GUEST COMMENTARY

By Cindy M. Cathey

Superintendent of Schools

It is with great enthusiasm that I personally welcome each of you to the 2011-2012 school year! During the summer break we were busy preparing for the opening of school and looking forward to another year of success for the children of our community.

Our focus this year will be to strengthen our partnerships with our families, community, local businesses, foundations, and our city. Working together we can transform our schools into outstanding centers of learning that we all want them to be.

Such a transformation will not happen overnight, but I am confident that we can work together to ensure that our programs and support systems meet the diverse needs of all of our students. I am committed to seeing that our children thrive in our schools.

• • • •

Last year we implemented many new initiatives, which we will continue to strengthen throughout this year. Persistence on our part will no doubt yield impressive learning outcomes for our students. We purchased new materials, provided extensive training, altered schedules and course offerings, and worked with teams of teachers to identify essential standards so that all students have access to rigorous curriculum.

While our test scores are hot off the press as I write this annual letter, I can see that in some cases the data shows promise, but in other cases the scores fell short of our goals. Rather than feel discouraged, we must rise to the challenge facing us and closely examine our successes and our challenges and adjust accordingly.

We must work together as a community to ensure our students receive a world class education. In the next weeks, we will be analyzing last year's state assessments so that we can further tailor our plans for our children's success.

• • • •

Our accomplishments over the summer related to Measure B projects give us much to proudly celebrate. A few of these accomplishments are:

• Painting and lighting systems in all classrooms at: Wilson, Roosevelt, Bancroft, and San Leandro High School.

• Completion of restroom modernization at Bancroft, Muir, Roosevelt and Wilson Schools.

• New classrooms at Lincoln Alternative High School to allow for a new education program designed to serve our most needy seventh through twelfth grade students.

• Continued modernization at the Career Technical Education Center at SLHS.

• Modernization of our Adult School to add a new nursing program.

Measure M bond projects took off this summer with the approval by the board of the Pacific Sports Complex and Burrell Field conceptual design. The conceptual design for the SLHS swim center and field work will be presented to the board at their regular meeting on Sept. 7. Preparation for these two marquee projects is well underway and timelines remain on schedule.

• • • •

While the budget crisis in California and the nation continues to plague school districts, the school board made tough decisions to use funds to restore some crucial programs for the 2011-2012 school year only. Staff positions and services restored include: maintaining K-3 class size at 28 to 1 and restoration of middle school counselors; elementary librarian assistants, a campus supervisor, middle and elementary school vice principals, and two furlough days, to name a few. This helps us get through this year and gives us time to prepare for the inevitable cuts that are unfortunately slated to come next year.

• • • •

I am proud to be your Superintendent and look forward to a fantastic school year! I invite the community to visit our schools. I promise that you will be impressed with what you see.