

September 8, 2000

The Honorable Gray Davis
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Davis:

I am pleased to provide you with a status report on the California Professional Development Initiatives that were launched this past summer. I was pleased to have an opportunity to meet with Interim Secretary for Education John Mockler this morning. My staff is working closely with him in discussing and analyzing the current year's efforts and in developing plans for future work.

I deeply appreciate your leadership and support as the various segments of education work together to improve teacher quality and student learning in California. These efforts are extremely important to our future, and I am sure that California State University Chancellor Charles Reed and President Jonathan Brown of the Association of California Independent Colleges and Universities concur.

I am pleased to report that faculty and teacher leaders representing approximately 40 institutions of higher education throughout California responded to your challenge to provide high-quality professional development, and through their efforts we are serving nearly 60,000 teachers in over 400 institutes. We expect this figure to grow in the months ahead as we add new schools and teachers on year-round calendars and initiate online learning options, and I want to reaffirm our commitment to reach out to 70,000 teachers through these programs. Follow-up instruction and support for all institute participants will continue throughout the school year. Assistant Vice President Robert Polkinghorn, who has responsibility for these efforts in my office, assures me that we are ready to meet this challenge.

Our greatest success has been with the Reading Professional Development Institutes. As you know, the plan was to expand our level of service from 6,000 teachers in 1999-2000 to 20,000 in the current year. However, enrollment in these programs swelled to nearly 24,000 shortly after we announced the programs. I am pleased to report, as well, that we received a \$5 million grant from the California Commission on Children and Families that enabled us to expand service to pre-kindergarten teachers above current State-funded levels so that more preschoolers will receive a solid foundation in reading prior to their first year in school. The

Bank of America Foundation has also contributed \$1 million over two years to The California State University to help with the Reading Initiative, and has provided corporate leadership to the overall effort.

Our greatest challenge has been in the area of mathematics. As you know, we have four types of institute offerings, although our principal emphasis has been algebra. We are currently one third of the way to our target of 9,000 teachers. We have made small but important steps in building support for the State Board of Education's new standards in frameworks in mathematics, which emerged after public, sometimes bitter, disagreements over the content and teaching methods. In particular, we have made an excellent start on content statements and assessments for the Institutes that are accepted by a substantial number of faculty and K-12 educators. I am confident we will make a strong showing by year's end, both in the quality of the program and in the number of teachers served.

Institute programs for teachers of English language learners and those sponsored by the California Subject Matter Projects are on target for meeting their goals (10,000 and 25,000 teachers respectively) in the current year.

My colleagues and I deeply appreciate your leadership, and your confidence in the University of California, The California State University, and California's independent colleges and universities. We are especially appreciative of your concern for improving the quality of public education in California. I am confident that together we are making great strides.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Atkinson
President

cc: Secretary Mockler
Chancellor Reed
President Brown