



Future Forward: Elevating Student Achievement Together

Strategic Plan 2025-2030

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Message from the Chancellor

I am proud to introduce our new five-year strategic plan, *Future Forward: Elevating Student Achievement Together*. This plan represents the collective vision of our students, faculty, staff, and community partners, who share a deep commitment to transforming lives through education. In an ever-changing world, this plan serves as our guiding light, illuminating a path toward innovative solutions, equity-driven practices, and unparalleled opportunities for every student who walks through our doors. Together, we will build on our rich legacy while boldly embracing the future.



At the heart of *Future Forward* is our unwavering dedication to student success. This plan centers on empowering students to thrive academically, professionally, and personally. We are prioritizing initiatives that enhance access, increase retention, and foster a sense of belonging within our campuses. By leveraging cutting-edge technology, strengthening academic support systems, and cultivating inclusive learning environments, we will ensure that every student has the tools they need to achieve their dreams. Our focus is clear: to place student achievement at the core of all that we do.

The journey ahead will require collaboration, creativity, and a shared commitment to excellence. With *Future Forward*, we are not just envisioning a brighter future; we are actively shaping it. As we embark on this transformative journey together, I invite every member of our district—from students and staff to community stakeholders—to join us in this ambitious endeavor. Together, we will elevate student achievement, foster innovation, and secure a thriving future for generations to come. Let us move forward with purpose, passion, and the belief that the best is yet to come.

Dr. Steven Bloomberg, Chancellor
Kern Community College District

The Communities We Serve: Population and Demographics

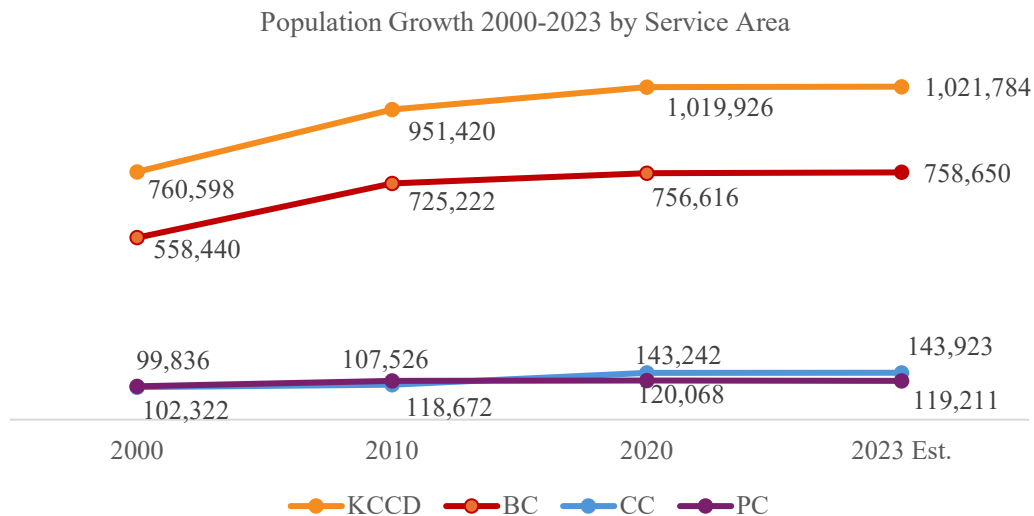
The Kern Community College District (KCCD) service area is over 24,900 square miles, encompassing Inyo County, most of Kern County, the southwestern half of Tulare County, and small portions of Mono and San Bernardino Counties. The major population centers within the district are in Kern and Tulare Counties.

The district population grew at a rate of 25.1% from the 2000 to 2010 census and 7.4% from 2010 through 2023. The growth rates of each college's services area are described below.

Bakersfield College's (BC) service area, though not the largest geographically, is the most densely populated, and the population is increasing. Population in the BC service area increased by 29.9% from the 2000 to 2010 census, but only 4.6% from 2010 through 2023.

Cerro Coso Community College's (CC) service area is the most widely spread geographically and the least densely populated. The campuses serve students in the communities of Ridgecrest, Mojave, California City, Bishop, Mammoth Lakes, Tehachapi and the Kern River Valley. CC's service area population grew at a rate of 7.7% between the 2000 and 2010 census and 33.8% from 2010 through 2023.

Porterville College's (PC) service area is located in southwestern Tulare County. The population of PC's service area increased at a rate of 16% from 2000 to 2010 but slowed to 0.5% from 2010 through 2023.



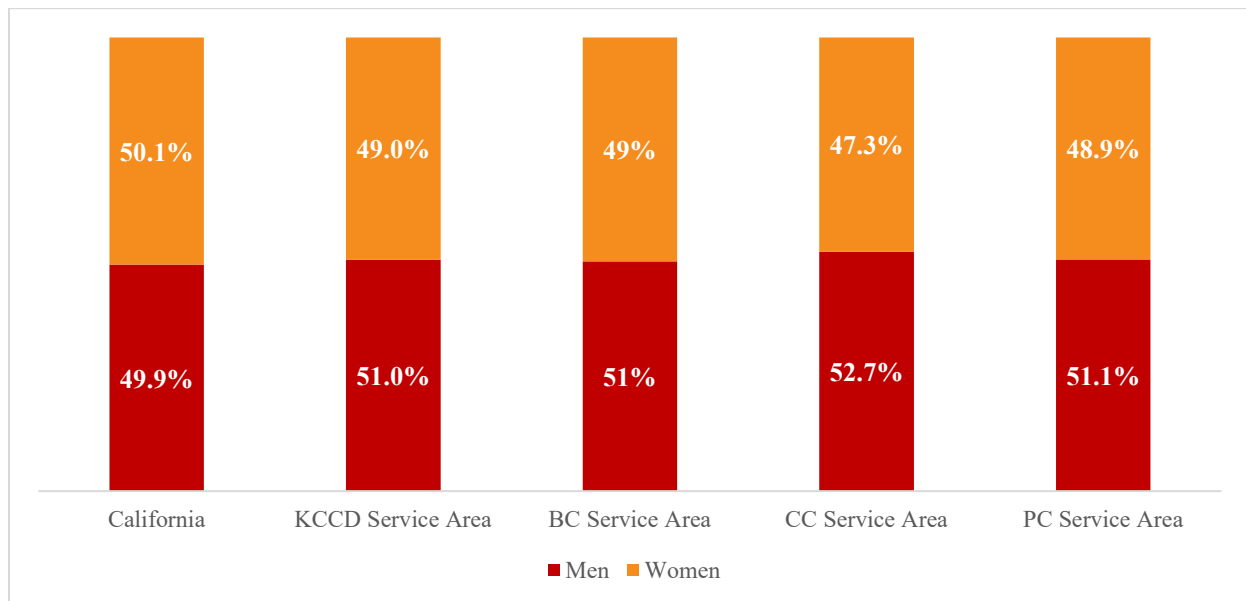
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023 Estimates

Race and Ethnicity

In 2023, 53.9% of the KCCD service area population identified as Hispanic or Latino, 34.3% identified as White. The Hispanic or Latino population in the KCCD service area is higher than the Hispanic or Latino population for the State of California, which was 38.8% in 2023. This trend was consistent for the BC service area and the PC service areas where the majority of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino. This trend was not consistent for the CC service area where the majority of the population identified as White. In 2023, 59.9% of the CC service area population identified as White and only 24.9% identified as Hispanic or Latino.

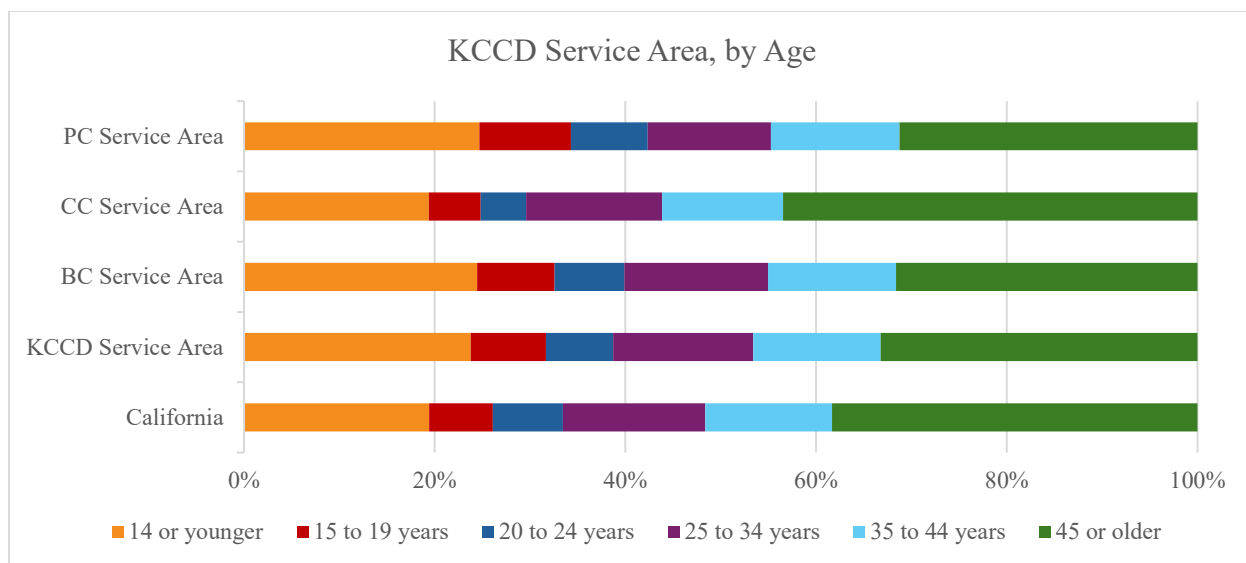
Gender

More men than women live in the KCCD service area. In 2023, 51% of the KCCD service area population identified as men while 49% identified as women. The trend is consistent in the BC, CC, and PC service areas. The gender distribution for all of the KCCD service areas is consistent with that of Kern County and the State of California, which also have more men than women.



Age

In 2023, 31.7% of the KCCD service area population was 19 years or younger, 21.7% between the ages of 20 and 34, 46.6% were over the age of 35. BC had a similar age distribution. CC had a larger percentage of their population over the age of 35 (56.6%). PC had a slightly larger percentage of their population under the age of 19 (34.3%). Overall, the KCCD service area population is younger than that of the State of California.



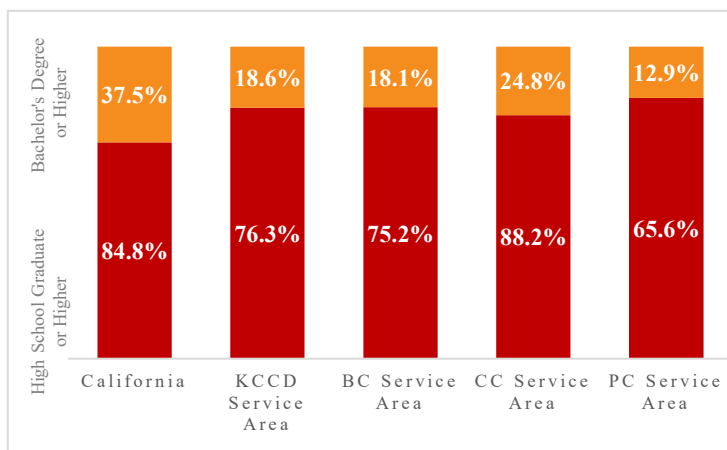
Income and Poverty

The median household income for the KCCD service area is much lower than the State of California and Kern County. In 2023, the median household income for the KCCD service area was \$62,143, \$33,378 less than the median household income for the State of California and \$6,750 less than the median household income for Kern County.

The percentage of individuals living below poverty level in the KCCD service area is much higher than in the State of California and slightly lower than in Kern County. In 2023, 18.2% of individuals were living below poverty compared to 12% for the State of California and 19.2% for Kern County. This trend was consistent for the BC and PC service areas. The CC service area had a slightly higher percentage of individuals living below poverty in comparison to the State of California, but a lower percent in comparison to Kern County. The percentage of families living below poverty level in the KCCD service area is much higher than the State of California but lower than those for Kern County. In 2023, 15% of families in the KCCD service area were living below poverty compared to 8.5% for the State of California and 15.3% for Kern County. This trend was consistent for the BC service area. The PC service area had a significantly higher percentage of families living below poverty in comparison to the State of California, while the CC service area had a lower percentage of families living below poverty in comparison to those for Kern County.

Educational Attainment

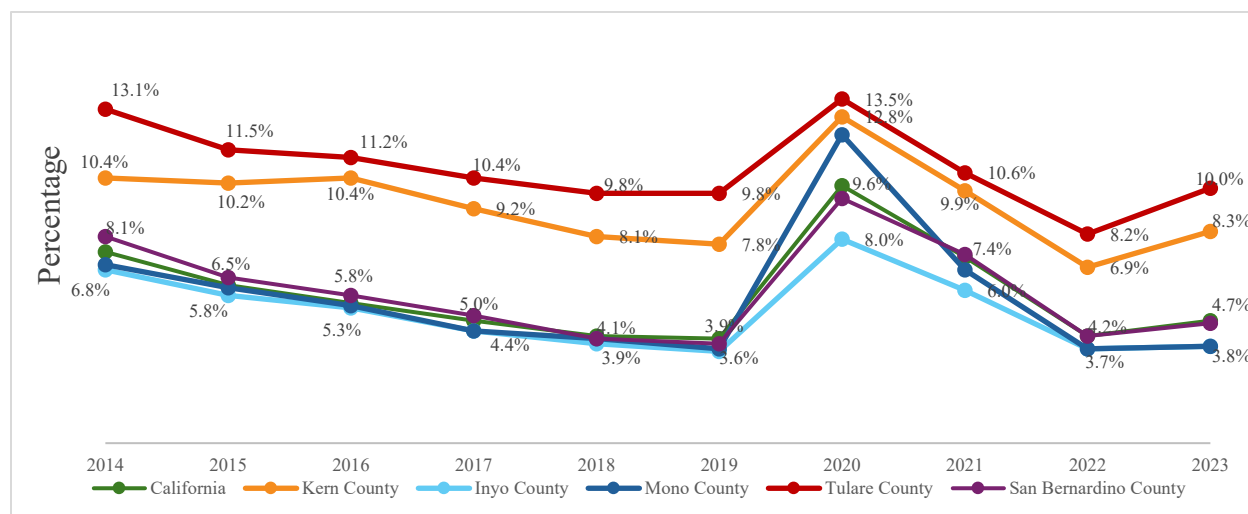
In 2023, 76.3% of the KCCD service area population 25 years and over reported having a high school diploma (or its equivalency) or higher, while 18.6% had a bachelor's degree or higher. BC had similar rates of educational attainment for its population 25 years and over, while PC had lower rates and CC had higher rates. Overall, the educational attainment of KCCD service area



population 25 years and over is lower than the State of California where 84.8% of the population 25 years and over reported having a high school diploma (or its equivalency) or higher and 37.5% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Educational attainment impacts the employment, income level and quality of life of youth and families in our communities.

Unemployment

The five counties within the KCCD service area are Kern, Inyo, Mono, Tulare, and San Bernardino Counties. The labor force for these four counties consisted of 609,590 individuals in 2014. In 2023, the number of people in the labor force for these counties increased to 624,460. Over a ten-year period, these counties experienced a 2.4% increase in their labor force, a 5.3% increase in the total number of people employed, and a 24.7% decrease in unemployment. The unemployment rate in all five counties has been on the decline since 2014 but increased slightly in 2020, which is consistent with statewide data.



Source: State of California, Employment Development Department (2023). Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Annual Average.

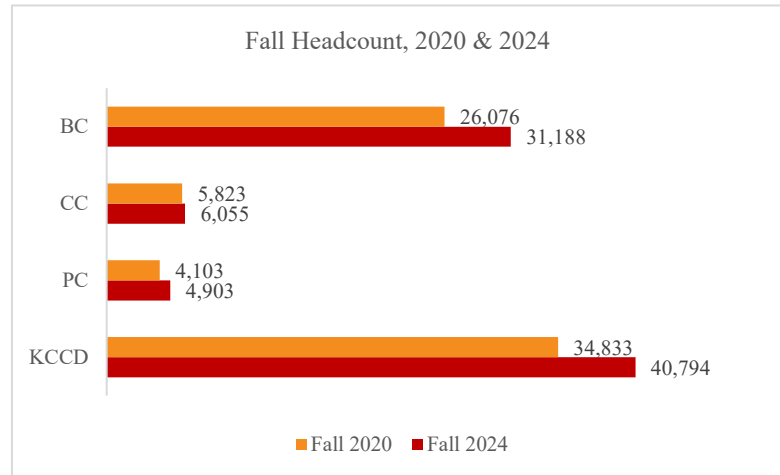
The Students We Serve: Headcount and Demographics

Headcount

KCCD is geographically one of the largest community college districts in the United States. Student headcount for the Kern Community College District was 40,794 for Fall 2024, which includes special admission students concurrently enrolled in high school. Student headcount increased by 5,961 students

between 2020 and 2024. The district experienced a 14.6% increase in the overall student population during this time. Bakersfield College experienced the largest increase (16.4%), followed by Porterville College (16.3%), and Cerro Coso Community College (3.8%).

In Fall 2024, 6,993 students enrolled in the district (17.1%) were incoming students. At Bakersfield College, 5,523 students (17.7%) were incoming students. At Cerro Coso Community College, 706 students (11.7%) were incoming students. At Porterville College, 937 students (19.1%) were incoming students. Overall, the percentage of incoming students increased at all three colleges between 2020 and 2024.

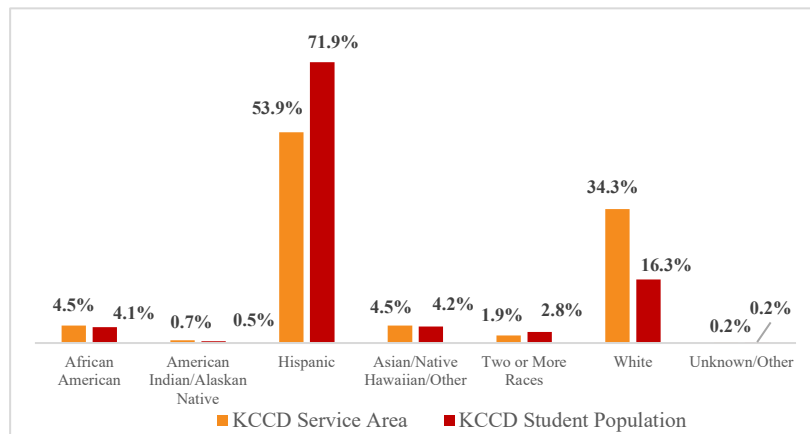


Race/Ethnicity

In fall of 2024, 71.9% of the KCCD student population identified as Hispanic or Latino and 16.3% identified as White. The underserved ethnic population represents 76.4% of the KCCD student population and includes African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and

Hispanic populations. The underserved ethnic group student population was even higher at BC and PC. Overall, most students at all three colleges are Hispanic/Latino.

The KCCD student population is more diverse than that of the community's residents, with 34.3% of the KCCD service area being White compared to 16.3% of fall 2024 students. A significantly higher percentage of students also come from an underserved ethnic group.

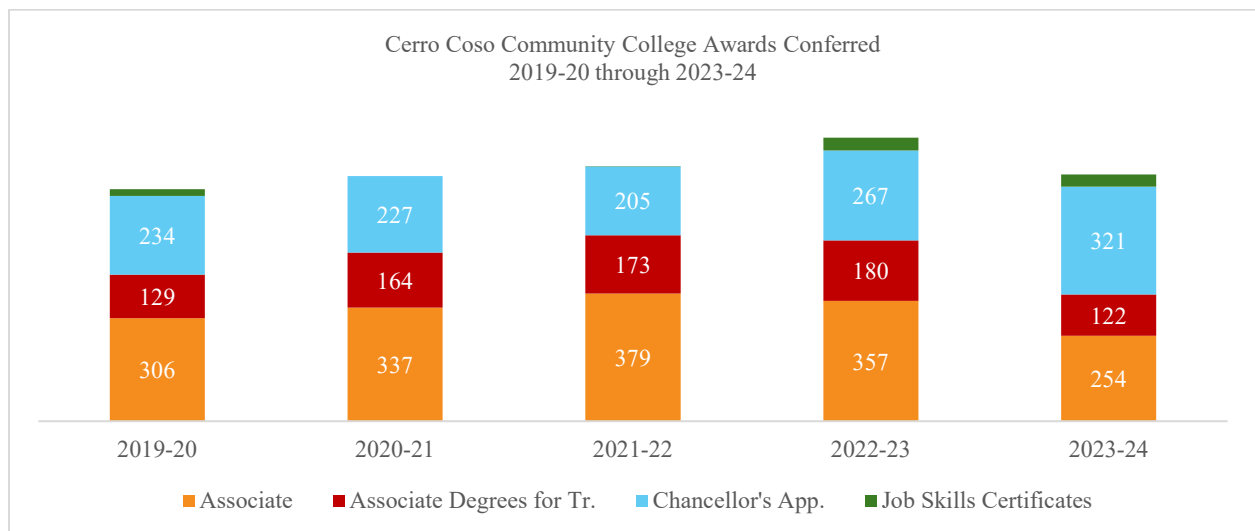
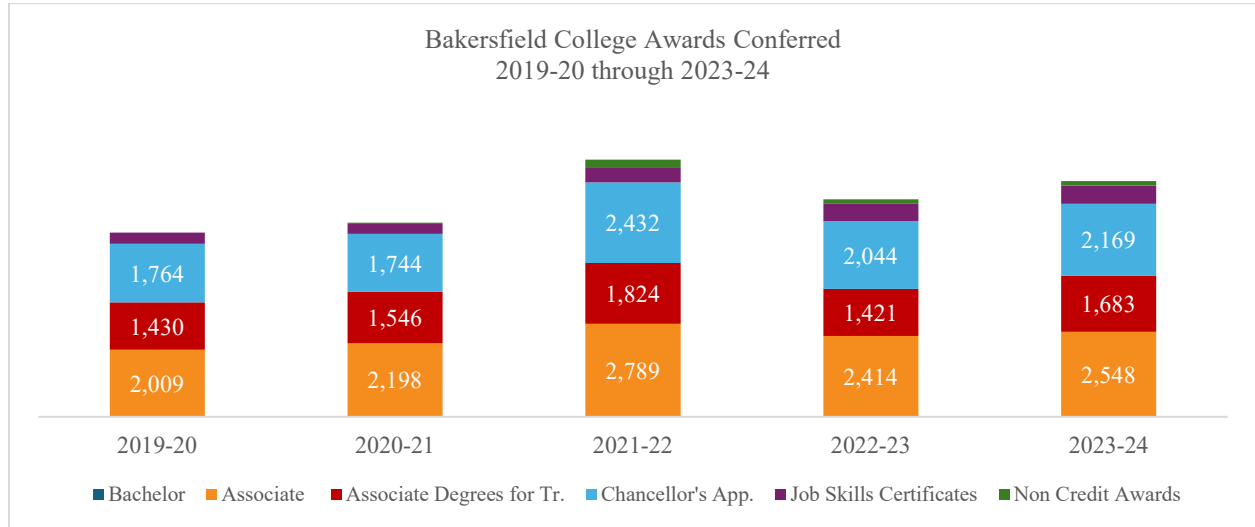


2023 Estimate KCCD Service Area Population vs. Fall 2024 KCCD Student Population

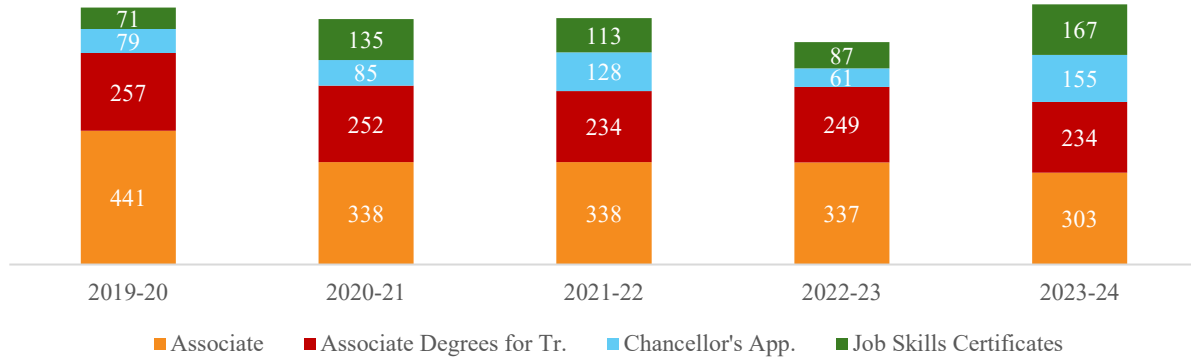
Student Success

Awards

In 2023-2024, BC awarded 3,568 awards, CC awarded 567 awards, and PC awarded 746 awards. Of the three colleges, BC has had the largest increase in awards (35.8%) from 2019-20, followed by CC and PC. Associate degrees were the primary awards awarded at all three colleges followed by Certificates of Achievement.



Porterville College Awards Conferred
2019-20 through 2023-24

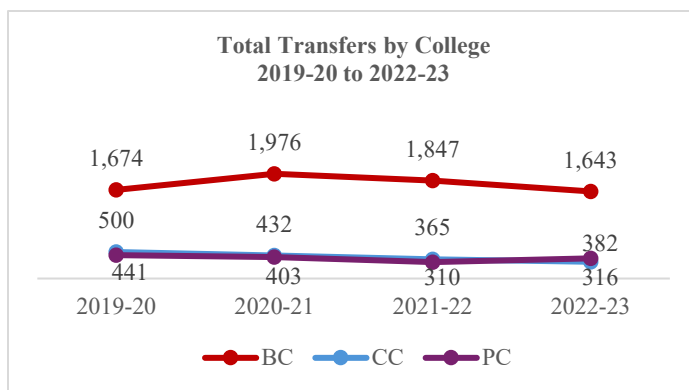


Transfer

In 2022-23, the number of students who transferred to a four-year postsecondary institution declined 10.3% districtwide. BC had a 1.9% decrease in the total number of students who transferred to a CSU or UC, In-State Private, or Out-of-State college institution, PC had a 13.4% decrease and CC had a 36.8% decrease.

In 202-23, BC had 1,643 transfers, PC had 382 transfers and CC had 316 transfers.

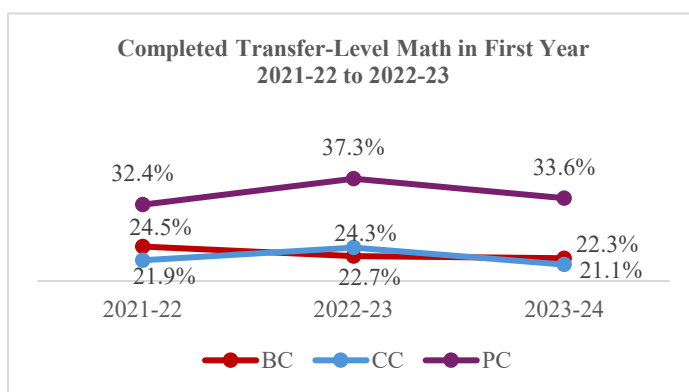
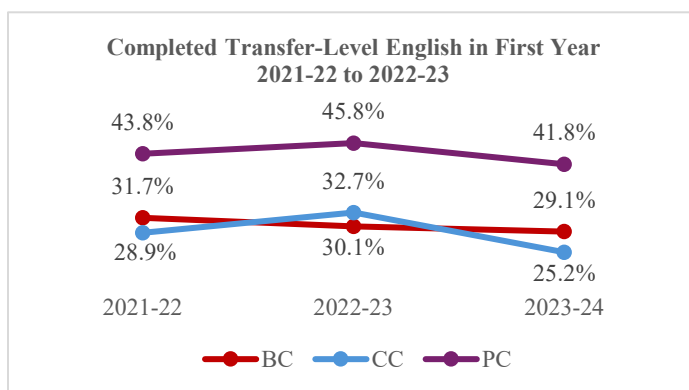
The majority of BC and PC students transferred to CSU or UC. While over 40% of CC students transferred to Out-of-State institutions. CSU Bakersfield and CSU Fresno were the two most popular destinations for transfer students in the district.



Course Success

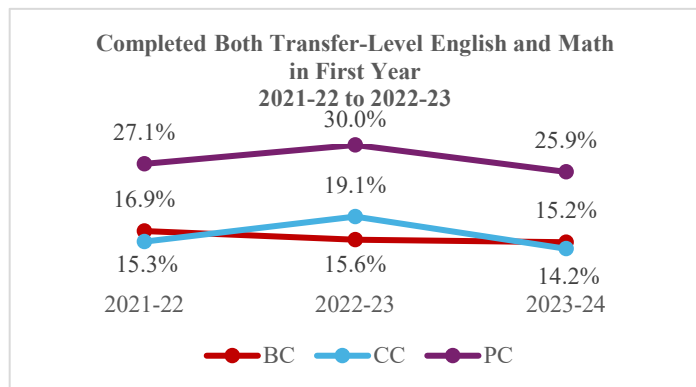
The percentage of students who completed a transfer-level English course, a transfer-level Math course, or both a transfer-level English and Math course during their first year have improved significantly over the past ten years.

CC and PC reported their highest transfer-level English completion rates in 2022-23. All three colleges experienced slight declines in 2023-24. BC experienced a 1% decrease in the percentage of students who completed a transfer-level English course during their first year, CC experienced a 7.5% decrease, and PC experienced a 4% decrease.



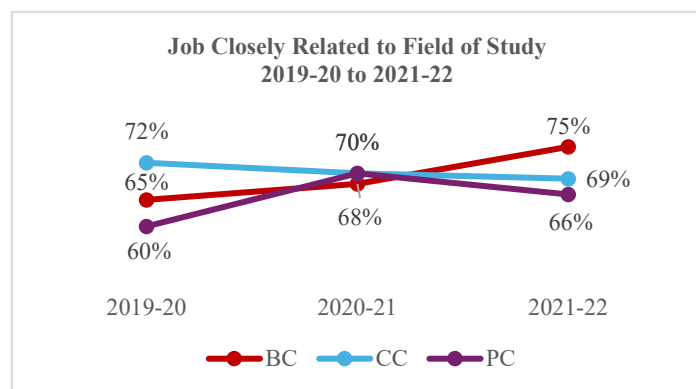
Completion rates for transfer-level Math were much lower than completion rates for transfer-level English at all three colleges. PC had higher completion rates in both transfer-level English and Math than BC and CC.

Fewer students completed *both* a transfer-level English and a transfer-level Math course during their first year. Completion rates declined at all three colleges in 2023-24.



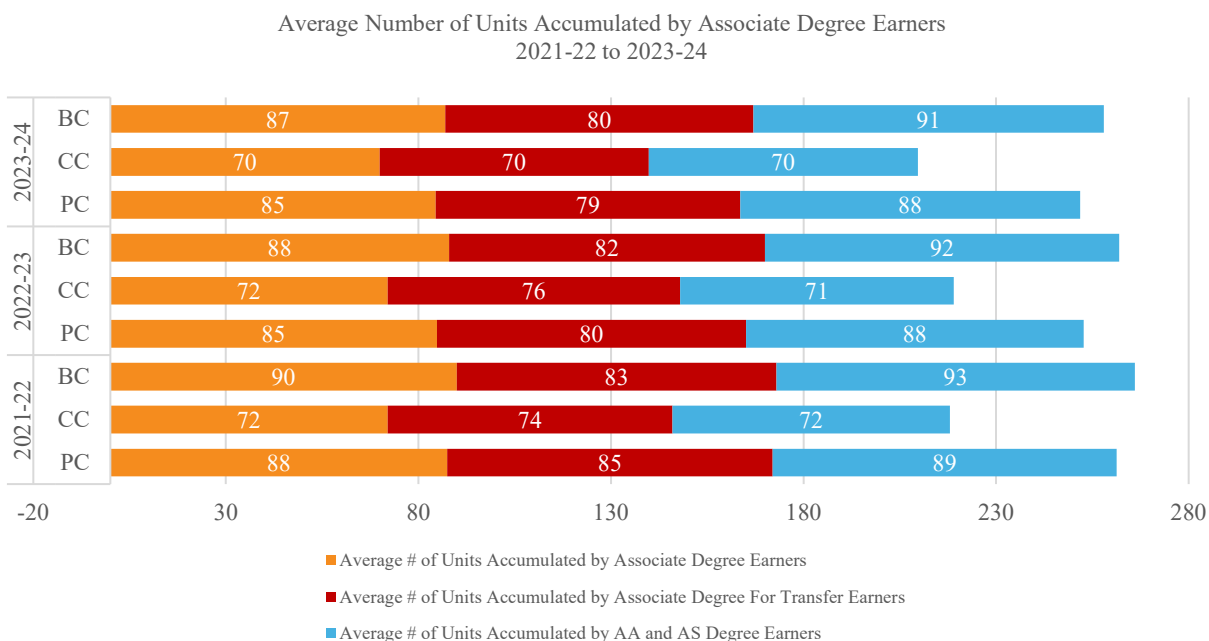
Job Success

BC had the highest percentage of students that reported working in a job very closely or closely related to their field of study, followed by CC and PC. The percentage of students that reported working in a job closely related to their field of study increased for BC between 2019-20 and 2021-22. PC experienced an increase in the number of students that reported working in a job closely related to their field of study in 2020-21 and then a slight decrease. CC experienced a slight decline.



Units Accumulated

Among all students who earned an associate degree, an AA and AS degree specifically, BC students averaged a higher number of units accumulated compared to CC and PC students. The same was also true of students who earned an associate degree for transfer. While students at all three colleges are graduating with too many units upon graduation, the average number of units to degree is dropping each year.



Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information System

Strategic Planning Process

Throughout the 2024-2025 academic year, a cross-functional team from Kern Community College District (KCCD) – comprising students, faculty, staff, and administrators from both the district office and each college – engaged in a strategic foresight process to envision the future of the college in 2035. Unlike traditional strategic planning, which builds on past data for incremental improvements, strategic foresight is a future-oriented approach that anticipates emerging trends, uncertainties, and potential disruptions to develop adaptable strategies through the generation of multiple plausible scenarios. From these scenarios, a preferred scenario is selected to guide long-term planning and decision-making.

Understanding Strategic Foresight

Strategic foresight is an approach that enables institutions to prepare for uncertainty by identifying emerging trends, signals of change, and potential future possibilities. Unlike traditional planning, which often assumes a linear progression of events, foresight recognizes the complexity and unpredictability of the future (see Table 1). This process enables institutions to create multiple plausible scenarios and proactively develop strategies that enhance adaptability, innovation, and resilience.

The key steps of strategic foresight include:

1. **Scanning the Environment:** Identifying key drivers and emerging trends that will shape the future.
2. **Developing Multiple Scenarios:** Constructing alternative, plausible futures based on identified trends.
3. **Analyzing Implications:** Assessing potential impacts of each scenario on the institution.
4. **Selecting a Preferred Scenario:** Engaging stakeholders in evaluating the scenarios and choosing a strategic direction.
5. **Building Strategic Plans:** Implementing strategies to align with the preferred scenario.
6. **Ongoing Monitoring and Adaptation:** Continuously tracking changes in key drivers and adjusting strategies accordingly.

Table 1: A Comparison of Traditional Strategic Planning and Strategic Foresight

Aspect	Traditional Strategic Planning	Strategic Foresight
Approach	Predictive and linear	Exploratory and adaptive
Time Horizon	Short to medium-term	Long-term (10+ years)
Assumption of Change	Incremental and stable	Disruptive and uncertain
Decision-Making	Based on historical data	Based on future possibilities
Strategy Formation	Fixed, goal-driven	Flexible, scenario-driven
Response to Uncertainty	Reactive	Proactive and anticipatory

By embracing foresight principles, KCCD positions itself as an agile and future-ready institution capable of thriving in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

Key Drivers Shaping the Future of the Kern Community College District

The foresight team identified several critical forces that will influence KCCD's trajectory over the next decade. These drivers span economic, technological, social, political, and environmental domains, shaping the opportunities and risks the institution must navigate. A comprehensive list of drivers considered during the development of this plan is provided in Appendix A.

- **Economic Pressures** – Rising tuition costs, inflation, and shifts in workforce demands pose challenges to affordability, access, and financial sustainability.
- **Technological Advancements** – Artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), automation, and decentralized learning models are redefining traditional educational structures.
- **Changing Student Expectations** – Learners are demanding greater flexibility through online, hybrid, and competency-based education, while skepticism toward traditional degree programs is growing.
- **Political and Demographic Shifts** – Higher education faces increasing scrutiny from policymakers, while population trends necessitate a greater focus on non-traditional students and lifelong learning.
- **Environmental and Workforce Evolution** – Climate concerns and the rapid transformation of job markets require innovative educational models that prepare students for emerging careers.

Understanding these forces allows KCCD to develop strategies that enhance institutional resilience, ensuring that programs remain relevant, accessible, and aligned with industry and community needs.

Preferred Scenario: A Future-Ready KCCD

To ensure long-term sustainability and success, KCCD envisions a future where students, faculty, and the broader community thrive through enhanced student support, greater flexibility in educational delivery, and a commitment to technological innovation. By adapting to the evolving needs of students, embracing cutting-edge advancements in teaching and learning, and modernizing administrative processes, KCCD aims to establish itself as a statewide leader in higher education transformation.

Key Elements of the Preferred Scenario

- **Comprehensive Student Support** – Expanded mental health services, on-campus housing, and real-time translation tools create an inclusive learning environment.

- **Flexible Academic Pathways** – Eight-week and four-week terms, monthly start dates, and increased competency-based education options cater to diverse student needs.
- **Expanded Credentialing Options** – Increased micro-credentials, online degrees, and four-year programs aligned with workforce demands.
- **Technology-Driven Learning** – AI-powered tutors, gamification, virtual reality-enhanced courses, and adaptive learning models provide personalized education experiences.
- **AI-Driven Student Support** – Virtual advisors, early alert systems/interventions, and career guidance tools help students stay on track and improve retention.
- **Modernized Administrative Processes** – AI-driven automation for transcript evaluations, degree petitions, and financial forecasting improves efficiency and reduces administrative burdens.
- **Maximizing the Employee Experience**—using the guiding principles of Employee Experience (EX), ensure the District encourages and sustains a Cultural Environment that builds a supportive workplace, A Technological Environment where employees have access to intuitive, efficient technology that supports work, and a Physical Environment, that is designed for employee well-being; specifically, creating workspaces that balance focus, collaboration, and reducing stress.
- **Community and Global Engagement** – Virtual industry tours, international partnerships, and lifelong learning initiatives expand opportunities for students and local industries.

By implementing this scenario, KCCD will position itself as an innovative, accessible, and workforce-aligned institution that meets the needs of 21st-century learners.

KCCD Strategic Plan for 2025-2030

The 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, titled "Future Forward," outlines the areas of focus for the Kern Community College District. The plan focuses on three primary themes: culture, technology, and the physical environment, and how they interact to support both students and employees. Thus, the plan is subdivided into two major sections – the student ecosystem and the employee ecosystem, with strategies supporting each of the three primary themes.

The Student Ecosystem

Cultural Environment

Student culture includes programs, services, and support structures that promote student success in courses and programs of study. Kern CCD's focus is on developing an environment that fosters a positive student experience, supports students throughout their academic journeys, and promotes overall student well-being.

Table 1: Strategic Initiatives to Support Student Culture

Year	Initiative	Deliverable
2025-26	1.1 – Assess students' needs for mental health support, evaluating awareness, accessibility, and potential gaps in services to identify strategies to improve students' access to mental health services.	Document key mental health needs and strategies to address them.
	1.2 – Gather feedback from students on advising, including virtual advising services, to identify areas for improvement or expansion.	Document feedback and plans for improvement
	1.3 – Assess student success rates in current academic modalities, existing program delivery options, and best practices in community colleges nationwide, including short-term courses and micro-credentials, to identify strategies that would improve student outcomes.	Document identified strategies.
	1.4 – Review and update district processes as needed to support current short-term classes and potential program expansions offered in eight-week formats.	Updated processes disseminated to all relevant stakeholders
2026-27	1.5 – Implement strategies to enhance student access to mental health services, as noted in the 2025-26 plan.	Document implementation and outcomes.

	1.6 Convene staff involved in mental health support and student services representatives from all three colleges to determine best practices and explore coordination of services.	Document best practices in use and plans for coordination.
	1.7 – Identify and pursue funding opportunities at the college or district level to support implementation and expansion of mental health supports.	Document funding opportunities and pursuits.
	1.8 – Implement strategies to improve or expand advising services based on findings from 2025-26	Document implementation progress and outcomes.
	1.9 – Colleges develop structured plans to implement strategies identified in 2025-26, such as expanding short-term courses and program offerings, developing micro-credential programs, expanding online course or program delivery, or scheduling to ensure course availability aligns with program maps.	Document plans.
2027-28	1.10 – Based on the successful pursuit of external funding, continue to expand and support mental health services for students.	Document funders and service expansion.
	1.11 – Continue to convene stakeholders from all colleges to examine best practices and coordinated services related to mental health services for students.	Document feedback and strategies identified.
	1.12 – Pilot new or revised courses and/or programs in short-term formats, with embedded micro-credentials, in online delivery modalities, or with other strategies as defined in previous years.	Document pilots and implementation of plans.
	1.13 – Assess student success in revised courses and programs.	Document student success data.
2028-29	1.14 – Implement strategies identified by college stakeholders for the 2027-28 period.	Create a timeline that outlines the various steps.
	1.15 – Sustain support for strategies that have been implemented, such as short-term courses and programs or micro-credentials.	Establish ongoing review cycle of metrics. Document student success data.
2029-30	1.16 – Assess the mental health services, including student feedback, available through all three colleges and determine future areas for improvement.	Document findings and strategies for future implementation.

	1.17 – Assess ongoing needs in course and program scheduling or delivery to identify areas of future emphasis.	Document student success and future needs.
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Technological Environment

The technological environment experienced by students includes the technology used for instruction, accessing college-related information, student support services, and academic supports. The goal of the Kern CCD is to implement and maintain technology that promotes student success, enhances the student experience, and ensures accuracy of information and student privacy.

Table 2: Strategic Initiatives to Support Student Technological Environment

Year	Initiative	Deliverable
2025-26	2.1 – Assess current processes, best practices, and technology, including AI-powered tools, to enhance advising, counseling, and career guidance.	Identify recommended tools and strategies.
	2.2 – Assemble a committee to explore the use of technology, including immersive simulations, gamification, and augmented and virtual reality, in various disciplines to enhance student learning	Identify priority uses of technology to enhance student learning.
2026-27	2.3 – Develop an implementation plan for the top tools and strategies identified in 2025-26, including processes to ensure appropriate human oversight of AI-assisted student services.	Document processes.
	2.4 – Develop a framework for incorporating enhanced technology into the classroom experience, including training resources, funding sources, and designated campus spaces if needed.	Develop an implementation plan for identified technologies
2027-28	2.5 – Implement identified strategies such as AI-assisted advising, counseling, and career planning tools.	Document implementation and outcomes.
	2.6 – Pilot courses or instructional activities that include innovative technology to enhance the student experience. Assess impact on student learning through empirical data and student feedback.	Document outcomes and student success.

2028-29	2.7 – Assess early feedback on implemented strategies, including student feedback, with an emphasis on AI-assisted advising, counseling, and career services. Identify areas of improvement.	Document outcomes and plans to address identified areas of improvement.
	2.8 – Expand the use of innovative teaching and learning technologies based on current needs and opportunities at each college	Document expansion and efficacy of technology-enhanced teaching and learning.
2029-30	2.9 – Implement plans from 2028-29 to address identified areas of improvement in the use of AI-assisted advising, counseling, and career services.	Document outcomes.
	2.10 – Assess student success and satisfaction with courses and faculty members using innovative technologies to support teaching and learning.	Document outcomes and feedback.
	2.11 – Establish a districtwide committee to review current uses of technology that support the student experience and to identify emerging technologies for future implementation.	Committee shares recommendations with the strategic planning committee and Chancellor’s Cabinet for future consideration.

Physical Environment

The physical environment encompasses the spaces where students learn, gather, and connect. Kern CCD strives to create and maintain physical environments that foster student success, encourage collegial collaboration, and cultivate a sense of belonging.

Table 3: Strategic Initiatives to Support the Physical Environment for Students

Year	Initiative	Deliverable
2025-26	3.1 – Using feedback from student surveys, focus groups with students and employees, and a facilities review by Maintenance and Operations, identify key areas of facilities improvement.	Document key facility improvements.
2026-27	3.2 – Begin implementing key facility improvements identified in 2025-26.	Document progress and continued needs.
	3.3 – Plan further actions based on progress made and needs established in 2025-26.	Document next steps.
2027-28	3.4 – Continue implementing facility improvements based on 2025-26 analysis.	Document progress and continued needs.

2028-29	3.5 – Complete facility improvements based on 2025-26 analysis.	Document progress.
2029-30	3.6 – Survey students and conduct focus groups to reflect on the impact of changes implemented since 2025.	Document results.
	3.7 – Assess the physical environment, conduct student surveys and focus groups, and identify areas for improvement to inform future initiatives.	Document needs.

The Employee Ecosystem

Cultural Environment

Workplace culture refers to the overall values, attitudes, and behaviors that collectively shape the employee experience. It can be felt in the interactions between employees and in the overall atmosphere of the workplace. Kern CCD strives to create an environment where employees thrive – one in which they are productive, feel valued, and understand the connection between their role and the district's broader functions.

Table 4: Strategic Initiatives to Support Employee Culture

Year	Initiative	Deliverable
2025-26	4.1 – Complement the wellness survey with follow-up focus groups to further determine key wellness initiatives.	Document key wellness initiatives.
	4.2 – Establish a Center for Wellness and Success that will provide and coordinate professional development and wellness activities throughout the district	Document Center activities.
	4.3 – Develop and offer at least two Master Classes to provide professional development or health and wellness support for classified employees, managers, and/or faculty.	Agendas and records of classes.
	4.4 – Establish a districtwide steering committee to provide input into the development of professional development opportunities to be offered at the district level.	Agendas and minutes of meetings.

	4.5 – Continue to explore opportunities to promote and enhance employee wellness through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.	Report of findings.
	4.6 – Pilot a mentoring program for employees. Assesses the scalability and sustainability of the program.	Planning documents and assessment report.
	4.7 – Launch a Management Leadership Institute to support and develop new managers in the district.	Agenda and feedback from institute.
2026-27	4.8 – Plan further actions based on wellness initiatives identified in the wellness survey and focus groups.	Document next steps.
	4.9 – Offer wellness at least four Master Class sessions open to all employees.	Document session frequency and facilitators.
	4.10 – Evaluate the viability of a Peer Wellness Ambassador Program.	Document results and determine next steps.
	4.11 – Expand the mentoring program for employees. Assesses efficacy at the conclusion of the program.	Planning documents and assessment report.
	4.12 – Establish a districtwide process to review wellness data and identify strategies that best meet the needs of district employees while maintaining a student-centered approach to services.	Identified strategies and plan for implementation.
2027-28	4.13 – Assess the success of the Master Class sessions and determine steps for improvement.	Document steps and continue to offer Master Class sessions.
	4.14 – Reflect on feedback from the mentoring program and implement improvements.	Improvement plan.
	4.15 – Continue offering Master Classes that meet the needs of classified, management, and faculty throughout the district.	Document session frequency and facilitators.
	4.16 – Implement the wellness strategies identified in 2026-27.	Document implementation.

2028-29	4.17 – Implement Peer Wellness Ambassador Program.	Generate a timeline with the various steps.
	4.18 – Continue offering professional development and wellness support through Master Classes, the Management Leadership Institute, mentoring, and other activities to promote professional learning, support employee health and wellness, and enhance the sense of community among employees.	Documentation of professional development activities and feedback from employees on their effectiveness.
	4.19 – Assess effectiveness of districtwide wellness strategies. Identify changes to implement feedback.	Document effectiveness and identified changes.
2029-30	4.20 – Assess the Peer Wellness Ambassador Program and determine steps for improvement.	Document steps and continue to offer Peer Wellness Ambassador Program.
	4.21 – Assess the efficacy of the Center for Wellness and Success through an evaluation of professional development, health and wellness, mentoring, and other supported activities. Identify opportunities for improving services, adding additional professional development activities, or adjusting offerings to better meet the needs of all employees.	Documentation of the program evaluation and opportunities for future endeavors.
	4.22 – Assess effectiveness of districtwide wellness strategies and identify opportunities for continued expansion of services.	Document outcomes.

Technological Environment

The technological environment includes the technology used and accessed by employees to complete their duties. This encompasses the technology used to support teaching, assess student learning, provide student services, manage district budgets, and maintain system operations. Kern CCD strives to adopt and implement technological strategies that enable employees to work effectively and efficiently, maintain the proper security of information, and support process improvements through changing times.

Table 5: Strategic Initiatives to Support the Employee Technological Environment

Year	Initiative	Deliverable
2025-26	5.1 – Develop policies and procedures for data privacy and ethical use of AI technologies.	Documented policies and procedures for data privacy and ethical use of AI.
	5.2 – Conduct research of administrative workflows to identify areas for AI automation and process improvement.	Document key administrative workflows for identified AI automation, test, and evaluate results.
	5.3 – Research AI-driven solutions for automating transcript evaluations, degree petitions, and financial forecasting.	Evaluate AI-driven solutions develop a pro and con of each solution.
	5.4 – Research and evaluate uses of AI tools to support faculty work, including grading activities and tools that promote student engagement and learning.	Document potential AI tools to incorporate into the learning environment.
2026-27	5.5 – Implement pilot workflow for AI automation	Determine what constitutes success of the pilot and measure at the end of the year.
	5.6 – Identify viable AI-driven solutions for transcript evaluations, degree petitions, and financial forecasting.	Develop timeline, identify budget, and begin implementation of solutions.
	5.7 – Collaborate with the faculty to identify tools of interest and potential funding sources if needed. Plan pilot courses or instructional activities that use the selected innovative technologies.	Document the planned implementation and pilot.
2027-28	5.8 – Based on pilot workflow automation success, expand to include additional workflows to be automated with AI.	Document additional areas that have been updated with AI automation
	5.9 – Pilot identified courses or instructional activities using innovative technologies.	Document the outcomes of the pilot
2028-29	5.10 – Continue to refine workflow automation and include additional areas as appropriate.	Document expansion.

	5.11 – Expand pilot to include additional courses or instructional activities using innovative technologies.	Document the outcomes.
2029-30	5.12 – Assess efficacy of workflow automation.	Document outcomes.
	5.13 – Assess outcomes of innovative technologies used to support faculty work through surveys or focus groups with faculty practitioners.	Document outcomes and areas of future improvement or growth.

Physical Environment

The physical environment encompasses the spaces where employees work, gather, and interact. Kern CCD seeks to develop and maintain physical spaces that encourage well-being, collegial collaboration, and productivity.

Table 6: Strategic Initiatives to Support the Employee Physical Environment

Year	Initiative	Deliverable
2025-26	6.1 – Using feedback from employee surveys, focus groups, employees, and a facilities review by Maintenance and Operations, identify key areas of facilities improvement.	Document key facility improvements.
2026-27	6.2 – Begin implementing key facility improvements identified in 2025-26.	Document progress and continued needs.
	6.3 – Plan further actions based on progress made and needs established in 2025-26.	Document next steps.
2027-28	6.4 – Continue implementing facility improvements based on 2025-26 analysis.	Document progress and continued needs.
2028-29	6.5 – Complete facility improvements based on 2025-26 analysis.	Document progress.
2029-30	6.6 – Survey employees and conduct focus groups to reflect on the impact of facility improvements implemented since 2025.	Document results.
	6.7 – Assess the physical environment, conduct student surveys and focus groups, and identify areas of improvement for future initiatives.	Document needs.

Professional Development to Support the Strategic Plan

As the Kern CCD embarks upon the strategic initiatives outlined above, the need for consistent, districtwide professional development and support is evident. As a result, the District plans to establish a Center for Wellness and Success within the Department of Educational Services and Student Success that will provide and coordinate professional development and wellness activities throughout the district. The Center's activities will supplement the professional development that each college offers individually and encompass current district-wide professional learning opportunities, such as the Leadership Academy. Center leadership will seek input from districtwide faculty, classified staff, and management representatives districtwide to assist with determining the types of programming to offer.

Conclusion: Embracing the Future of Education

Kern Community College District stands at a pivotal moment in its history. The challenges ahead – ranging from technological disruption and workforce evolution to demographic shifts and funding uncertainties – demand bold thinking, adaptability, and a commitment to student success.

By embracing strategic foresight, KCCD positions itself as a leader in higher education transformation, ensuring students are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and adaptability to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

However, preparing for the future requires more than just planning – it requires resilience. Wildcard events – such as shifts in federal funding, government regulations, economic downturns, or new technological revolutions – can reshape the landscape overnight. To stay ahead, KCCD must proactively anticipate and prepare for these potential disruptions, ensuring that adaptive strategies are in place before challenges arise.

This plan is not just a roadmap – it is a living strategy that will evolve in response to emerging trends and stakeholder insights. With strong leadership, engaged faculty, empowered students, and strategic partnerships, KCCD will redefine what it means to be a community college in 2035.

Monitoring and Adaptation of the Plan





During the planning process, the Strategic Foresight team identified several wildcard events (Appendix C) and potential barriers to implementation (Appendix D) that could lead to significant shifts in the strategic plan. As part of the District's commitment to continuous improvement, a Strategic Oversight Committee, composed of representative members from the faculty, classified staff, and management, will review progress toward achieving the strategic initiatives, track the development of key drivers, and identify technological advances central to the District's functions. The process for monitoring the initiatives is further outlined below. In

addition, the committee will consider changes in the educational and economic landscape to reevaluate the annual strategic initiatives and suggest changes to ensure the continued relevance of the strategic plan.

Initiative Scoring

At the end of each fiscal year, the Strategic Oversight Committee will assess progress on each initiative and determine a simple score. Each item will be scored as either *Not Started*, *In Progress*, or *Completed*. The *notes* column will include explanations that substantiate each score. For example, if an initiative was scheduled to begin in a given year and no action has been taken by the end of that year, the committee will work with the responsible department(s) to document the reasons for the delay and record this in the notes. Similarly, if an initiative is scored as *In Progress*, the notes will be used to identify the progress that has been made and planned steps toward implementation. The score will be visual, and progress will be tracked using a matrix (see Table 2).

Table 2: Sample Strategic Initiative Scoring Matrix

Year	Initiative	Deliverable	Score	Notes
2025-26	Assess students' needs for mental health support, evaluating awareness, accessibility, and potential gaps in services.	Document needs.		This is complete
	Gather data on student preferences for virtual advising sessions, identifying areas for improvement in accessibility and engagement.	Document areas where improvement can be made.		We've gathered the data but are still working on identifying areas of improvement.
2026-27	Convene mental health providers from all three colleges to discuss best practices, and service coordination.	Develop a student mental health services plan for addressing the needs.		This will be started next year.
	Identify and pursue funding opportunities at the college or district level as appropriate to support implementation.	Document funding opportunities pursued.		This will be started next year.

Legend

Complete		In Progress		Not Started	
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Strategic Planning Committee

Tanner Barnett, *Administrative Assistant for Student Services, Cerro Coso Community College*
Becky Beed, *Purchasing Coordinator/Analyst, Kern CCD*
Emma Blackthorne, *Assoc. Vice Chancellor of Institutional Research & Reporting, Kern CCD*
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Appendix A: Key Drivers Shaping the Future of Kern Community College District

What Is a Driver?

A driver is a force or trend—social, economic, political, technological, or environmental—that influences an organization’s trajectory. These forces can operate independently or interact with others to shape future outcomes. By identifying key drivers, organizations gain the ability to spot both emerging opportunities and threats, enabling them to anticipate change and create more resilient strategies.

The future of education will be shaped by a complex web of forces—from technological disruption and economic instability to shifting demographics and growing demands for flexibility. Institutions that fail to adapt risk becoming obsolete, while those that embrace change will redefine their relevance and impact for the next generation.

Below are the primary drivers identified by the Strategic Plan Development Team along with their relevance to higher education and the Kern Community College District (KCCD).

Economic Drivers

Rising Cost of Education: Tuition and related expenses continue to climb, creating financial barriers for students. Growing student debt discourages many from pursuing college, contributing to declining enrollment.

Increased Economic Inequality: Widening wealth gaps result in uneven access to education. While affluent students can afford better-quality options, low-income students face limited choices and heightened financial stress.

Rising Inflation: Persistent inflation raises operating costs (e.g., salaries, utilities, materials) for colleges. Students, in turn, bear higher living expenses, which make education less affordable.

Increased Economic Instability: Economic volatility and job insecurity lead prospective students to question the long-term value of higher education. Colleges may see fluctuating enrollment as individuals move in and out of the workforce based on economic shifts.

Technological Drivers

Increases in AI and VR/AR: Artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual/augmented reality (VR/AR) are transforming how education is delivered. Institutions must rapidly adopt and integrate these technologies to remain relevant.

Alternative Sources of Information and Knowledge: Free online courses, certifications, and platforms like YouTube give learners more choices. This decentralization forces traditional colleges to prove their value proposition in a crowded marketplace.

Increased Decentralization of Learning: Micro-credentials, fully online degrees, and modular learning pathways are on the rise. Traditional colleges must adapt by offering more personalized, flexible programs to attract and retain students.

Social Drivers

Questioning the Value of Education: As tuition costs rise and job markets evolve, students, employers, and society are increasingly skeptical about the return on investment in higher education.

Desire for Greater Flexibility: Learners now demand online, hybrid, and competency-based options that fit their schedules. Institutions that fail to provide such flexibility risk losing enrollment to more adaptable competitors.

Decreasing Work/Life Balance: Rising job demands and life responsibilities push students to seek flexible scheduling and additional support services to remain engaged and successful.

Increased Influence of Social Media: Students' perceptions of education are heavily shaped by social media, which also contributes to new forms of social pressure and distraction, affecting mental health and academic performance.

Changes to the Nature of Work: Automation, remote work, and the gig economy demand shorter, more flexible credentials aligned with emerging job markets. Colleges must ensure programs remain relevant and responsive to these shifts.

Political and Demographic Drivers

Increased Politicization of Higher Education: Colleges are drawn into political debates, facing external pressure from policymakers and interest groups.

Demographic Shifts: An aging population and lower birth rates mean fewer traditional college-aged students. Institutions must pivot to serve non-traditional learners, including adult and lifelong learners.

Shifting Population Centers: Migration toward urban areas or away from certain regions can significantly alter enrollment patterns, necessitating changes in campus locations and program accessibility.

Impact of Vision 2030: Vision 2030 is a strategic plan to improve access, equity, and completion across California's higher education system. Colleges that fail to meet these goals may lose funding.

Environmental Drivers

Increased Impacts from Climate Change: Extreme weather events, higher energy costs, and relocation due to environmental factors can disrupt operations and enrollment, requiring proactive planning and infrastructure investments.

Summary

Together, these drivers form a complex landscape that KCCD must navigate. Economic instability, technological innovation, demographic changes, and shifting student expectations all underscore the need for adaptive strategies. Success will hinge on the district's ability to remain agile, anticipate change, and align resources with the evolving needs of both students and the workforce. Understanding these forces is critical to building a sustainable future in an increasingly uncertain world.

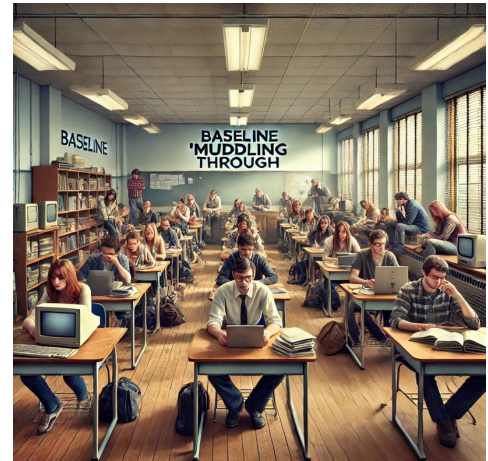
Appendix B: Scenario Planning

Scenario planning is a strategic foresight tool that allows organizations to explore a range of possible futures by developing different scenarios based on key drivers of change. These scenarios are not predictions but structured narratives that help institutions prepare for uncertainty and make more adaptive decisions. By considering multiple plausible futures, KCCD can identify potential risks and opportunities while ensuring resilience in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Each scenario below represents a different possible future for KCCD in 2035. These scenarios align with well-established archetypes used in foresight planning: **Baseline (Muddling Through)** represents continuity with minimal change, **Gradual Decline** depicts the slow erosion of institutional health, **Incremental Progress** envisions moderate yet insufficient improvement, and **Transformation** represents bold, innovative shifts. Understanding these archetypes helps frame potential pathways and responses to change, allowing decision-makers to craft policies and strategies that align with the most desirable future. The following sections provide an in-depth exploration of these possibilities.

1. Baseline/Muddling Through Scenario

A baseline scenario, often called “muddling through,” envisions a future where current trends and conditions persist with minimal disruption. Decisions and actions follow familiar patterns—neither triggering major crises nor implementing bold innovations. While stability is maintained by relying on existing structures and incremental adjustments, this approach can lead to stagnation, as it lacks the foresight and adaptability to keep pace with shifting internal and external dynamics. Over time, such inertia can leave the institution vulnerable to greater disruptions and a gradual decline in both relevance and performance.



Baseline/Muddling Through Scenario for Kern Community College District

In this scenario, KCCD faces mounting obstacles that hamper alignment with workforce needs, institutional goals, and student success benchmarks. Key developments include:

Skills Mismatch with Job Market: Programs remain disconnected from local and regional industry demands, leading graduates to lack essential competencies. Employers perceive the college’s offerings as outdated, weakening its reputation and increasing graduate unemployment.

Rising Costs for Students: Tuition and associated expenses climb, limiting access – especially for low-income and first-generation students. This financial burden contributes to declining enrollment over time.

Program Closures and Enrollment Decline: Programs not aligned with current workforce needs or unable to sustain enrollment are discontinued. With fewer program options, prospective students look elsewhere, accelerating the downward enrollment trend.

Growing Demand for Student Supports: Even as the student population shrinks, those who do enroll require more resources, such as tutoring, counseling, and financial aid. With limited budgets and staff cuts, these needs remain largely unmet.

Decreased Funding for Program Development: Insufficient funding stifles efforts to revamp or introduce new programs that reflect evolving industry standards, further limiting the college's relevance.

Decline in Workforce Training Programs: As critical training programs dwindle, local businesses seek alternative providers. This shift weakens KCCD's long-standing role in regional economic development.

Failure to Meet Vision 2030 Goals: Inadequate progress toward access, completion, and equity targets sparks criticism from stakeholders, damaging the institution's credibility.

Risk of Funding Loss: Dropping enrollment and missed performance targets put KCCD at risk of reduced state and federal funding, creating a feedback loop of declining resources and worsening outcomes.

Decreasing Career Relevance: Misaligned curricula leave the district ill-prepared for emerging fields, prompting more students to opt for specialized or online alternatives.

Shrinking College-Going Population: Demographic shifts and rising education costs diminish the college-going population. Both recent high school graduates and adult learners increasingly view higher education as financially out of reach.

Centralization and Campus Consolidation: To cut costs, the district centralizes decision-making and reduces the number of satellite locations. This move limits student access, especially in remote areas, and weakens community ties.

Summary Impact

In this baseline scenario, incremental decision-making fails to address systemic issues, leading to falling enrollment, reduced relevance, and unmet goals. As resources dwindle, KCCD's capacity to deliver quality education and workforce training diminishes, threatening its long-term sustainability and community impact. Without a strategic pivot, the college risks slipping further into irrelevance.



2. Gradual Decline Scenario

A gradual decline scenario depicts a slow but consistent erosion of institutional health. Challenges that appear manageable in isolation accumulate over time, undermining sustainability and relevance. The district struggles to keep up with external changes, and its responses are often too little, too late. Eventually, the institution reaches a tipping point, making any meaningful recovery increasingly difficult.

Gradual Decline Scenario for Kern Community College District

In this scenario, KCCCD drifts into sustained decline marked by internal stagnation and external pressures. The college continues to operate for some time, but each new hurdle chips away at its foundation. Key developments include:

Increased Political Polarization: Growing political divisions within and around the district cause rifts over resource allocation, curriculum, and student services, hindering unified planning and execution.

Lagging Adoption of AI and VR/AR: Despite the rising importance of AI and VR/AR in both education and industry, KCCCD fails to integrate these tools swiftly. As a result, instruction and skills training fall behind more tech-forward institutions.

Expanded Resource Consolidation: Ongoing budget constraints force centralization, reducing campus autonomy. This limits localized innovation, narrows program diversity, and weakens community engagement.

Widening Equity Gaps: Students from underrepresented groups face increasing barriers, including higher costs and fewer support services. This intensifies disparities in enrollment, completion, and career outcomes.

Continued Enrollment Decline: Demographic changes, skepticism over higher education's value, and rising competition from online providers exacerbate enrollment losses.

Drop in Student Success Metrics: Reduced funding and fewer staff impede the college's ability to maintain high graduation and transfer rates. Fewer students achieve meaningful career or academic progress, damaging the institution's reputation.

Inadequate Student Support: While student needs—such as mental health counseling and financial aid—rise, resources dwindle. Understaffed services leave many students without necessary assistance.

Loss of Traditional Majors and Programs: Programs with low enrollment or outdated curricula are cut. As options shrink, so does the appeal for prospective students seeking a well-rounded education.

Diminishing Relevance: Without active modernization, the district's offerings fall behind current workforce demands, prompting employers and students to look elsewhere.

Eroding Services and Resources: Ongoing declines in funding chip away at counseling, tutoring, and library support. With fewer personnel, student satisfaction and success suffer.

The Challenge of Defining Gradual Decline vs. Baseline

Both scenarios describe negative trends—declining enrollment, reduced budgets, shrinking services—but differ in pace and intensity.

- **Baseline:** The institution stagnates, relying on familiar processes but not facing an immediate existential threat.
- **Gradual Decline:** The institution experiences deeper, systemic deterioration. Over time, unresolved issues accumulate, leading to potential obsolescence.



Ultimately, the gradual decline scenario highlights how smaller challenges, if ignored, can cascade into long-term irrelevance and potential collapse.

3. Incremental Progress Scenario

This scenario envisions cautious yet steady improvements within existing frameworks. Change is practical, risk-managed, and aligned with maintaining continuity. While less dramatic than full-scale transformation, incremental progress can build momentum over time, leading to meaningful outcomes—provided it keeps pace with external developments.

Incremental Progress Scenario for Kern Community College District

Here, KCCCD pursues methodical steps to modernize and adapt, emphasizing sustainable growth, technological integration, and local relevance. Key elements include:



Intentional Program Shrinking: Low-demand or obsolete programs are phased out, directing funds to areas with the greatest potential. This ensures curricula remain aligned with workforce needs and societal trends.

Greater Accessibility and Flexibility: Efforts to expand online degrees, open satellite locations, and offer weekend/evening services reduce long-standing barriers. Zero-Cost Textbooks further improve affordability and equity.

Innovative Instructional Methods: Classrooms evolve into collaborative hubs. AI-powered tools support personalized learning and competency-based

approaches, while the district cautiously integrates VR into select courses.

Upgraded Infrastructure: Modernizing technology systems and campus facilities raises operational efficiency and enhances the student experience, keeping KCCCD competitive.

Localized Program Development: New certificates and micro-credentials cater to specific industry needs, and robust partnerships with employers enrich work-based learning opportunities.

Community and Staff Engagement: Regular forums encourage conversations about politics, society, and economics, strengthening community ties. New staff roles—such as program expansion leads—help bridge department and campus initiatives.

Proactive Student Services: Advising, academic planning, and support services become more flexible, meeting diverse student schedules. Pilot programs with life coaches and faculty advisors bolster retention and success.

Lifelong Learning Emphasis: Curriculum integrates digital literacy to prepare students for a rapidly changing job market. Competency-based learning and AI tools help students master skills at their own pace.

Balanced Growth: The district maintains stability at current locations while exploring targeted expansion to better serve local needs.

Summary

By taking measured but meaningful steps, KCCD cultivates a forward-thinking culture without overextending resources. Though not a sweeping overhaul, this approach provides a foundation for sustained relevance and success aligned with Vision 2030.



4. Transformation Scenarios

A transformation scenario features a significant and deliberate reimagining of institutional structures and strategies, fueled by bold vision, innovation, and a willingness to break from tradition. While transformation carries inherent risks, it also offers the potential for radical improvements that can set the institution apart in a rapidly evolving world.

Transformation Scenario One: Flexible and Future-Focused Education

Promoting Student Achievement Through Flexible Modalities

Short-term classes with monthly start dates, fully online degrees, and self-paced programs empower diverse learners. This flexibility extends KCCD's reach worldwide and fosters global partnerships.

Four-Year Degrees and Partnerships

Offering bachelor's programs positions KCCD as a strong competitor to traditional four-year institutions. Transfer pathways and 2+2 agreements ensure seamless student progression, reflecting California's trend of expanding bachelor's degrees at community colleges.

Enhancing Student Learning with Emerging Technologies

AI, VR, and automation drive teaching and learning. Virtual labs and gamified courses deliver immersive, hands-on experiences, while AI tools personalize learning and facilitate peer collaboration.

Strengthening Workforce Connections

By expanding internships, apprenticeships, and classroom-to-career pipelines, KCCD aligns curriculum with real-world skills. Virtual industry tours and remote work training further equip students for evolving job markets.

Comprehensive Student Supports

From e-libraries and free internet access to on-campus housing and mental health services, robust support systems reduce barriers. Digital career services and online tools prepare students for success both in the classroom and beyond.

Student Highlight: Maria

A 31-year-old Computer Science major, Maria loves KCCD for its unparalleled flexibility—allowing her to pause and resume her program as needed. Four-week online classes fit her busy schedule, while a clear education plan reduces guesswork. She values AI tutors, faculty office hours, and free wellness services that help her stay balanced. Flexible course end dates ensure she can progress at her own pace, completing modules as soon as she masters the material.

Transformation Scenario Two: AI-Driven Innovation

Classified Perspective

AI-driven automation now handles tasks like transcript evaluations, degree petitions, and budget forecasting, freeing staff to focus on higher-impact activities—such as improving student services and coordinating recruitment events. Admissions and outreach teams can dedicate more time to building relationships with prospective students, while accessibility services leverage AI for real-time captioning and translation. This renewed focus on high-touch interactions allows classified staff to better understand student needs and collaborate with faculty to create a more welcoming campus environment.

Faculty Perspective

While AI manages repetitive grading and personalized feedback, faculty remain indispensable to curriculum design, academic rigor, and student mentorship. They guide students through collaborative projects and real-world problem-solving, ensuring that graduates are both workforce-ready and capable of critical, ethical thinking. Faculty also partner with classified staff to integrate emerging technologies, striking a balance between automation and hands-on learning.

Student Highlight: Tracey

Tracey, a 19-year-old Robotics major, benefits from robust industry partnerships that provide a paid internship alongside her coursework. Her classes blend AI-driven virtual instruction with hands-on lab sessions, allowing her to refine essential skills in real-world settings. Digital boards keep her updated on project deadlines and campus events, while AI tutors and flexible online options help her maintain a healthy work-life-education balance. She also collaborates with peers from diverse backgrounds through inclusive learning pods, expanding her global perspective. Inspired by this environment, Tracey hopes to mentor future students and foster new industry partnerships within KCCD.

Student Perspective

From enrollment to graduation, AI systems streamline processes like financial aid and course scheduling, freeing students to focus on academic and personal growth rather than paperwork. They receive immediate assistance from AI tutors and early alerts if they begin to struggle, helping them stay on track toward graduation. Meanwhile, on-demand counseling services and virtual advising sessions boost engagement and retention by providing personalized guidance around the clock. With local access to advanced degree programs, students can pursue higher education without the need to relocate.

Campus of the Future

Digital learning pods, advanced labs, and real-time translation tools enhance access, equity, and collaboration across KCCD. Smart classrooms equipped with AI analytics enable instructors to adapt lessons on the fly, ensuring a more dynamic learning experience. Students from around the globe can participate in virtual forums and group projects, forging international connections and broadening the district's impact. With sustainable infrastructure and tech-enabled services,

KCCD's campuses provide a connected, inclusive environment where the entire community can thrive in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

Transformation Scenario Three: The KCCD Metaverse

AI-Powered Learning Ecosystem

Students receive real-time support from AI tutors drawing on free or low-cost materials. The system is designed to meet cultural and equity needs, avoiding bias against protected groups.

Immersive VR and AR Integration

VR/AR technologies power labs, field trips, and job simulations, with physical learning pods providing comfortable, well-maintained study spaces across California.

Global Collaboration

Joint programs with international colleges and virtual study-abroad options expand horizons without imposing travel costs. Social media platforms further connect students to global initiatives and projects.



Enhanced Security and Transparency

Biometric safeguards and blockchain-based credentials reduce the risk of scams. Multi-factor authentication protects student data and maintains trust in the system.

Holistic Well-Being and Lifelong Learning

Flexible, modular programs incorporate wellness and mental health resources. Emphasis on digital literacy, critical thinking, and civic engagement prepares

students to thrive in a constantly evolving world. Partnerships with industry leaders enable dynamic curricular planning and stronger job placement.

Student Highlight: Jocelyn

A 23-year-old Nursing major and mother, Jocelyn relies on KCCD's family-friendly learning environment to manage parenthood and her education. In addition to essential health services for her and her child, she benefits from on-demand VR tutoring that tackles challenging lessons and VR experiences suitable for her five-year-old. By balancing flexibility with comprehensive support, KCCD enables Jocelyn to advance toward her career goals without sacrificing family commitments.

Appendix C: Wildcards and Risk Factors

A *wildcard* is a low-probability, high-impact event that, if realized, could drastically alter the trajectory of an institution, industry, or society. Unlike predictable trends, wildcards emerge unexpectedly and require institutions to develop flexible, resilient strategies to mitigate risks and leverage opportunities.

The team identified several potential wildcards that could significantly impact KCCD's future. To ensure preparedness, it is recommended that district and college leadership engage in scenario gaming and strategic exercises to explore responses to these possible disruptions:

- *Reduction in federal funding:* Cuts to higher education funding could strain budgets and limit student access.
- *Economic depression:* A severe downturn could impact enrollment as students prioritize immediate employment over education.
- *Elimination of accreditation:* Fundamental changes in higher education regulation could reshape institutional recognition and funding models.
- *Government censorship or loss of academic freedom:* Increased political influence on curricula and institutional policies could impact academic integrity and decision-making.
- *Water shortages and population exodus:* Resource scarcity could lead to shifts in student demographics and regional economic viability.
- *Tuition-free college funded by state or federal programs:* While increasing access, this could disrupt traditional funding structures and impact private institutions.
- *Decrease or elimination of federal financial aid:* Changes in aid availability could create affordability challenges for students.
- *Future pandemics:* Public health crises could force rapid shifts to remote learning and alter operational models.
- *Natural disasters:* Earthquakes, wildfires, or extreme weather events could impact campus infrastructure and student mobility.
- *Geopolitical instability or global conflict:* International disruptions could affect enrollment, supply chains, and funding.
- *Electrical grid disruptions:* Power shortages or cyberattacks on infrastructure could threaten digital learning capabilities and campus operations.
- *Universal basic income (UBI):* If implemented, UBI could shift societal attitudes toward work and education, influencing enrollment trends and workforce development needs.

Given the potentially transformative impact of these wildcards, proactive planning, scenario development, and adaptive strategy implementation are essential to ensuring the district's resilience and long-term success.

Appendix D: Barriers to Implementation

The committee also identified several barriers that could hinder the successful implementation of this plan. It is recommended that leadership keep these potential barriers in mind when implementing the strategies. Addressing these barriers proactively will be essential to ensuring long-term success:

- *High costs of implementation* – Financial constraints may slow progress or require phased execution.
- *Retraining needs* – Faculty and staff will require extensive training to adapt to new technologies and learning models.
- *Initiative fatigue* – Overburdened faculty and staff may resist additional initiatives due to workload concerns.
- *Lack of clarity between district and college roles* – Unclear decision-making authority can delay or complicate implementation.
- *Concerns with impact on academic freedom* – Faculty may perceive certain technological and policy shifts as encroachments on their academic independence.
- *Resistance to change* – Cultural and operational inertia may slow adoption of new practices.
- *Poor implementation planning* – Inefficient execution may lead to wasted resources and unmet objectives.
- *Leadership continuity and institutional memory* – Leadership turnover can disrupt long-term planning and strategic follow-through.
- *Indifference to idea or mission* – Without strong engagement from stakeholders, key initiatives may lose momentum.
- *Lack of infrastructure and bandwidth to support emerging technologies* – Insufficient technological resources can hinder digital transformation.
- *New laws and regulations* – Changes in legislation may impact funding, curriculum, and institutional policies.
- *Professional development that is not thoughtfully planned or strategic* – Ineffective training programs may fail to prepare faculty and staff for emerging challenges.

While the committee identified significant challenges, it also recognized existing strengths that can be leveraged to support successful implementation of this strategic plan:

- *Current financial support is favorable* – Existing funding opportunities provide a solid foundation for growth.
- *Culture of innovation* – A willingness to experiment with new approaches and technologies positions KCCD well for future transformation.
- *Successful CEO-district collaboration* – Strong leadership alignment enhances decision-making and policy execution.
- *Improvements in transparency, particularly in governance and communication* – Enhanced openness fosters trust and buy-in from stakeholders.
- *Community and college partnerships that benefit students* – Strong local collaborations provide experiential learning and workforce opportunities.
- *Openness to exploring new technologies* – Faculty and leadership demonstrate interest in integrating AI, VR, and other innovations.

- *Internships and field experiences* – Existing work-based learning models provide valuable career pathways for students.
- *District-level wellness programs for students and employees* – Institutional commitment to well-being enhances student success and retention.
- *Substantial rainy-day fund reserves* – Fiscal stability allows for strategic investments in new initiatives.
- *Growth in middle college and early enrollment* – Expanding high school-to-college pathways strengthens long-term enrollment prospects.
- *Strong community support* – Local stakeholders and industries remain invested in KCCD's success and future development.

By building upon these strengths while addressing potential barriers, KCCD can successfully implement its strategic vision, positioning itself as a leader in innovative, accessible, and future-focused education.