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From the desk of Charles Weis, Ph.D.
County Superintendent of Schools

One peculiarity of the American education system is that the standards of public education vary significantly from state to state. This has created a host of problems, including a predictably wide range of educational standards, depending on where you live.

Last summer I was appointed by Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez to serve on California's Academic Content Standards Commission. The commission developed new content standards in language arts and mathematics, aligned with national common core standards developed by an interstate collaborative.

Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to testify before the California Assembly Education Committee on the new standards. One of my recommendations was to take funding that otherwise would have been spent on a statewide assessment system, and put it toward professional development. Also, I urged that funding be rolled out as soon as possible through County Offices of Education to begin the transition

Prospect High wins county Mock Trial event

Students from Prospect High School will compete for the state championship later this month after recently winning the Santa Clara County Mock Trial competition. The Prospect team defeated their Saratoga High School peers in the Feb. 22 final round of a tournament hosted by the Santa Clara County Office of Education and the Santa Clara County Bar Association.

The state competition will be held March 25-27 in Riverside, Calif., and the SCCOE will honor the Prospect legal eagles next month.

This year, about 390 students from 21 public and private schools participated in the county event.

In Mock Trial, students act as lawyers, witnesses, bailiffs and time-keepers in a fictional criminal court case. This year's imaginary case, People v. Woodson, centered on a student accused of assault and cyber bullying, as well as the First and 14th Amendments.

State group honors COE administrators

Two SCCOE leaders have earned state recognition for their service by a California professional association for school administrators.

The Association of California School Administrators has named Dr. Cary Dritz, Deputy Superintendent, as state Central Office Administrator of the Year. Lisa Ketchum, Volunteer Coordinator/Staff Developer, was named state Classified Leader of the Year.

This is the second state win for Dritz, who in 2005 was named Human Resources Administrator of the Year.

Dritz and Ketchum also join two other staffers in taking regional honors: Dr. David Matuszak, Regional Occupational Program
from the existing framework to common core.

The standards are rigorous and designed to prepare the nation's students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a global economy. While there are questions about funding, I believe that implementing the standards will actually save us money over time, and benefit those who stand to gain or lose the most: our students.

Chi Diem Hang, a student enrolled in the SCCOE Orthopedic Impairments Program, was also nominated for ACSA's Every Student Succeeding Award.

The David and Lucille Packard Foundation's Children, Families & Communities Program won the regional award for Partners in Education Excellence.

The state winners will be honored in November. They will also be honored with their fellow regional winners at a countywide awards dinner in May.

Student writers gather at conference

More than 400 students participating in an SCCOE-based program that prepares pupils for college eligibility and success will explore the importance of writing skills at a conference this month.

The students will attend the 10th annual AVID Writers Conference on March 22 at CSU Monterey Bay, where they will participate in writing workshops led by university staff, and have an opportunity to talk with university students.

The conference is the culmination of a "Write-Off" competition, which garners participation from about 3,700 students in an effort to develop enthusiasm for writing, as well as hone skills for on-demand writing. This year, student essays focused on how technology affects inter-personal relationships.

AVID - Advancement Via Individual Determination - is an in-school academic support program for grades 4-12 that prepares students for college eligibility and success.

Board honors employee, student

Here's a summary of the Santa Clara County Board of Education's actions at its March 2 and 16 meetings:

- Recognized Sandi Yellenberg as March's Employee of the Month
- Honored Redemption Academy student Jesse Alonso for his accomplishments
- Approved a resolution to issue temporary loans for school districts
- Approved the charter petition for Communitas Charter High School
- Approved a resolution in support of Wisconsin's public employees

The Board of Education is the elected governing body of the Office of Education. Its seven members serve four-year terms and are...
elected by different regions of the county. Learn more about the members, and view their meeting schedule, agendas and minutes.

**Student scientists advance in competition**

Budding scientists will advance to steeper competition after prevailing earlier this month in Santa Clara County's regional science fair in San Jose.

Check out a list of the top performers at the Synopsys Silicon Valley Science and Technology Championship.

Some winners are invited to compete in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair and the California State Science Fair, both in May.

The regional fair was held March 8 and 9 at the San Jose Convention Center, drawing entries from more than 930 students in grades 6 through 12 from public and private schools throughout the county.

The fair is organized by the Santa Clara Valley Science and Engineering Fair Association. The champs will be honored next month in an awards ceremony at California's Great America amusement park in Santa Clara.

**Free SARC solution aids districts**

The SCCOE is offering a free School Accountability Report Card (SARC) solution in an effort to relieve districts of the extra SARC work prompted by budget cuts.

The SARC portion of the SCCOE's Single Plan and Accountability Report Card Suite (SPARCS) is now available for all California school districts at no cost as part of SchoolPlan's response to the state budget crisis and its impact on SARC support.

The offer extends to schools and districts that may have already completed their SARCs this year. Districts can register for free SARCs for next year as long as they do so before May 15. Register and find additional information online.

Also, contact Dr. Bill Conrad, SCCOE Director of Assessment and Accountability, at (408) 453-4332 for more information.

Since 1852, the Santa Clara County Office of Education has provided vital services and resources to the county's 31 K-12 public school districts and...
more than 250,000 students. The COE strives to provide: advocacy and leadership on education issues, student programs that are models of excellence, and indispensable services to schools and community partners. The COE takes pride in being a premier employer and a champion for children, schools, and community.

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