



LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT:

Mr. Don Olson—Del Norte County Superintendent of Schools



What led you to become County Superintendent?

After 34 years of serving as an educator in Del Norte County, I had the great opportunity to be selected as the Superintendent of Del Norte County Unified School District and was appointed as the County Superintendent of Schools.

What inspired you to enter the field of education?

My grandmother, Inga Ellertson, was a teacher in the early 1900's in a one room schoolhouse on the plains of North Dakota. I always loved her ability to help me with my studies. My school experiences were simply wonderful. I experienced great teachers that always worked to improve the lives of their students. I wanted to take those experiences in education and embellish them to share with my students. I taught fourth and fifth grades for 21 years and truly loved the work, the students and the families. Teaching elementary mathematics was a strong point of my work. I pioneered new math programs and many "replacement units" in Del Norte Schools. I was the Teacher Director of the Redwood Area Math Project in the 90's and spent 10 years working to improve mathematics instruction in grades K through 16.

Do you have a particular goal that drives you?

My goal is to contribute to building a better Del Norte County by creating an educational environment that is supportive of learning and teaching.

What objectives do you hope to achieve?

I am working to define the Del Norte County Office of Education. Del Norte County consists of one school district and one County Office of Education. Forever, this county has been recognized as the Del Norte County Unified School District. I am presently working on a building project to improve the learning environment at our community school. Additionally, a full time art teacher has been hired to reconnect students to education through the arts. The County Office also employs a Director of Educational Technology to support the use of technology in education for the entire county. I use every opportunity to support local education through County Office Staff.

What are your interests?

Staying active is important to me and I do that through cycling, hiking and swimming. I also love to cook and have become quite good at making pizza, which includes making the dough and sauce from scratch.

Who are the special people in your life?

The special people in my life are my wife Martha, my two daughters, Phoebe and Jaden and the wonderful people of Del Norte County.

GUEST COLUMN:

SPECIAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE; A STATUS REPORT

-By Vicki Barber, Co-Executive Director of the Special Education Task Force

At last the issues around special education services and funding are being examined through the formation of a Statewide Special Education Task Force. The Task Force includes 34 members, representing parents, teachers, special education administrators, general education administrators, higher education, non-public agency, and charter schools. Two County Superintendents were selected to serve on the Task Force, Dr. David Gordon, Sacramento County Superintendent and Michael Watkins, Santa Cruz County Superintendent. Dr. Vicki Barber, retired El Dorado County Superintendent and Maureen Burness, retired Special Education

Administrator for Folsom-Cordova Unified are serving as the Co-Executive Directors for the project.

The Task Force is preparing policy recommendations for the State Board, Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and the California Department of Education, to be completed by the end of 2014. Public hearings have been conducted in several locations and additional input is welcomed. The San Mateo County Office is serving as the fiscal agent and the website, <http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/spedtf>, includes a tremendous amount of information regarding the effort.

FROM THE DESK OF:

Peter Birdsall, CCSESA Executive Director

At the April General Membership meeting, we plan to bring to the CCSESA Board for approval a document to guide county offices in the review and approval of school district LCAPs. This important resource is being developed by the LCAP Support Task Force that was established by the Board last December, with most of the materials being drafted by leadership from BASC and CISC. Given the statewide interest in how county offices will review LCAPs, the meeting in Santa Barbara on April 27-29 is particularly important to attend.

We should also know much more by late April about how the state plans to select a fiscal agent for the new California Collaborative for Educational Excellence. The Collaborative has the po-

tential to be a great resource for county offices of education as the LCAP process evolves and becomes more sophisticated. County offices play a major role in FCMAT, Williams Oversight, and the K-12 High Speed Network. It is reasonable to expect that county offices will also play a major role in the operation of the new Collaborative.

During the week of March 31, several of us will be in Washington, D.C. for our annual advocacy trip. Key topics will be increased technology access through E-Rate, proposals to expand high quality preschool, federal funding for K-12 education, and renewal of the CORE waiver.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

April Quarterly Meeting:

The April 27-29 CCSESA quarterly meeting will take place in Santa Barbara. If you have questions regarding registration and/or hotel reservations, please contact Grace Vote at the CCSESA office at (916) 446-3095.

ACSA/InnovateEd LCAP Trainings:

In late March and early April, the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and InnovateEd will be hosting several one-day sessions on "strategically designing and assessing the impact of LCAP as a district builds capacity for continuous improvement." Click or call to register: www.acsa.org/lcapworkshops, or (800) 608-2272.

JCCASAC Annual Conference:

JCCASAC is hosting its 45th Annual State Conference on May 14-16, 2014 in San Diego. The conference, *Paving the Way...*, will highlight college, career, and job ready programs, as well as showcase outstanding best practices throughout California. See CCSESA's homepage ([HERE](#)) for more information, and register by May 1.

Federal Advocacy Trip Dates:

The County Superintendents will make their annual advocacy trip to Washington D.C. from March 31– April 3. They will also have the opportunity to visit Discovery Education on March 31. This visit is optional, and will not conflict with any other meetings. Call the CCSESA office with any questions regarding the trip.

CCSESA STAFF

[Peter Birdsall](#)

Executive Director

[Sarah Anderberg](#)

Arts Initiative Director

[Sandra Morales](#)

Director of Government Relations

[Cindy Ridley](#)

Business Services Coordinator

[Jessie Kroll-Yoas](#)

Executive Assistant

[Grace Vote](#)

Member Relations Coordinator

[Christina Marcellus](#)

Project Coordinator

MARCH ARTS ADVOCACY LUNCHEON



Artwork Credit:
Nicholas Sanchez

In honor of March as Arts Education Month, CCSESA partnered with the California State PTA to host the *Be a Hero for Arts Education* luncheon on March 19th at The California Museum in Sacramento. Over 80 district, county, and state leaders attended. Dr. Steven Winlock, Sacramento County Office of Education and Region 3 Arts Lead, was the event moderator.

The program included the following speakers: Wes Smith, Executive Director for ACSA; Craig Watson, Executive Director for the California Arts Council; Francisca Sánchez, President of CABA; Julie Fry, Program Officer for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; and Assemblyman Ian Calderon.

Student madrigal singers from Bella Vista High School in Fair Oaks performed under the direction of Wendy Carey, Director. Barbara Ledterman, Chair of CA PTA's Special Committee for the Arts and Sarah Anderberg, CCSESA, honored Julie Fry with the 2014 Hero for Arts Education award.

MERCED COE FEATURED AT STATE BOARD MEETING

On March 13, the State Board of Education heard testimony from Kathy Pon, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional services at the Merced County Office of Education (MCOE). Merced was invited to speak to showcase the work the county has been doing with regard to early Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) implementation.

The State Board plans to hear reports at each meeting from school districts and county offices on their progress in developing and implementing LCAPs. If your county would like to share your experiences with the State Board of Education, please contact Christina Marcellus of CCSESA staff, at cmarcellus@ccsesa.org or (916) 446-4095.

Merced is one of the many county offices that operate alternative education programs. The MCOE presentation focused on the overlap of the county LCAP, which must address services

to students in county and community schools, as well as state priorities covering expelled students and foster youth.

MCOE is currently working collaboratively and diligently to ensure their LCAP reflects the best interests of their most vulnerable students. As stated in the agenda item, "The MCOE has engaged employees, students, parents, and other agencies that support students attending the county's Community and Court schools in providing input and feedback to inform the development of the LCAP. The MCOE's instructional and business service leaders are working together to engage stakeholders, write the LCAP, and support implementation of key activities. The MCOE experience reflects a positive start to the LCAP with a strong local commitment to successful implementation of the LCFF."

GAYE SMOOT ACCEPTS POSITION AT THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

On Friday March 14, CCSESA bid farewell to our longest-serving employee, Gaye Smoot. Gaye started her term of service with the County Superintendents Association in January of 2002. She has taken a position with her former employer, the California Department of Education, in their Charter School Division. Gaye's plan had always been to return to the Department for one last stint before retirement, and though her move was expected, there was no way to fully prepare for the departure of such a valuable member of our team.

As Assistant Executive Director, Gaye was CCSESA staff's point-person for many of the most prominent issues of the past 12 years. From the Williams Settlement, to QEIA, to the K-12 Student Mental Health Initiative and most recently, LCAP and Common Core, Gaye was instrumental

in providing coordination for CCSESA with state agencies and other education organizations. Gaye also served as staff liaison to CCSESA's Technology and Telecommunications (TTSC) and Curriculum and Instruction (CISC) Steering Committees. Judy Flores, Assistant Superintendent at the Shasta County Office of Education and former CISC Chair, offered her thoughts on her time working with Gaye; "During my year as CISC Chair, I found Gaye to be a tremendous resource and support. Gaye's years with CCSESA helped to frame the historical perspective as well as the interagency perspective. She was always looking across Steering Committees for ways in which we could collaborate and work together. Gaye provided me with tremendous support during 2013 for which I am very appreciative."

Thanks to our Business Partners (Click to Visit):

GRAND CANYON
UNIVERSITY™

ZippSlip

EDJOIN.ORG