



**PALO VERDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**SPECIAL MEETING/STUDY SESSION**  
**Tuesday, April 22, 2025**  
**Open Session 5:00 p.m.**  
**One College Drive, Blythe, CA – CS 209**  
*(Livestream held at PVC Needles Center, 725 W. Broadway, Needles, CA)*

**1. Opening of Meeting**

**1.1 Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Board President Stella Styers.

**1.2 Flag Salute**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**1.3 Roll Call**

Members Present: Stella C Styers, Gloria A Copple, Jon E McNeil, Angel Ramirez, Brad E Arneson, George W Thomas, Glenda K Williams

Administrators Present: Dr. Bruce Moses, Superintendent/President, Clint Cowden, Asst. Supt./V.P. of Instruction and Student Services, Stephanie Slagan, Asst. Supt./V.P. of Administrative Services and College Advancement

**1.4 Approval of Agenda**

Approve the Agenda for this meeting.

Motion by Angel Ramirez, second by Brad E Arneson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Stella C Styers, Gloria A Copple, Jon E McNeil, Angel Ramirez, Brad E Arneson, George W Thomas, Glenda K Williams

**1.5 Announcement of Recusal From Agenda Items**

Trustee Styers recused herself from Action Item 4.1 due to a conflict of interest.

**2. Hearing of Citizens Agenda Items**

**2.1 Members of the public have this opportunity to directly address the Board on agenda items. Each speaker will be allowed a maximum of five (5) minutes per topic. Fifteen (15) minutes shall be the maximum time allotment for public speakers on any one subject regardless of the number of speakers at any one board meeting.**

There were no public comments offered regarding the items on tonight's agenda.

**3. Presentation**

**3.1 Institutional Data**

**Summary of Institutional Data Presentation – Presented by Ms. Alma Correa**

Alma Correa, Dean of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness, presented a comprehensive overview of how institutional data drives state funding for Palo Verde College under the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF). She explained that SCFF, implemented in 2018-19, shifted California community college funding to not

only reward enrollment but also incentivize student success and equity. Under this formula, 70% of PVC's funding is based on enrollment (FTES), 20% on supplemental factors (including students receiving the Pell Grant, Promise Grant, and AB 540 status), and 10% on student success outcomes, such as completion of degrees, certificates, transfer-level math and English, transfer to four-year universities, and attaining a regional living wage.

Alma emphasized that data from multiple areas—including faculty rosters, grades, financial aid, degrees awarded, and student demographics—is collected and submitted to the state via Management Information System (MIS) reports. She noted that while instructional data has long been the foundation of funding metrics, student services data is now playing a larger role, particularly in tracking financial aid recipients and student classifications such as special admit, CDCR, and in-service students.

She presented trend data showing positive movement in several funding categories, including an increase in Pell Grant recipients and AB 540 students. She also highlighted growth in associate degrees for transfer (ADTs), credit certificates, and the number of students completing 9+ CTE units. However, Alma noted that certain metrics—such as students completing transfer-level math and English in their first year—remain low, which limits funding potential in that area. She explained the importance of improving first-year completion rates and leveraging dual enrollment and mirrored noncredit/credit courses to support more students entering CTE pathways.

Alma also addressed the importance of FTES as a funding mechanism, explaining that one FTES equals 525 contact hours annually, and noting that although most PVC students are part-time, the institution has seen steady FTES growth over the last decade. She presented detailed charts on FTES trends—including supplemental FTES from in-service, CDCR, and noncredit programs—and emphasized the coordinated, cross-departmental effort required to report data accurately to the state.

The presentation also included a comparison between PVC and its peer colleges (Barstow, Copper Mountain, Mendocino, and West Kern), highlighting where PVC stands out (Promise Grant recipients, CTE units completed, and credit certificates awarded) and where improvement is needed (transfers and first-year math/English completion). Alma concluded by connecting this work to broader initiatives such as Vision 2030, the President's goals, and PVC's forthcoming Educational Master Plan, underscoring the College's commitment to continuous improvement, data-driven planning, and equitable student outcomes.

#### **Discussion on Institutional Data Presentation – Presented by Ms. Alma Correa**

Dr. Moses asked, "How much do we get reimbursed for credit, and how much do we get reimbursed for noncredit?"

Mr. Cowden explained that enhanced noncredit—meaning noncredit classes offered in a sequence of three courses aligned with a vocational need—are funded at the same rate as credit. He stated that if it is noncredit traditionally thought of at the institution, like quilting, it is funded at approximately one-third the rate of credit. He noted that the exact numbers could be confirmed by the business office, but generally, credit and enhanced noncredit are funded the same, while other noncredit classes are funded at a lower rate. Mr. Cowden added that if a class has 20 seats, with 15 students taking it for credit and 5 for noncredit, the funding would essentially be the same. He also mentioned that much of the work coming out of Adult Basic Education and the noncredit side is focused on creating opportunities for students to enter credit programs.

Trustee Williams asked whether, if someone is getting a certification in welding, it would fall under the credit side.

Mr. Cowden responded that for welding, the certification is through an outside party, but the college aligns the sequence of welding classes to be enhanced noncredit, meaning it would be funded at the same rate as credit. He explained that these are called "preparation certificates" and clarified that while the actual AWS welding certification does not align directly to the Chancellor's Office, the college documents it for employment purposes. This helps demonstrate that the class is vocational and not simply welding for personal enrichment. He noted that at other institutions where noncredit welding is not aligned to employment outcomes, it would be funded at the lower, one-third credit level.

Dr. Moses asked Dr. Robinson to elaborate on potential opportunities reflected in the recent student data.

Dr. Robinson responded that the current moment presents strong opportunities due to active program mapping and pathway development efforts. She explained that historically, there had not been a well-structured sequence of courses, but faculty are now developing clearer academic pathways. She emphasized the importance of ensuring students—particularly in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs—complete nine units in their major during their first year to maximize outcomes under the Student Centered Funding Formula (SCFF).

Dr. Robinson noted that previously, students were earning multiple certificates concurrently, which limited the funding benefits, as only one award would be counted. She recommended a shift to sequentially stacking certificates to increase both student momentum and funding outcomes. She further highlighted the

implementation of a single General Education (GE) pattern aligned with CSU and UC requirements (AB 928), which would enable more students to enter transferable pathways.

She also discussed efforts underway in noncredit CTE programming, noting that mirrored courses now offer students the ability to start with noncredit career preparation and later transition into for-credit programs—an opportunity particularly valuable for post-traditional students re-entering education.

Trustee Thomas asked what happens with students who complete their English and math requirements after two years—perhaps in four or five years—and whether they are still eligible under SCFF.

Dr. Robinson responded that such students would not qualify for the SCFF early completion incentive but reiterated the District's commitment to supporting all students, regardless of timeline. She cited efforts under AB 705 and AB 1705 focused on equitable placement, improved persistence, embedded tutoring, and culturally responsive curriculum.

Trustee Thomas followed up by asking how extended completion timelines affect the District's funding.

Mr. Cowden explained that the District receives FTES (Full-Time Equivalent Student) funding for enrollment but only receives SCFF incentive funding if students complete English and math within the first two years. He added that certificates and associate degrees still generate additional revenue, even if English and math are completed later. Mr. Cowden stressed that while the funding model incentivizes timely completion, institutional strategy must remain student-centered and flexible.

Trustee Williams observed that the model seemed like a performance-based system for both the college and the student.

Mr. Cowden confirmed that California has adopted a performance-based funding model. He shared an example of how scheduling practices have changed to prioritize student progress and discourage unnecessary delays in math and English course-taking.

Trustee Arneson inquired whether the District risks exhausting incarcerated students' financial aid by allowing them to earn multiple associate degrees rather than progressing toward a bachelor's degree.

Mr. Cowden clarified that the state only funds the highest award per student per year. He acknowledged that better communication with students is needed, especially incarcerated students, to encourage intentional academic planning. He explained that the District is working closely with CDCR and other agencies to prioritize registration for students closest to completion.

Dr. Robinson added that the District had recently analyzed data to identify incarcerated students with over 100 units—far more than the 60 required for an associate degree. Counseling and advising staff prioritized students within 15 units of completion by providing degree audits and tailored registration recommendations. She emphasized that students who complete a degree are then placed at the back of the registration queue to allow others to matriculate, in alignment with AB 928. CDCR has expressed strong support for these changes.

Trustee McNeil asked if these registration and prioritization strategies apply to community students or are limited to incarcerated students.

Dr. Robinson stated that the initiative began with incarcerated students due to scale and timing but is being extended to community students. Counselors are now reviewing graduation readiness for local learners and flagging those near completion for targeted support.

Trustee McNeil expressed that such efforts would be very helpful for Needles students and asked whether he could refer students directly to Dr. Robinson.

Dr. Robinson responded that within the confines of her role, she is happy to support students and will work collaboratively with Counseling and Advising to help find appropriate solutions.

Trustee McNeil commented that students in Needles often report challenges accessing counseling services and that better support would help address those frustrations.

Dr. Robinson acknowledged those concerns and reiterated that any student nearing graduation may be referred to her for assistance.

Trustee McNeil asked for an update on tutoring efforts referenced earlier.

Dr. Robinson shared that embedded tutoring is under consideration through AB 1705, particularly in courses with high DFW (Drop/Fail/Withdraw) rates. While additional planning is needed, she expressed hope that improvements would be implemented over the next academic year.

Trustee McNeil asked whether AB 540 students are primarily high school students.

Mr. Cowden clarified that AB 540 students are typically nonresident individuals who completed at least three years of high school in California but are not U.S. citizens. He noted that high school dual enrollment students fall under a separate "Special Admit" category.

Dr. Moses requested clarification on funding rates. Ms. Slagan responded that the credit rate is \$5,294, CDCP (Career Development and College Preparation) is \$7,400, and noncredit courses are reimbursed at \$4,400.

Trustee Williams inquired about the definition of a "regional living wage."

Ms. Correa explained that a regional living wage is the wage students typically earn when they obtain employment, and it is determined by the region based on factors such as cost of living. She noted that the figure is generally set by the state.

Mr. Cowden further elaborated, stating that while the calculation previously relied on MIT's Living Wage Calculator, California developed its own equation due to concerns with the MIT results. He explained that the state's formula bases the living wage on county-wide metrics. Mr. Cowden encouraged anyone interested in understanding the concept further to reference the MIT Living Wage Calculator online, as it provides a straightforward overview. He emphasized that in career technical education (CTE), the goal is to create programs that lead to living-wage careers. He clarified that California's definition of a living wage is based on the needs of a single individual, even though many students support families. He added that a living wage typically ranges from 1.3 to 1.5 times the minimum wage, equating to about \$22 to \$23 per hour, which can make a significant difference.

Trustee Williams then asked whether the College's transfer rates to four-year universities had increased since the introduction of the nursing program.

Ms. Correa responded that she did not believe there had been an increase.

Mr. Cowden added that while the nursing program will substantially impact the regional living wage—given that nursing salaries in California range from \$75 to \$81 per hour—it may not significantly affect transfer rates. He explained that most students graduating from the nursing program will likely enter the workforce directly rather than pursue a bachelor's degree. He further discussed how the College is improving transfer outcomes through initiatives such as guided pathways and associate degrees for transfer (ADTs). Mr. Cowden noted that these efforts help students navigate educational pathways more easily, particularly given the limited time counselors have with each student. He highlighted that the College has consolidated general education patterns into one streamlined path, greatly simplifying the decision-making process for students and positioning the College ahead of many other California Community Colleges in this area.

Dr. Moses addressed the Board to emphasize the college's ongoing commitment to a data-informed, student-centered approach to institutional planning. He stated that the foundation of this strategy is rooted in leadership, collaboration, and continuous improvement. As part of this approach, the administration is actively reviewing data to evaluate what is working, what needs to be refined, and what may no longer be effective.

Dr. Moses explained that while the institution is responding to data in real time, the implementation of new strategies—such as expanded support services or tutoring—often involves a lag of at least one semester. This is due to the time required to develop and implement appropriate structures and mechanisms. Nevertheless, the administration is taking deliberate steps, informed by input across the organization, to pivot and realign efforts where needed to enhance student outcomes.

He further noted that recent data presentations, including the one shared with the Board, reflect the intentional shift the college made to scale back FTES in 2023–24 due to reaching its funding cap. The college had previously been providing instruction to students for whom it received no funding—an estimated 175 FTES. In response, the administration strategically reduced enrollment to align with funded capacity while now focusing on securing additional supplemental funding through improved student outcomes, such as increasing Pell Grant recipients and ensuring CTE students complete nine units in their major during the first year.

Dr. Moses concluded by reiterating that while the impact of these strategies may take time to materialize, the institution remains committed to aligning its operations with long-term success goals and student equity measures.

Trustee Styers inquired whether the support services being discussed would be offered to students at CDCR (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) facilities.

Dr. Moses responded that a delegation of approximately 20 individuals from the college recently visited a CDCR facility, where they engaged with educational staff, institutional leadership, and the regional CDCR representative. The visit was described as highly productive, leading to follow-up strategy sessions focused on enhancing both instruction and student services. Dr. Moses emphasized that CDCR leadership has expressed a desire to shift away from incarcerated students earning multiple associate degrees and instead promote transfer pathways to four-year universities, some of which now operate within CDCR institutions. He noted the college's commitment to transitioning students from adult basic education into mirrored noncredit and credit-bearing courses, but emphasized that the institution would no longer offer courses solely to generate FTES without reimbursement. Instead, the college is pursuing additional funding through alternative allocations and supplemental metrics.

Trustee Styers asked whether CDCR students are funded through the Rising Scholars Program or if they receive financial aid such as Pell Grants.

Dr. Robinson explained that incarcerated students typically qualify for the California College Promise Grant, provided they meet state residency requirements. She shared that a recent systems review revealed issues with incomplete residency selections on student applications, which resulted in students being misclassified as out-of-state and deemed ineligible for state aid. To address this, the college is revising its admissions procedures to only accept completed applications, which will improve the accuracy of financial aid eligibility determinations, including for AB 540 students. Dr. Robinson clarified that CDCR students do not typically receive Pell Grants.

Mr. Cowden added that incarcerated students at the college are not standard Pell recipients and often fall outside the typical financial aid structure. He clarified that while there may be occasional exceptions, the college's standard operations do not include Pell Grant processing for Rising Scholars. He noted that the low percentage of Pell recipients in the District's student portfolio is partially due to the high concentration of Rising Scholars and Fire Science students—groups that are generally not engaged in the Pell application process.

Mr. Cowden then reviewed the concept of apportionment as it pertains to FTES (Full-Time Equivalent Students), credit and noncredit funding, and financial aid eligibility. He reiterated that apportionment encompasses all sources of revenue associated with student attendance and course types. Using a standard example, he explained that a "typical" full-time student might enroll in five three-unit classes per semester—equating to 15 units per term, or 30 units per year—thus qualifying as one FTES. He acknowledged the complexity of the 525-hour calculation used to determine FTES and emphasized that only a small percentage of the college's students attend full-time.

Trustee Williams asked whether a student enrolled in 10 three-unit classes per year would equate to two-thirds of one FTES.

Mr. Cowden clarified that such a student—completing 30 units per year—would in fact represent one FTES, as that aligns with the 15-unit-per-semester benchmark used for full-time status and degree completion in two years.

### **Presentation and Discussion on Institutional Data – Presented by Mr. Clint Cowden**

Mr. Cowden began his presentation, referencing a PowerPoint slide, and revisited the ten-year FTES average—explaining that the data reflected full-time equivalent students (not headcount) generated from classes held in the Needles area, including those offered at the high school and the Needles Center. He clarified that the blue bars on the graph represented credit courses, while the orange bars reflected noncredit, with Needles FTES consistently comprising just under 1% of the District's total.

Trustee McNeil raised a concern about potential inaccuracies in past FTES reporting for Needles, referencing a conversation he had with Alejandro. Trustee McNeil stated that Needles was previously credited with students who were not actually enrolled in Needles, but rather were consortium students. He noted that Alejandro "cleaned it up" upon joining the college by correcting the misclassification of high school students as adult education students. He asked that the data be reviewed for possible errors based on those past practices. He also pointed out that in his first two years on the board, Needles had no classes held in the facility, which may further affect the data's accuracy.

Mr. Cowden responded that while the District can dig deeper into the numbers, the potential FTES impact from those issues would likely be small — "plus or minus one FTES." He confirmed that the data in question reflects courses physically held at the center or the high school, not distance learning.

He then discussed a broader issue: the District had been reporting FTES that it was not funded for, estimating that it provided instruction for approximately 200 FTES over its funded cap. He explained that this resulted in teaching without reimbursement. As a result, the District made a strategic decision to scale back, including reducing the number of correctional institutions served from 21 to 6. He emphasized that while the total number of incarcerated students has decreased, the average number of units per student has increased — a sign of greater program efficiency and effectiveness.

Mr. Cowden noted the shift in focus from simply increasing headcount to placing resources into areas like counseling, tutoring, and graduation support, emphasizing that these changes reflect a student-centered strategy. Looking ahead, he presented a growth projection model with three paths:

- A high growth trajectory continuing at the current rate of 6.12%, which would require significant planning and expansion of programs and personnel;
- A floor model based on conservative estimates accounting for potential slowdowns or economic downturns;
- A moderate trajectory serving as a middle path that could be adjusted upward if the state provides more growth funding or if the Board chooses to support expanded growth efforts.

He stressed that strategic planning is essential, given that changes like hiring faculty or building new programs can take 18 to 24 months. He noted that administrators like Dr. Robinson are already planning 3–5 years into the future.

Mr. Cowden also explained the college's participation in the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) program, which allows students from bordering states to attend at a reduced rate. He stated that Palo Verde College is one of only six California community colleges that qualify based on location and enrollment size. Needles falls within 10 miles of the Nevada border, making the college eligible under WUE guidelines. He confirmed that the Chancellor's Office had re-verified the college's eligibility and that documentation is kept on file. Through WUE, the District may claim up to 100 FTES, and currently has room for additional growth under the program. He added that students participating in WUE pay 1.5 times the in-state tuition rate, making it an affordable and attractive option.

Dr. Moses asked, "Just for the example — the 6.12%, the gray line — if we stay on that trajectory, when do we hit 3,000 [FTES]?"

Mr. Cowden responded that based on current growth projections, the District would reach 3,000 FTES in 2026–27, "so in two years," and noted that would align with their anticipated three-year growth outlook.

Dr. Moses followed up, asking for confirmation: "So if we hit 3,000, we would not be eligible for 100%?"

Mr. Cowden confirmed, stating that if the college reaches 3,000 FTES, "we would not be eligible for any FTEs from out of state, any of the apportionment from out of state," and added that tuition for those students would also increase from the current \$69 per unit rate.

Trustee Williams asked if those students would then just pay the regular out-of-state tuition price.

Ms. Slagan clarified that without WUE eligibility, tuition for students from Arizona and Nevada would rise to \$138 per unit. She added that regular in-state students pay \$46 per unit, and WUE-eligible students currently pay \$69 per unit.

Trustee Williams asked if students under the 100 FTES WUE cap would still qualify for the \$69 rate.

Ms. Slagan confirmed: "Correct."

Mr. Cowden emphasized that tuition revenue makes up only a small fraction of the District's overall funding. He explained that the college receives apportionment not only for FTES ("butts in seats") but also for various student success metrics and performance-based funding indicators. If the District surpasses 3,000 FTES, "all of that would go away. We would only claim tuition."

Mr. Cowden explained that Palo Verde College is currently eligible to claim up to 100 FTES for out-of-state students—primarily from Arizona and Nevada—and is presently averaging about 12 FTES at the applicable location. He clarified that it takes roughly 80 individual students to generate 12 FTES, meaning the District would need to recruit approximately 730 students to fully utilize the 100 FTES limit under current enrollment patterns.

Dr. Moses added that this correlates with the District's part-time student population, noting that 84% of students are part-time, which impacts the FTES conversion.

Mr. Cowden agreed and said that the part-time percentage is likely even a little higher, as he believed Ms. Correa was referring to the District-wide figure.

Trustee Williams asked whether more classes would be required to accommodate that number of students.

Trustee McNeil commented that outreach and marketing efforts would be needed.

Mr. Cowden responded that it would take "all of the above." He emphasized that generating 100 FTES, depending on the mix of students and how they are counted, could equate to \$500,000 to \$700,000 annually in funding. He added that because the college is a two-year institution, roughly half the student population turns over each year, requiring ongoing recruitment of 350 to 400 new students annually to maintain growth.

Dr. Moses asked whether those 400 students would need to be physically present at the center or if they could be reached through other modalities.

Mr. Cowden explained that the college is already expanding through online synchronous instruction, utilizing classroom technology that allows a class to be taught in-person while also broadcasting online. This enables students to attend from home or local sites (such as the Needles Center lobby), which is especially helpful for students with limited broadband access. He added that this model still supports collaborative learning, with faculty using Zoom breakout rooms for group work and interaction.

Mr. Cowden then referenced the current FTES figure, stating that 2,680.1 FTES had just been submitted the previous day. He took a moment to recognize Ms. Alma Correa, expressing sincere appreciation for her work and collaboration across departments. He remarked on the critical role of Institutional Research and said, "I cannot express how much I'm going to miss you. This amount of data, this being able to do this — I hope everyone sees that institutional research has to get along with everybody, has to work with everybody, and have the hardest conversations with everybody. And we're deeply going to miss you, and I am very much going to miss you."

Mr. Cowden continued, noting that at the current growth rate, the college could reach 3,000 FTES by 2026–27 or 2027–28. He explained that hitting 3,000 FTES would disqualify the District from claiming any out-of-state FTES under WUE (Western Undergraduate Exchange). He stressed the importance of long-term planning, as crossing this threshold would require formal notification to the state and impact both tuition structures and funding eligibility. He reminded the board that students are entitled to catalog rights, so tuition changes cannot be applied midyear, even if the FTES threshold is crossed. He explained that while the state can change tuition at any time, this specific opt-out scenario (triggered by enrollment) lacks clear state guidance.

He urged the Board to begin considering its strategic direction, particularly regarding growth, marketing, and budget planning. He emphasized that the loss of \$500,000–\$700,000 annually in out-of-state apportionment would need to be accounted for and said, "We're looking to you for that guidance... Where should we be directing growth? How should we be moving forward?"

He concluded by explaining that institutional contracts, step-and-column salary structures, and other mechanisms are tied to growth, meaning the District must either grow or consider staffing reductions. He asked for direction from the Board on where growth efforts should be focused.

Trustee McNeil recommended bringing the topic back as an item on a future agenda for further discussion.

Dr. Moses agreed and stated that more information would be brought forward as the administration continues working on its Strategic Enrollment Management Plan. He referenced Dr. Robinson's efforts to build academic pathways with faculty and emphasized that this work aligns with his presidential goals and objectives. Dr. Moses reiterated the need to capture more local high school students and support their transition to completing associate degrees at the college.

He explained that while results from current efforts may not be visible until Spring 2026, the administration is planning two to three years in advance and will bring forward recommendations tied to future budgeting and resource allocation. He concluded by saying, "We're being much more strategic as an administration," and emphasized that growth decisions must be paired with Board input and collaboration.

Trustee McNeil responded, "That was a really good answer," stating that he was initially trying to defer the discussion but felt Dr. Moses' explanation was exactly the right response.

Trustee McNeil then commented on the role of Lake Tahoe Community College in advocating for the legislation related to enrollment caps and expressed concerns that the 3,000 cap could potentially change in the future due to legislative influence.

Mr. Cowden noted that Tahoe is the smallest college in California and unlikely to exceed the 3,000 enrollment cap.

Dr. Moses added that he and Mr. Cowden would be traveling to Sacramento again next week to continue advocating for an increased enrollment cap. He noted that during their last visit, they requested an increase of 500 additional students to serve more local learners rather than incarcerated students. Although they did not receive a definitive answer, they remain committed to pursuing the request. Dr. Moses explained that the Chancellor's Office controls the enrollment cap and that efforts are ongoing to meet expectations, such as focusing on more local educational initiatives and offering additional face-to-face instruction at local prisons.

Dr. Moses emphasized the District's priority to allocate any cap increases toward serving local high school and adult populations, particularly in Blythe and Needles, rather than pursuing FTES in outlying areas.

The discussion then shifted to available incentive funding. Dr. Moses shared that upcoming efforts include working with seniors from Palo Verde High School and Needles High School to complete FAFSA applications, with the goal of identifying Pell-eligible students. Pell eligibility can result in additional incentive funding for the District.

Mr. Cowden elaborated that while some incentive funding is provided for Pell-eligible students, significant funding is awarded when Pell-eligible students persist and complete their programs. He explained that the Chancellor's Office structured incentive funding to discourage institutions from focusing solely on recruiting from private schools and to support lower-income students who require additional resources to succeed.

Trustee Williams requested to be informed about the outreach efforts at Needles High School. Dr. Moses responded that he would inform the Board; however, he clarified that these events are working sessions between staff, students, and parents, rather than formal events where administrators or board members would typically participate.

Trustee Williams noted that sometimes students fail to communicate important information to their parents. Dr. Moses assured that staff would work directly with students and parents to ensure proper communication and support.

Trustee McNeil reported that during a recent senior event, out of 45 graduating girls, 20 indicated they plan to attend Mohave Community College (MCC), and one plans to attend Palo Verde College. He noted this is an improvement from last year when no students planned to attend Palo Verde, but stressed the importance of reaching out sooner, as many students have already committed to MCC. He emphasized the goal of capturing more of the graduating class, which totals 89 students.

Trustee Thomas asked why students are choosing MCC over Palo Verde College and whether the issue was the types of classes offered.

Trustee McNeil explained that the Needles Center does not offer regular classes that students want, and the Center lacks the activity and environment of a full college campus, which students are seeking.

Dr. Moses agreed, noting that the Needles site is an educational center, not a full-fledged campus like MCC. He explained that MCC offers a full campus life and programming that we can't offer at the Needles Educational Center. Dr. Moses further stated that because MCC is a full-fledged campus with proximity to Needles, it will always pose a challenge.

Trustee Williams noted that MCC is transitioning toward becoming a four-year college and questioned whether they would continue to be in direct competition with Palo Verde College as a result.

Dr. Moses clarified that he does not believe Mohave Community College is becoming a four-year college but rather that MCC has been approved to offer select four-year degrees. He further explained that some institutions, such as Cochise College, drop the word "Community" from their name for branding purposes while continuing to operate primarily as two-year colleges.

Trustee Thomas mentioned that some community colleges are being allowed to offer four-year degrees.

Trustee Williams asked whether Palo Verde College could do the same.

Dr. Moses added that, based on his past experience in Arizona, certain community college districts—such as Maricopa—have been approved by the state to offer specific four-year degrees in designated areas. However, he emphasized that receiving approval to offer select four-year programs does not necessarily mean the institution is transitioning into a four-year college. He ended by stating that he would look into it further and get back with more information.

Trustee Thomas asked if Palo Verde College was getting closer to offering a four-year nursing degree.

Dr. Moses responded that while some colleges are petitioning to offer bachelor's degrees, Palo Verde College is not there yet.

Mr. Cowden added that to apply to offer a four-year degree, a college must have a large and robust associate degree program and show that local employers are requiring a bachelor's degree instead of an associate degree. He noted that the state's criteria are somewhat vague and continue to evolve.

Trustee Styers concluded the discussion by expressing appreciation to Ms. Correa and Mr. Cowden for their outstanding presentation and thanked everyone for their engagement in the discussion.

#### **4. Action Items - Misc**

##### **4.1 Excusal of Trustee Stella Styers from April 8, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

Trustee Styers recused herself due to a conflict of interest and did not participate in the discussion or vote on the item.

Approve the excusal of Trustee Stella Styers from the April 8, 2025, Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees for compensation purposes.

Motion by Brad E Arneson, second by Jon E McNeil.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Gloria A Copple, Jon E McNeil, Angel Ramirez, Brad E Arneson, George W Thomas, Glenda K Williams

Abstain: Stella C Styers

#### **5. Hearing of Citizens Non-Agenda Items**

##### **5.1 Members of the Public have this opportunity to directly address the Governing Board on items of interest to the public, subject to five (5) minute time limitation per individual.**

**No public comments were offered.**

No public comments were offered.

#### **6. Possible Future Agenda Items**

Trustee McNeil commented that it was good to get the update while the administration is still working through the details of the plan. He noted that as the different pieces start coming together, it would be beneficial to have the topic placed on the agenda. He added that he anticipates it may be on the agenda at every meeting moving forward, describing it as "the modeling play coming together."

Dr. Moses responded that the administration would return to one of the upcoming study sessions to present what has collectively "bubbled up" as the direction the administration believes is best for aligning efforts and resources. He confirmed that this would be brought to a future session.

Trustee McNeil agreed and said it's good to keep the Board informed so they have a clear idea of what's developing.

Trustee Williams asked whether the college was "bumped up" with another college that we "map" out people to.

Dr. Robinson responded that there are federal articulation agreements with CSU, UC, and Arizona State, allowing students to transfer seamlessly. She explained that the next step is to develop direct agreements for more structured pathways, such as "2+2" or even "1+2+1" models—starting in high school, spending two years at Palo Verde College, and then completing a bachelor's degree at a partner institution. She emphasized the goal of helping students visualize a complete pathway from high school to career.

Trustee Williams shared that, according to what she had heard, students would be assigned a college counselor while still in high school, starting in their junior year. That same counselor would stay with them through their senior year, graduation, and continue to support them through college.

Dr. Robinson agreed and described a successful model from her previous institution, Walla Walla Community College, where students participated in a co-enrollment program with Lewis-Clark State College. Students would begin coursework at Walla Walla while already being admitted to Lewis-Clark, even receiving a joint college ID card. This model helped students feel a sense of commitment, belonging, and purpose. She emphasized that replicating something like this locally—anchored in signature programs—could build persistence and retention while helping students stay on track through a six-year educational plan (associate plus bachelor's degree).

Trustee Williams asked whether the college was "bumped up" with another college that we "map" out people to.

Dr. Robinson responded that there are federal articulation agreements with CSU, UC, and Arizona State, allowing students to transfer seamlessly. She explained that the next step is to develop direct agreements for more structured pathways, such as "2+2" or even "1+2+1" models—starting in high school, spending two years at Palo Verde College, and then completing a bachelor's degree at a partner institution. She emphasized the goal of helping students visualize a complete pathway from high school to career.

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helped students feel a sense of commitment, belonging, and purpose. She emphasized that replicating something like this locally—anchored in signature programs—could build persistence and retention while helping students stay on track through a six-year educational plan (associate plus bachelor's degree).

Mr. Cowden added that the college has been participating in the CSU "Degree with a Guarantee" program, where associate degrees for transfer (ADTs) are tied to specific CSU articulation agreements. He noted that these aren't generic pathways—the college must build each curriculum and get it accepted by a CSU campus. He pointed trustees to a handout showing these pathways and noted that work is also underway with Arizona State University (ASU), including the college's "MyPathway to ASU" alignment. Students in the RN program, for example, are automatically accepted into ASU's BSM program. He emphasized that the college is now doubling down on expanding these options and making students more aware of them through counselor engagement and outreach.

Trustee McNeil shared that 30 years ago, he was involved in similar efforts. Under the rules at that time, students didn't have to be 18 to pass the LVN. He explained that after completing two years in high school with him, students earned their LVN, then went on to Mount SAC for one year to become certified nursing assistants, and completed their LVN. He then coordinated with UCLA so those students could become registered nurses. He recalled that some of the students intentionally followed that path to become doctors—completing two years of college and then going directly into medical school. "I had several kids who did that," he said. He also referenced other models, including "two plus two plus two" programs, adding, "It's not a brand-new concept, but it's one that's really terrific and worked great."

Trustee Williams agreed and commented, "Yeah, because I think it gives them a bigger picture and already kind of feels like that answer to, 'What are you going to do with your life?'"

Trustee Thomas added that long before his time at the college, there had previously been some sort of agreement in place with Arizona State as well.

Trustee Styers concluded the discussion by confirming that no future agenda items had been requested.

Trustee McNeil noted, "I think it's good if he just updates us."

Trustee Styers clarified that [Dr. Moses] would be providing updates at a future Study Session, not during regular Board meetings.

## **7. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.



**Dr. Bruce Moses, Superintendent/President**

### **Minutes approved at May 13, 2025, Regular Board Meeting**

*Minutes generated by Naomi Alaniz, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/President and Board of Trustees. These minutes are a concise summary of reports, discussions, and actions taken at this meeting. For detailed comments and discussion, a tape is available to the public for 30 days after the date of this meeting.*