Subject: Superintendent’s Monthly Report to the Board  
December 18, 2008

The following matters and events have occurred since the report of November 20, 2008.

Pacific Collegiate School Facility  
Santa Cruz City Schools District and Pacific Collegiate School appear to have reached a tentative agreement, contingent upon clarification of details, on the matter of the lease of the Natural Bridges School facility. Depika Shrestha-Ross, PCS Board President, has expressed her appreciation to President Dilles and myself for our efforts in mediating a settlement.

Pacific Collegiate School Recognition  
U.S. News & World Report recently ranked PCS the number 3 high school in the country and the top public charter school. The ranking is based on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate tests which measure academic achievement for placement in college or university.

Pacific Collegiate was also this month named California Honor Roll School for 2008 by the California Business for Education Excellence.

Regional Occupational Program, Retail Merchandising Class Fashion Show  
Nevenka Radich, ROP Instructor of the Retail Merchandising Class, once again inspired her Watsonville High School students to new relevancy in producing the 11th annual Fall Fashion Show. Students are responsible for all aspects of the production. Congratulations to the students, Ms. Radich and ROP management for their work in this highly successful student showcase.

United Way Community Assessment Project Report  
I joined business and community leaders at a press conference at the Watsonville Civic Plaza in late November to unveil the 2008 Community Assessment Project Report and to recognize several contributors to the area’s quality of life in the areas of economy, education, health, the environment, public safety and the social environment. Early childhood programs were acknowledged as making a positive impact on education in the County.
Youth Awareness Program – Hunger in Our Community
I met with Ron Slack, publisher of Good Times, Willie Elliott-McCrea, Director of Second Harvest Food Bank, as well as Pancho Rodriguez, Principal, Pajaro Valley High School, and Murry Schekman, Principal of Watsonville High School, to discuss formation of a youth awareness program to educate and involve students in public schools to address hunger within the community. The matter became even more relevant last week when State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell warned that state funding for the free and reduced-price lunches program for students could run out of money before the end of the current school year.

Homeless Project Phone Bank
The County Office of Education facility was made available to the Santa Cruz Homeless Project for their annual by-phone fundraiser. About forty volunteers utilized our facility and phone system between the hours of 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on December 8, to make local calls to potential donors. The Homeless Project reports the fundraiser was a success.

Project Impact
Nancy Serigstad, Project Coordinator, Traci Hart, Director of Human Resources, and I met to finalize the curriculum for the first full schedule Project Impact, teachers’ intern program which begins in January.

Teacher Pipeline
I continue to meet with Ron Glass, UCSC, and grant writers to apply for funding to support the Teacher Pipeline project. Teacher Pipeline will support local university students in their career path based upon their commitment to entering the teaching profession in Santa Cruz County public schools.

Inside Education
Participants of the Inside Education Program were welcomed last week to the fourth in the series of nine sessions introducing them to the educational process, opportunities and programs in our public schools in Santa Cruz County. The focus last week was on Special Education. In addition to an overview of special education, the group visited special education programs at Green Acres School, the Special Connections Family Resource Center and the autistic program at Chrysalis Center. Participants also visited the Special Day Preschool class and Special Day Kindergarten classes at Bay View elementary School.

Teacher Housing Assistance
Susan Midori-Jones, California Teachers’ Association representative, Larry Tousey, President, Santa Cruz County Office of Education teachers’ bargaining unit and I met to begin discussion on how the SCCOE and the teachers’ union might assist teachers in procuring housing in the County.

ROP Expansion in Watsonville
I conducted an initial meeting with Antonio Rivas, mayor of Watsonville, to discuss expansion of ROP classes in Watsonville schools. Mayor Rivas, Bryan Wall and I will meet shortly after the beginning of the new year to continue this discussion.

**Drug and Alcohol Prevention**
Julie Haff, Superintendent, San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District, Bill Manoff, County Drug and Alcohol Prevention, and I met relative to partnering to present a series of parent education workshops to address teen drug and alcohol abuse. We will incorporate the County Office of Education, Student Support Services’, successful DUI Prevention Program. The kick-off event will be scheduled for a date in January.

**Pacific Elementary School, Davenport**
Both Associate Superintendent Barney Finlay and I continue to meet with school and county environmental representatives, Sharon Smith, Principal/Superintendent and the district board regarding the finding of Chromium 6 levels in the Davenport area. Recent tests indicate an abatement but the situation will continue to be monitored.

**Superintendents’ Council**
District superintendents and I will meet sometime in January or early February for a one-day superintendents’ retreat to focus on creating new and innovative collaborative efforts to assist all districts and the COE to achieve goals and successfully deliver services during the current fiscal climate.

**Children’s Health Insurance**
Leslie Connor, Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz County, representing that organization and the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board (MRMIB) addressed the superintendents at our monthly meeting. MRMIB administers the Healthy Families program and, in collaboration with First 5 California, and First 5 of Santa Cruz County are dedicated to ensuring all students have health care. First 5 has pledged funding to continue the program in light of an enrollment freeze imposed by the state economy.

**High School Teachers Recognition Event**
Several high school teachers from throughout the County were recognized for outstanding merit at a celebratory event at the Chaminade sponsored by the Region 5 California League of High Schools. Theresa Rouse, Rowland Banker and I attended.

**Facility Activities Committee (FAC) Holiday Celebration**
Thank you to members of FAC who provided employees with another annual holidays luncheon. FAC members sponsor monthly employee participation events, each of which are appreciated by participating employees, in order to fund the reduced price luncheon.

**Bay Avenue Property Update**
Associate Superintendent Barney Finlay and I met the last week in November with representatives of Redtree Properties relative to negotiations with a potential lessor of approximately 22,000 square feet of the Bay Avenue Property. Redtree will forward a proposal for our consideration.
CSBA Education Conference
Trustees Aaron Hinde, Vic Marani, Bud Winslow, Arnie Levine, and Jack Dilles as well as Theresa Rouse and myself attended the California School Boards Association’s annual education conference earlier this month. Workshops and discussion groups were a beneficial resource for staying current on wide scope of matters of interest to the Board. I personally found clinics on implementing environmentally friendly practices and policies, the resultant monetary savings, and improved learning outcomes of merit, as well as a critical issues workshop focused on 21st Century learning.

Retirement
Maria Bispo, Executive Assistant to Alice Talnack, Associate Superintendent of Student Services, is retiring the end of December. Maria was hired in that position in May, 2001. Thank you and congratulations, Maria.

Monthly/Quarterly Meetings Attended
First 5 Commission Pre-school Steering Committee
PVPSA Migrant Head Start Board
Steinbeck Board of Directors First 5 Commission
United Way Board of Directors Superintendents’ Council
New Teacher Project Steering Committee Children’s Network