Members of the Board of Trustees  
835 College Avenue  
Marin Community College District  
Kentfield, CA 94904

Dear Board Members and Dr. Coon:

On January 18, 2011, I appeared before you to urge the Board to maintain the Center for Early Childhood Education. The Board took the visionary action to include the Center in the bond measure of March, 2011. On November 14, 2011, I wrote to the Board supporting the provision of some additional funding needed for site preparation. Again, the Board found those resources.

I am now writing to you to share that I had the privilege of visiting the new Center for Early Childhood Education on Tuesday, October 8, 2013, with my colleagues who are members of the Marin Early Childhood Education Partnership. What an incredible experience! The facility is beautiful, the staff, under Lyda Beardsley’s directorship, is first-rate and the program is solidly designed to provide a preschool experience that will prepare children for successful entry into school and give them the core knowledge, skills and values that they will need to succeed in their studies and, more importantly, in life in the 21st Century. I saw a staff that knew how to create a safe and nurturing environment for learning. I observed the gratitude of parents who were leaving their precious children in a place where they knew they were not just being watched, but taught.

On behalf of the children, parents and our entire education community, I want to thank the Board and President Coon for your courageous actions in keeping the Center in operation and in providing such a beautiful place for this critical program. The Center is a demonstration classroom for furthering our understanding of how young children learn. It provides for observation and research, student teacher training and work study jobs for students studying to be Pediatric Nurses, Child Psychologists and other related fields. Its effects are felt in all of Marin County and had improved the quality of childcare and early childhood education everywhere. It is an important part of closing the achievement gaps and giving its students a chance to succeed.

The challenges facing Trustees and Community College Presidents, faculty and support staffs over the past years have been almost overwhelming. Yet, this Board and your staff have never wavered in keeping your focus on students. By providing a wonderful Early Childhood Education Center, you have provided our youngest and most vulnerable students with a program that will affect their lives long after all of us here tonight are gone. You have reached out and touched the future. You have shown what courageous public service means. I commend you for this achievement and I am committed to continuing the partnership the Marin Community College District and the Marin County Office of Education have had over many years.

Sincerely,

MARY JANE BURKE  
Marin County Superintendent of Schools

BUILDING THE FUTURE . . . ONE STUDENT AT A TIME