



Monterey County Office of Education

Dr. Nancy Kotowski
County Superintendent of Schools

August 5, 2015

The Honorable Marla O. Anderson
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Monterey
240 Church Street
Salinas, CA 93901

**RE: Response to the 2014-2015 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report No. 5-
"Education, A 'No Excuses' Approach to English Language Learning in Monterey
County"**

Honorable Judge Anderson:

This response to the **2014-2015 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report No. 5-
"Education, A 'No Excuses' Approach to English Language Learning in Monterey County"** is a joint response of the Monterey County Superintendent of Schools (County Superintendent) and Monterey County Board of Education (County Board), herein referred to as the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE).

The Civil Grand Jury report focuses on the complex issue of English Learners (EL) attaining proficiency. This is a strategic priority of the MCOE.

The report falls short of fully addressing the issue because it misplaces the primary responsibility for the success of English Learners on MCOE and misrepresents the roles and work of the County Office of Education, the County Superintendent and the County Board of Education. While the County Office of Education plays a key role in leadership, support and service to districts that the Civil Grand Jury calls for must go far beyond the County Office of Education. The reality is that achieving this goal is very complex and involves roles for the family, the school and the community. For example, in the 2015-16 budget allocation, the Monterey County School Districts, not MCOE, are projected to receive \$131,776,426 in supplemental and concentration grants to be specifically used to serve English Learners, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and foster youth. Each school district's Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) is critical because it must identify how the funds will be directed to meet the needs of these students. The County Superintendent supports the districts

in developing their plans and is responsible for approving them, following statutory guidelines. It is each district's responsibility to implement their plan.

MCOE plays an important leadership role in providing high quality professional development opportunities that are well attended by teachers and administrators, and provides technical assistance to school districts to support them in what is needed for their English Learners to achieve advanced levels of English proficiency.

The County Superintendent and County Board of Education have no statutory authority over the quality and successful implementation of the districts' instructional programs. Each school district's Board of Trustees is entrusted with and responsible for their district's educational programs and engagement of their families and communities. The only student programs MCOE operates directly are those that are more cost effective and efficient when provided at the County level: juvenile hall and youth center for incarcerated students, community schools for expelled students, special education for the more severely disabled students, Head Start, and supplemental Migrant Education programs.

Inaccuracies in the Report

It is important to note that there are inaccuracies in the report. These inaccuracies are addressed below.

In the "Role of Monterey County Office of Education" section, the report indicates that the elected County Superintendent reports to a five-member elected Board of Education. This is not accurate. First, the elected County Board is a seven-member, not five-member board. Second, the report states that the County Board oversees the County Superintendent. The County Board does not have direct legal authority to oversee the County Superintendent. The County Board and County Superintendent have distinct roles and responsibilities.

In the "LCAPs that Incorporate ELL Standards and Strategies" section, the report suggests that MCOE only provides a compliance role in reviewing and approving LCAPs while other COEs go far beyond the required compliance role before they are submitted to the State for funding.

In this new era of public education, MCOE has worked extensively with districts in the development of their LCAPS to ensure that the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) funding is effectively utilized to meet the specific needs of each school district's student population. MCOE is a leader in the State by having developed an LCAP Resource Guide that is utilized throughout California. It was presented to the California County Superintendents of Schools and the Monterey County district superintendents. The MCOE LCAP Resource Guide contains tools and resources for English Language Learners. The MCOE LCAP Resource Guide may be found on the MCOE website at www.montereycoe.org/programs-services/local-control-accountability-plans-icap/index. Further, MCOE conducts on-going LCAP technical assistance trainings that have included experts in the state who are involved in the development of the

State's LCAP process. These trainings have gone beyond compliance issues and delved deeply into designing each district's strategies and activities to support their goals.

MCOE is, in fact, providing major guidance and support to districts in developing their LCAP, sending teams to the school districts and helping them include EL best practices in their plans, going far beyond the required compliance role of reviewing and approving district LCAP's. The MCOE professional development series for the upcoming 2015-16 year is based on an analysis of identified goals, strategies and activities of the districts' LCAP. MCOE views the LCAP as a district's strategic working plan and uses the LCAP to define a district's professional development needs and practices.

In the "Development of Local Control Accountability Plan" section, the report suggests that MCOE does not work closely with individual school districts regarding development of their LCAP's to serve their EL populations. In fact, in addition to technical assistance and workshops conducted at the County Office of Education, MCOE's teams also schedule individual meetings with school district teams to provide support as they are developing their plans. Further, the MCOE team conducted a full day workshop with the south Monterey County small school districts, who have unique needs, in helping them in the design and development of their LCAP's. This included identifying their goals, strategies and activities to meet the needs of their students, including their English Learners.

In the "Stakeholder Opportunities to Share ELL Experiences" section, it is reported that the County Board Leadership Summit for School Governance Teams did not address English Learners. In fact, the keynote address and a major break-out session was conducted by legendary Tony Plana, who is a renowned actor, director, educational activist and co-founder of the East L.A. Classic Theater, which focuses specifically on serving the needs of our English Learners. The keynote speaker highlighted his immigrant experience and its consequent relationship to language difficulties. He revealed insights into learning language and the arts and how they are necessary for holistic child development. Additionally, the keynote speaker presented the strategy of Language In Play to conquer language issues, build academic success, and help children discover and develop their talent, with his session rated 4.7 out of 5 by the superintendents and board members in attendance.

In the "MCOE Organizational Support For ELL Services" section, the report calls MCOE an "exceptionally large bureaucracy" that has lost focus on English Learners.. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no relevance between "bureaucracy" and losing focus on English Learners. However, at the time of their inquiry, a staff vacancy existed. This issue has been resolved and is discussed later in this report. ,In the 2012 Civil Grand Jury Report (received in January 2013), finding 7 stated: "The Civil Grand Jury found all six of the MCOE's service departments well organized, efficient, and working diligently to provide support, guidance, training and resources for all members of Monterey County." They did not find MCOE to be a "large bureaucracy." A comparison of the organizational structure of EL services for 2012 and

2015 shows no deterioration of concentration. We have always considered that a critical component of our professional development and service to our districts focuses on meeting the needs of and working towards the success of English Learners.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding F-1: English Language Learners (ELL) in Monterey County perform far below the minimal academic standards established by the state and continue to be unprepared for college or the workplace, largely due to inadequate progress in learning English.

Response F-1: We agree that it is critical to accelerate the progress English Learners make in their acquisition of English proficiency in order for them to be well prepared for college and the workplace. We disagree that English Learners are performing far below the academic standards established by the State. In Monterey County, the percentage of English Learners who drop out is 20.2%, compared to the statewide average of 20.9%. Further, English Learners are graduating at the same rate (65.4%) as their peers across California (65.3%), despite significantly greater obstacles. While we are keeping pace with the State, these results must be improved.

Recommendation R-1: Work with school districts to create a set of ELL standards for use or reference in the development of districts' LCAP, to make it easier for them to set and achieve ELL goals.

Response R-1: The recommended action was already implemented during the 2014-15 LCAP year. A document was prepared by The California Rural Legal Assistance, Californians Together, California Association for Bilingual Education, and The Center for Equity for English Learners to provide guidance for LEAs in designing, funding and implementing programs for English Learners. This document serves as a rubric incorporating 10 focus areas with high impact on English Learners. The document was presented to district LCAP teams by the MCOE for districts to use to identify best practices for ELL students, while developing their LCAPs. Please refer to the document in Appendix A.

Finding F-2: Monterey County school districts have developed local control accountability plans (LCAP) that are producing uneven results in ELL academic achievement.

Response F-2: MCOE disagrees with this finding. It is unclear how writers conclude that the LCAPs are "producing uneven results regarding ELL academic achievement." Being the first year of implementation, it is not possible to draw any conclusions about the impact of these plans at this point.

Recommendation R-2: Act as a resource for small school districts located in rural, distant areas of South Monterey County in meeting and exploring how they can work together to make most efficient use of shared ELL and other resources.

Response R-2: MCOE will continue to implement the recommendation of being a resource for the small, rural districts in South County. This collaboration includes the sharing of ideas, resources and strategies. Some of the many regularly scheduled meeting networks include: Curriculum Leadership Council, Transitional Kindergarten, Bilingual Coordinators, Superintendents' Council, new Administrators, and New Teacher Induction mentoring. These MCOE supported collaboratives are focused on improving all student achievement with differentiation for English Learners, low socio-economic students and foster youth. At these network meetings, time is designated for sharing ideas, resources and strategies.

Focusing on the special needs of our small, rural school districts, the MCOE Team will continue to conduct meetings in South County with the small school districts that share similar needs, offering technical assistance and professional learning opportunities for teachers and administrators.

When the small school districts are unable to come to the County Office of Education to attend the network meetings and trainings that are offered at the county office, we provide webcasting options for them to participate as part of the larger group.

Finding F-3: The training and support MCOE offers to school districts in development of their LCAP centers primarily on achieving compliance with state requirements and does not include working together to create quality standards or ELL strategies that can produce positive results.

Response F-3: MCOE disagrees with this finding. MCOE has provided a series of technical assistance workshops conducted at the County Office. In addition, MCOE's LCAP teams conducted individual meetings with school district teams to provide support as they were developing their plans. Further, the MCOE team conducted a full day workshop with the south Monterey County small school districts, who have unique needs, in helping them in the design and development of their LCAP's, identifying their goals, strategies and activities to meet the needs of their students, including their English Learners. MCOE has provided expert guidance to District LCAP Leadership Teams by offering an LCAP Technical Assistance Series that brought in renowned experts in the field who are assisting the State in the LCAP process. For 2014, MCOE conducted a survey of the support provided by MCOE in the development of their LCAPs. The results indicated 96% of Monterey County districts participated in this professional learning offering. A satisfaction survey was sent out to a total of 24 districts and Charter Schools with 21 responding. The overall responses were positive with an average of 91% of the districts rating the series as effective or very effective in providing support and technical assistance in the development of the LCAP. At the conclusion of the 2015-16 LCAP process, a survey will again be given to determine how effective our services were and assist us in planning for the next year's LCAP process.

Recommendation R-3: Establish a satellite office in South Monterey County to increase accessibility and communication of County programs and services by September 2016.

Response R-3: MCOE does not agree with this recommendation. This recommendation is not a reasonable or viable option for MCOE.

MCOE plans to expand its offering of webinars and will continue to provide regional services and customized services to reach all districts in the most cost effective ways within the county.

Finding F-4: There is an important role for MCOE to play in regularly disseminating ELL best practices and sharing successful ELL strategies countywide.

Response F-4: MCOE agrees with this finding.

Recommendation R-4: Take on the role of compiling and disseminating successful ELL practices and performance measurements around the County.

Response R-4: MCOE is pleased to have hired a new English Language Development Coordinator/ Administrator. She will be establishing regular monthly network meetings with the EL district coordinators to share EL best practices and successful EL strategies countywide beginning with the 2015-16 school year. This will include compiling and disseminating research based best practices and performance measurements for English Learners.

Finding F-5: There was no evidence to suggest that MCOE promotes two-way communication and a partnership approach with school districts that encourages sharing of information and resources or that solicits frank input about the needs of local English Language Learning programs from frontline educators and administrators.

Response F-5: MCOE agrees partially with this finding. MCOE is continually improving our communications with frontline educators and administrators who are regularly asked for input about how the county office can better serve their districts' needs. As we engage with frontline teachers and administrators at the school site, district and county level through the professional development and training opportunities, we regularly seek feedback for ongoing follow-up needs to determine what else is needed. This is done through dialogue and evaluations conducted at the end of training sessions. Further, annually the Educational Services Division surveys districts to determine professional development needs for the coming year. When the districts' 2015-16 LCAPs are approved, MCOE will analyze them to determine the needs of the districts regarding their actions and services to ELs.

Recommendation R-5: Publish best practices and resources for all ELL stakeholder groups on the MCOE or other dedicated website by September 2016.

Response R-5: MCOE agrees with this recommendation and it has already been implemented.

The MCOE website contains a wealth of information to support all stakeholders. The website does include information to support English Learners. The tab, "Resources for English Learners" is located in the "Language and Literacy" tab. <http://www.monterey.k12.ca.us/programs-services/ed-services/common-core-21st-century/language-literacy/index>. The resources include links to implementing the Common Core State Standards for English Learners, ELA/ELD curriculum framework timeline and ELD standards timeline. MCOE plans to enhance the resources and MCOE home page of the MCOE website.

Finding F-6: Although the MCOE website contains a variety of information, it is completely lacking in English Language Learner resources and best practices.

Response F-6: MCOE disagrees, as the MCOE website already does include English Learners resources and best practices. These can be found at <http://www.monterey.k12.ca.us/programs-services/ed-services/common-core-21st-century/language-literacy/index>.

Recommendation R-6: Establish the regular practice of offering forums that bring together school district ELL personnel with their counterparts at other districts, so they can share information, explore solutions to similar problems, and share strategies and practices by January 2016.

Response R-6: MCOE has an established practice of offering forums to share information, explore solutions to similar problems, and share strategies and practices. The Bilingual Coordinators Network brings together district coordinators who support English Learners throughout the county. This network will continue to operate in the 2015-2016 academic calendar year. The link to the description and dates of meetings on the MCOE website is below: <http://www.monterey.k12.ca.us/programs-services/ed-services/additional-resources/bilingual-coordinators-network/index>

In 2015-2016 we will be adding an additional network for teachers and administrators to share best practices that support the academic achievement and acquisition of English for ELs. The MCOE will continue to encourage participation at these forums.

Finding F-7: There was no evidence to suggest that MCOE or any other professional organization provides opportunities for stakeholders (school boards, parents, students, staff, community members, etc.) to learn about their role and responsibilities in supporting the English Language Learner.

Response F-7: MCOE disagrees with this finding because ELs are a major focus at the local and State level. There are numerous professional organizations that provide opportunities for stakeholders to learn about their role, responsibilities and best practices for supporting ELs. For Board members, the California School Boards Association (CSBA) offers a wealth of information to help school board members in their role and responsibilities for ELs. (<https://www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources/StudentAchievement/EnglishLearners.aspx>).

Further, CSBA offers many training opportunities for school board members and superintendents, including a major annual conference that most school district board members attend. For staff, parents, students and community members, schools and districts of Monterey County who serve English Learners provide trainings for those willing to serve and participate in the English Learner Advisory Council and School Site Council. Further, schools and districts provide on-going professional development and MCOE provides trainings for parents, teachers, and administrators to help them understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting English Learners. The California Association of Bilingual Educators (CABE) is the premier state-wide organization focused on the education of California's English Learners and offers a plethora of resources for teachers, administrators, board members, and parents (<http://www.bilingualeducation.org/>). The MCOE budget for its county-operated programs (Alternative Education, Head Start, Migrant Education, Special Education) and Educational Services Division includes funding for annual participation of MCOE teachers and administrators at CABE. MCOE will continue to encourage participation in these conferences.

For school district governance teams (school board members and superintendents), the County Board, in partnership with the County Superintendent and the Monterey County School Boards Association, provides an innovative and first of its kind Leadership Summit every other year after the election of new school board members. This summit, conducted in a retreat setting and supported by many local sponsors, provides governance teams with a full-day to deeply engage in significant topics of school district leadership. This summit is planned for November 2015, major sessions are planned that focus on their roles, responsibilities, and best practices for school board members and superintendents in supporting all students, including a major focus on the achievement of ELs.

The response to the Leadership Summit was so enthusiastic that MCOE was invited to present our model to both the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association and the California County Boards of Education.

Recommendation R-7: Sponsor and facilitate an annual stakeholder (ie. representative parents, boards, students, administrators, support staff, etc.) "Summit" to help each group define its roles and responsibilities that influence the English Language Learning process starting in September 2016.

Response R-7: For programs operated directly by MCOE (i.e. Migrant Education and Head Start) there are countywide EL parent and stakeholder groups. MCOE works extensively with these groups, conducting numerous conferences, trainings and opportunities for addressing the needs of these English Learners on an ongoing basis throughout the year. The Head Start and Migrant Education websites detail the many ways that stakeholder groups are supported throughout the year. Head Start: <http://www.montereycoe.org/programs-services/head-start/index> Migrant Education: <http://www.montereycoe.org/programs-services/migrant-services/index>

Sponsoring and facilitating stakeholder summits for parents and students are best conducted by those who work most directly with their constituents at the local level. The stakeholder groups for which it is appropriate to conduct a countywide summit are the governance teams of the school districts, including district superintendents and district boards of trustees.

County Board and the County Superintendent in partnership with the Monterey County School Boards Association held their first Leadership Summit in November 2013 to bring awareness to critical issues in education. The County Board established a goal to hold a Leadership Summit every other year. The 2013 Summit keynote address and large breakout session was conducted by Tony Plana, a renowned actor, director, educational activist and co-founder of the East L.A. Classic Theater. His topic focused specifically on meeting the needs of English Learners. His keynote highlighted his immigrant experience, and its consequent relationship to language difficulties. He revealed insights into learning language and the how the arts are necessary for holistic educational development of English Learners. Additionally, in his large breakout session, he presented the strategy of Language In Play to conquer language issues, build academic success, and help English Learners discover and develop their talents. His session was rated 4.7 out of 5 by the superintendents and board members in attendance. It was decided by the governance teams of our school districts, the County Board, the County Superintendent and the Monterey County School Boards Association decided that the Leadership Summit would be held every other year. The 2015-2016 Educational Leadership Summit is planned for November 18, 2015 and will again include the topic of English Learners.

Finding F-8: The workshops, trainings and special programs offered by MCOE are often not well subscribed by school districts.

Response F-8: MCOE does not agree with this finding. The registration and attendance data in the meeting registration system of MCOE indicate that the trainings and special programs offered by MCOE are well subscribed. There is no basis for this finding as evidenced by strong attendance at MCOE sponsored trainings and summit.

Recommendation R-8: Adopt or develop an online program of professional development workshops to increase access for teachers unable to attend on-site classroom training by June 2017.

Response R-8: MCOE will continue to offer professional development webinars when deemed appropriate and effective.

Finding F-9: The relatively few ELL professional development trainings that are offered by MCOE do not appear to be scheduled well enough in advance to allow for planning by school district personnel.

Response F-9: MCOE agrees with this finding. During the 2014-15 school year, a vacancy occurred in the position of English Language Development Coordinator/Administrator. We have been recruiting for a highly-qualified candidate for this position, and this position has now been filled.

Recommendation R-9: Begin a regular practice of soliciting input from all County school districts to determine professional development needs as a basis for creating an annual calendar of ELL educational services, workshops, and activities by September 2015.

Response R-9: MCOE does, in fact, have a regular practice of soliciting input from all districts when determining and scheduling professional development needs. This includes training needed for English language development. In the spring of every year the Educational Services Division surveys districts to determine professional development needs for the coming year. As the year progresses new needs emerge and we respond with the professional development and training that is needed. The offerings for the 2014-15 school year can be found on the MCOE Educational Services website at <http://www.montereycoe.org/programs-services/ed-services/professional-learning-offerings/index>, and the offerings for the 2015-16 school year will be available online by September 2015.

Finding F-10: It is very difficult for schools in southern parts of the county to take advantage of MCOE trainings, since most are offered at the Salinas location.

Response F-10: MCOE agrees with this finding. The school districts that may be unable to come to the County Office of Education to attend trainings and meetings may request to participate via webcasting in order to participate as part of the larger group. In addition, we offer on-site and regional professional development opportunities throughout Monterey County. Continued efforts will be made to improve access to trainings.

Recommendation R-10: Make a commitment to bring best evidence-based state and national programs and expert speakers on English Language Learning for County professional development activities.

Response R-10: MCOE does, in fact, bring evidence-based expert speakers on English Learners to provide high quality professional development for teachers and administrators. Over the course of six days in 2013-14, MCOE conducted a California Association of Bilingual Educators (CABE) (<http://www.bilingualeducation.org/>) series here at MCOE that included sessions for teachers and specially scheduled sessions for administrators to learn best classroom practices and to establish quality district-wide programs for English Learners. Three days were devoted to elementary level educators and three days were devoted to secondary level educators who work with English Learners. In addition, CABE provided a one-day workshop for teachers on special assignment and others on Coaching Teachers, and a single four-hour workshop for administrators on how to provide effective feedback and coaching to teachers of English Learners. In the upcoming 2015-2016 academic year, professional development opportunities will be offered with Kate Kinsella, Margaret Heritage and Doug Fisher - all experts in the field with established records of renowned success in serving English Learners. Our new English Language Development Coordinator/Administrator will provide on-going implementation of the work done by the renowned experts for those districts interested. In addition MCOE has a team of Educational Administrators who all support English Learners in their professional development work with schools and districts.

Finding F-11: MCOE does not offer online professional development programs/training or significant other alternative delivery systems to increase accessibility and participation.

Response F-11: MCOE disagrees with this finding. MCOE offers professional development webinars when deemed appropriate and effective.

Recommendation R-11: Immediately fill the English Language Learning specialist position that has been recently vacated.

Response R-11: The English Language Development Coordinator/Administrator position has been filled. In addition to this position, MCOE has a team of Educational Administrators with expertise in both their subject matter, content and instructional strategies for supporting English Learners.

Finding F-12: Quality professional development provided by experienced ELL experts (generally not MCOE staff) and focused on proven evidenced-based methods was identified as a need by County school districts.

Response F-12: We agree that quality professional development provided to our school districts should be focused on proven evidence-based methods. This topic was discussed at our Superintendents' Council meeting and it was unanimously recommended that MCOE proceed with hiring a highly qualified English Language Development Coordinator/Administrator in order to provide the districts with the ongoing coordination that is essential for full implementation of a comprehensive English Learner program. The superintendents pointed out

that while there is some benefit to bringing in outside experts, the concern is that these experts alone would not have the time to be committed to the ongoing level of services our schools and districts need.

In accordance with this recommendation, MCOE has recruited and hired a highly qualified English Language Development Coordinator/Administrator. Further, to support this work, MCOE is launching the 2015-16 school year with a year-long series on the most effective research-based instructional practices for English Learners, presented by renowned experts in English Language development, as well as customized services conducted by MCOE staff specific to the individual needs of our 24 school districts.

Recommendation R-12: Establish an operational budget for the MCOE English Language Learning specialist to carry out the full scope of duties that support professional development, open communication and cooperation among all County school districts by September 2015.

Response R-12: The English Language Development Coordinator/Administrator has an operational budget to support and carry out all duties for this work.

Finding F-13: MCOE has one specified position for an ELL Specialist that is currently vacant.

Response F-13: MCOE disagrees with this finding. As stated in the interview with the Civil Grand Jury, MCOE was in the process of filling the position. It was filled on June 26, 2015. The English Language Development Coordinator/Administrator comes with a wealth of knowledge and skills, which will enable her to support all districts and their EL population.

Recommendation R-13: Hire a full-time grant writer to consistently identify grant opportunities and develop grant applications to raise additional funds in support of district ELL programs.

Response R-13: MCOE disagrees with this recommendation and will not hire a full time grant writer. It is not common practice for county offices of education the size of MCOE to have professional grant writers on staff. Grant writers are occasionally hired as consultants for a specific grant when needed. In fact, last year MCOE received three highly competitive federal grants that total \$2.8 million. MCOE did not hire a grant writer because we were able to write the grants utilizing the expertise of our team and our partners. MCOE also partners with other agencies to write grants as they become available.

Monterey County Office of Education continually monitors several websites that introduce available grants, for example:

- Grants.gov (federal)
- CA.gov (state)
- National Clearing House on Families and Youth (various)
- US Department of Education (federal)
- National Charter School Resource Center (various)
- Association of Public Television Stations (various)
- Grant Watch (various)
- Nationwide Grant Opportunities (various)

Finding F-14: There is no operational budget beyond salary for the activities listed in the MCOE ELL Specialist job description.

Response F-14: MCOE agrees with this finding. Job descriptions do not include operational budget information. For the 2015-16 school year, the operational budget for the two positions specifically focused on ELs is included in the Educational Services Division’s budget of \$4,402,500. As previously noted, all Educational Administrators in the Educational Services Division support the needs ELs. The budget includes salary and benefits, specialist consulting services, operational expenditures, and instructional services for all programs, including English Language development. Further it should be noted that with the LCFF, school districts are projected to receive \$131,776,426, going directly to school districts to support English Learners, students of poverty and foster youth.

Recommendation R-14: Benchmark and evaluate County ELL practices and services against practices used by other COEs that are successfully serving ELL stakeholders beyond state compliance requirements.

Response R-14: MCOE does not benchmark and evaluate our EL practices and services against practices used by other COEs. Rather, the MCOE regularly collaborates with other COEs regarding the best instructional practices, and carefully monitors, visits and exchanges information with counties that have proven success to learn from them as well as share with them the successes in Monterey County.

Finding F-15: No professional grant writer(s) is on staff at MCOE to offer expertise, guidance and support to school districts.

Response F-15: MCOE agrees with this finding. Our reason for not having a “professional grant writer” on staff is explained in Response R-13.

Recommendation R-15: Perform an organizational audit to determine optimal staffing levels at the Monterey County Office of Education that reflects the diminished scope of required COE services provided under the new Local Control Funding model.

Response R-15: Annually MCOE reviews staffing levels to address the changing needs of our students, schools and districts. There has been no reduction in the scope of work required by MCOE due to LCFF. In fact, the scope of work has increased significantly due to the implementation of the LCFF model. In recognition of this additional work, the Governor's recently adopted budget has increased funding to county offices by 40 million dollars.

Conclusion

We are in an exciting new era for public education. Today's world and economic conditions call for all of us to engage more deeply than ever before in supporting our schools and students as together we prepare them for their success. In order to continually provide significantly greater levels of leadership, support and service, we are in the process of updating our strategic plan, with a strategic priority of addressing the needs of our ELs. All students require support from their family, their school and their community to thrive and succeed.

While we had various reactions to the findings and recommendations in this report, we appreciate the focus the report has brought to the needs of our ELs. We are fully committed to providing the leadership, support and service our school districts need as together we engage in this important work. Our primary issue with this report is the misconception that MCOE has authority over local districts. Local boards have authority over local districts. We collaborate and work in tandem with our school districts.

All kids are *our* kids, and it takes all of us, parents, schools and community, working together to prepare them for success at each step of their educational journey. The Monterey County Office of Education will continue to lead in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Nancy Kotowski, Ph.D.
Monterey County
Superintendent of Schools



Mary Claypool, President
Monterey County
Board of Education

Attachment A: Does Your Local Control Accountability (LCAP) Plan Deliver on The Promise of Increased or Improved Services for English Learners? *10 Research Aligned Rubrics to Help Answer the Question and Guide Your Program*