource Center. Site visits were made to the Rolling Hills Middle School Head Start Program, Freedom Elementary Child Care Center, Preschool and Kindergarten Program, and the Pajaro Valley Unified School district’s Child Development and Early Literacy programs.

**Soquel High Students Discussion Group**
I was invited by a teacher at Soquel High to meet with a group of students who have formed an extracurricular activism club which they have named Making Our Voices Effective (MOVE). The students are motivated to take an active part in understanding the effects of the state budget upon their education.

**Victim Awareness Week**
The County Office of Education collaborated with the County District Attorney’s Office in sponsoring local observance of National Victims’ Awareness Week. In addition to bringing the matter to public attention by publishing op-ed pieces authored by myself and District Attorney Bob Lee, evening public awareness observances were conducted in both Watsonville and Santa Cruz.

**Meeting with School Nurses**
I attended the monthly meeting of school nurses from throughout the county. Discussion centered on keeping students healthy, student obesity issues, and coordination with health professionals. Of prime concern is the maintenance of quality services for students at this time when state budget cuts so very negatively affect nursing staff.

**PVUSD Art Show**
I attended the grand opening of the student arts exhibit at the Watsonville Civic Plaza. The exhibit is a collaboration among the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Santa Cruz County Superior Court and the Watsonville Library. The reception also included performances by student musicians from throughout the school district. The art exhibit will hang on the walls of the Civic Center for the next year.

**San Jose State Class**
At the beginning of the school year, I addressed the current cohort of students enrolled in the San Jose State University continuing education class for teachers which meets regularly here at the County Office of Education. I again spoke to them earlier this month which provided me with insight to their progress over the past year.

**Math Contest and Awards**
On a recent Saturday morning over 400 elementary and middle school students were at Aptos High at 8:30 a.m. to participate in the 42nd annual county Math Contest. Both team and individual awards will be presented this afternoon at the awards ceremony in the
Tech Center. First place in the elementary team category is the team from Linscott Charter School. First place in the 7th & 8th grade team category is the Mission Hill Middle School team. First place winners of individual awards are Ian Chiu, Rio del Mar, Grade 5; a tie between Kate Robins, Bradley Elementary, and Rebekah Shulman, Scotts Valley Middle School, Grade 6; Abe Karplus, Georgiana Bruce Kirby, Grade 7; and, Willie Dong, Pacific Collegiate School, Grade 8. Congratulations to all who participated.

Student Authors’ Fair
I was one of many attendees at the Student Authors’ Fair at Capitola Mall. The Santa Cruz County Reading Association and the County office of Education sponsored the 27th annual Fair on Saturday, May 2nd. The intent of the Fair is to encourage students to write and illustrate their own books and to recognize these students by sharing their books with the community. Twenty-six schools participated this year. Over 4,000 students were awarded certificates of appreciation for their fine work.

Collaboratives with PVUSD
Staff and I continue to meet with PVUSD Superintendent Dorma Baker and her staff to reinforce current as well as to create new program collaboratives between the District and the County Office of Education. Our most recent meeting focused primarily on Alternative Education and ROP programs.

Region 5 Online Education
Theresa Rouse and I represented the Santa Cruz County Office of Education in a meeting with superintendents and staff of Monterey, San Benito and Santa Clara County Offices of Education to discuss ways to provide online resources to districts so they can provide equitable learning opportunities and options for students, fingertip access to high quality professional development and online classroom environments for blended student learning.

Collaboration with Health Agencies re H1N1 Flu
Jo Ann Allen, Student Support Services Manager, and I were the leads in coordinating preventative measures and direction of information to districts and schools during the recent H1N1 flu outbreak. Dr. Pokie Namkung, County Health Services, met with district superintendents, Jo Ann and I following the initial outbreak to debrief and plan for future possible pandemic outbreaks. The experience proved that schools are well prepared to meet the requirements of the Countywide Emergency Crisis Response Management plan.

Grant Application
Rod Ogawa and Ron Glass, both on the UCSC staff and I continue to work on a grant application to submit to the American Federation of Teachers, to fund an innovative model of teaching profession career pathways. If successful, $200,000 in fund could be made available.
St. Francis WASC
It was a rewarding experience to participate as a team member during the recent WASC review of St. Francis School in Watsonville. As a reviewing team member, one is reminded of the exhaustive review process and the merits of a school that is successful in obtaining a WASC accreditation. Trustee Marani accompanied us as an observer.

Preschool Advisory Council
I want to congratulate and express my appreciation to the Santa Cruz County Preschool Advisory Council for their work during the past year in developing a blueprint for preschool education in the county. The Council has done an excellent and admirable job in developing a plan to provide every child in the County with the opportunity to attend a high quality, adequately funded preschool program that prepared them for success in school and life. The development of the preschool plan was funded by a grant from the David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

UCSC Chancellor’s Community Leadership Breakfast
I attended Chancellor Blumenthal’s Community Leaders breakfast and discussion last week. Bruce McPherson spoke about CALForward and discussion centered on how local community agencies and governments can work together to assist each other in the current economic climate to reach common goals.

Fun Day
The COE and the Sheriff’s Office Posse hosted the annual Fun Day for county special education students at the Posse Grounds. This annual event provides our students with an opportunity to experience activities such as horseback rides, discovering the adventures to be had with firemen and fire trucks, hands-on art and performances provided by participating Spectra artists.

Sheriff Robbins
I attended a reception for outgoing County Sheriff Robins who has been a long-time supporter and collaborator with various COE programs most particularly with the Alternative Education Programs. We look forward to continued cooperation with incoming Sheriff Phil Wowack.

League of Women Voters
The League of Women Voters invited me to speak at their recent meeting about education issues in Santa Cruz County. Topics covered were building a safety net for potential dropouts and at-risk youth, conditions necessary to reach high achievement, preschool, career technical education, and various challenges and potential opportunities affecting education as a result of budget deficits.
ROP Portfolios
ROP conducted the 11th annual Portfolio Showcase at Harbor High Tuesday. Student career portfolio’s are class projects which submit portfolios that display the results of their career technical education classes. Portfolios include a resume, sample job application letter, references and evidence of a job search. Scholarships and prizes are awarded at the showcase to students who demonstrate they have excelled at classroom projects, have been outstanding interns, or developed successful entrepreneurial enterprises.

Poetry Contest
The annual Santa Cruz County High School Poetry Competition Reading and Awards Ceremony was held at the COE this past Tuesday. The event is co-sponsored by Poetry Santa Cruz and the County Office of Education. I had the opportunity to recognize the teachers who contribute greatly to the literary education of their students. An anthology of the students’ poems is published and available to the public. I want to acknowledge and thank Brunella Deeds for coordinating the event. The event will be shown on Community TV.

Meeting with Secretary of Education
I will be attending an event in San Francisco Friday morning which features a conversation with United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan who will address preparing students for success from birth to college. Marian Wright Edelman, Children’s Defense Fund President will also speak. The combined events are sponsored by Mayor Newsom’s office and the New Day for Learning Organization.

International and State Science Fairs
Science Programs Coordinator Nancy Serigstad will report on the success of Santa Cruz County students at the recent International and State Science Fairs.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings Attended
First 5 Children’s Network
Child Welfare Steering Committee Superintendents Council
United Way Board Pajaro Valley Prevention Services
Child Care Planning Council Preschool Steering Committee
Migrant Head Start Board Juvenile Justice Council