



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

**JACK O'CONNELL**

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

July 20, 2009

California Writing Project  
University of California, Berkeley  
2195 Hearst Avenue, Suite 101  
Berkeley, CA 94720-1040

Dear Friends:

It is my great pleasure to recognize the California Writing Project on its 35th anniversary and extend my appreciation to all those who have participated in this remarkable collaborative effort.

While students today appear to be in a state of continuous communication, it is important that they are able to write about complex issues in ways that multiple readers can understand. Whether our students put word to paper or, more likely, put word to screen, they must develop strong writing skills to ensure future success. The ability to convey knowledge and information, even thoughts and feelings, logically and effectively is a fundamental life skill that will enable them to one day write their own success stories.

The California Writing Project has a central mission: to improve student writing and learning by improving the teaching of writing. I applaud the thousands of teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, parents, and students themselves who over the years have joined and supported this most noble and worthy cause.

The California Department of Education and I have a similar core purpose: to lead and support the continuous improvement of student achievement, with a specific focus on closing achievement gaps. Effective writing allows diverse groups and cultures to communicate with each other by sharing thoughts and life experiences, which in turn broadens their knowledge of and respect for each other. It is my hope that by teaching such communication skills to all students, we will help to narrow the achievement gap and prepare the next generation for success in the increasingly competitive global economy.

Congratulations on reaching this impressive milestone, and I wish you continued success in this most important endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack O'Connell".

JACK O'CONNELL