

Feasibility Study
Kern Community College District
Bakersfield College
South Education Center Location

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Purpose of Study

This feasibility study provides recommendations for determining a location for the development of a successful Bakersfield south education center toward State approval.

Methodology

To arrive at the recommendations in this report, numerous site, population growth, demographic trend data reports and studies were analyzed. The data are minimally reiterated in this report; sources are annotated at the end of this document. Supplementing the data are interviews with Arvin-Lamont public officials and community leaders, and Kern Community College District and Bakersfield College administrators. These resources are also identified at the end of this document.

Overview of Community College Sites

The State's community colleges consist of four types of sites:

Accredited College – instructional site that confer degrees and certificates; offers a full complement of academic programs, facilities, and student services. The site is administered by a college president and full administration.

Center – does not confer degrees or certificates, operates under a parent campus (accredited college), provides limited academic offerings and student services. A center may not have extensive facilities such as physical education play fields, a child development facility or a

performing arts theatre. A center has limited administrative support and is generally led by a provost or dean. Not all centers become colleges. Some centers may be larger (in size and enrollments) than colleges.

Outreach Operation – does not confer degrees or certificates and operates under a college or center. In most outreach operations, the site is temporary, experimental, and/or specific sites that offer very limited academic instruction; although some outreach operations have been in existence for decades. Facilities and administration are limited; student services may be periodic. The majority of outreach operations do not become centers or colleges; however, some outreach operations may be larger than centers.

District Office – stand alone district offices provide district administration and do not offer instruction. Some district offices reside on a college site particularly with single-college districts where the district superintendent and college president and administrative staff are one of the same. Other district offices include community education spaces.

State Approval Process for New Community Colleges and Centers

The two types of sites requiring approval by the Board of Governors/ Community Colleges State Chancellor's Office are colleges and centers. These State-recognized sites may be eligible for base (foundation) funding and may be eligible to compete for State-capital funding. Non-recognized sites are not eligible to receive either type of State funding.

The State Chancellor's Office California Community Colleges has for the most part followed the California Postsecondary Education Commission's (CPEC) process for the approval of colleges and centers. Formerly, sites were to be approved by the State Chancellor's Office prior to approval by CPEC as outlined in CPEC's *Guidelines: The Review of Proposed University Campuses, Community Colleges, and Educational and Joint-Use Centers*, April 2002. Since CPEC no longer exists as of November 18, 2011, the approval of colleges and centers rests solely with the State Chancellor's Office. The three-step approval process, for now, continues to follow the CPEC guidelines:

- 1) Preliminary Notice – general notification to the State when a district starts the planning for a new college or center.
 - When a district starts planning, the district shall forward notice to the State Chancellor’s Office advising of the general location of the proposed center, estimated enrollment at time of opening and projected enrollment after five years of operation. A copy of the board item discussing the new site shall be included. This informal notification does not require a response from the State.
 - With this step, the proposed site should appear on the District’s five-year construction plan.

- 2) Letter of Intent – not less than two years before a district plans to convert an outreach operation to a center, a Letter of Intent is submitted to the State Chancellor’s Office and other State agencies.
 - Five year enrollment projections for the site from the date of opening.
 - When converting an outreach operation to a center, the enrollment history of the outreach effort.
 - Location of the site as specific as possible. If different sites are under consideration, a brief description of each should be included.
 - Maps of the proposed center site showing population densities, road and transportation configurations, topography, and other items of interest.
 - District’s most recent five-year construction plan.
 - Time schedule for the development of the proposed center including preliminary data and enrollments at opening, intermediate and build-out phases.
 - Tentative five-year capital outlay budget starting with the first phase.
 - Identification of neighboring public and private education institutions.
 - Board resolution authorizing the proposed center.

When the State Chancellor’s Office concurs with the Letter of Intent, then the district may proceed with the Needs Study.

- 3) Needs Study – comprehensive study establishing the need for a college or center.

- General description the site's physical description, social and demographic analysis of surrounding area including income levels, and racial/ethnic categorizations.
- Enrollment projections – sufficient enrollment projections to justify the proposed center must presented in full-time equivalent students and include Weekly Student Contact Hours (WSCH) and WSCH per headcount.
- Projected enrollments should exceed the capacity of existing district colleges and centers. If enrollments do not exceed district capacity, compelling regional or local need must be demonstrated.
- The alternatives discussion, at a minimum, shall include: expansion of existing institutions within the region; increased utilization of existing institutions; shared or joint-use of existing facilities of other public and private institutions; use of non-traditional modes of instructional delivery such as distance learning and on-line classes; and private fundraising to defray costs of land and facilities. The cost-benefit analysis of these alternatives must clearly demonstrate that the new site is the most cost-effective and beneficial choice to serving the designated area.
- If the site was donated, in part of whole, the sole-sourcing discussion must demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of the site.
- Academic planning and program discussion – preliminary discussion of proposed academic degree and/or certificate programs together with a list of course offerings must be included. Also included is a description of the new center's academic/occupational organization.
- Student services and outreach – description of the student services planned for the new site including financial aid, advising, counseling, testing and assessment, tutoring, educational opportunity programs compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act, and outreach services to historically underrepresented groups.
- Support and Capital Outlay Budget Projects – included in the study as a five-year capital outlay projection including assignable square feet and cost estimates for buildings and personnel.
- Geographic and physical accessibility – plan for student, faculty and staff transportation and compliance with the American Disability Act must be demonstrated.

- Effects on other institutions – support by systems, institutions, and community must be demonstrated by letters of support along with impact of proposed center on existing institutions and systems, and demonstration that the proposed center does not have an adverse impact nor unnecessarily duplicate neighboring services.
- Environmental impact – summary draft for final Environmental Impact Report is to be provided with study.
- Economic efficiency – priority is given when the State is relieved of part or the entire economic burden or collaborative partnerships with other systems as determined.

Current Kern Community College District Sites

The Kern Community College District boundaries encompass 24,800 square miles reach into five counties - Kern, Tulare, Inyo, Mono, and San Bernardino Counties – serving over 42,000 students annually (2010-11).

Providing academic instruction are three colleges, four centers and numerous outreach operations:

- Bakersfield College – located in the metro area of Bakersfield (slightly to the northeast of the college’s service area) and serves the city and the western and southwestern-most part of the district;
- Porterville College - serves the north section of the district surrounding Porterville;
- Cerro Coso College - serves the eastern part of the district reaching north to Bishop and Mammoth Lakes;
- Delano Center (Bakersfield College) – serves the Delano area;
- Southwest Center (Bakersfield College) – located in the central city area offering vocational training programs including first responders and nursing, along with workforce and economic development. The site also houses the District Office;
- Eastern Sierra (Cerro Coso College) – dual-location site that serves Bishop and Mammoth Lakes;
- Southern Outreach/Edwards Air Force Base (AFB) (Cerro Coso College) – serves Edwards AFB and California City area residents; and
- Outreach locations – various throughout the district.

Bakersfield College Instructional Delivery

Bakersfield College provides instructional delivery at the main campus (also referred to as the Panorama campus) located at 1801 Panorama Drive in Bakersfield, the downtown Southwest Center at 2100 Chester Avenue in Bakersfield, and at several outreach locations including Stockdale High School and the Olive Drive Fire Training Facility.

Bakersfield College - Projected Population Trends

Within the College's service area, population growth is trending to the west between Highway 99 and Interstate 5 in the direction of available land. The heaviest growth pockets are in the undeveloped areas north and south of Rosedale Highway, and in the area northwest and south of Bear Mountain Boulevard and Highway 99. With the current housing and economic environment, growth has slowed and will return at a slower pace.

Long-range plans envision three spheres of influence for instructional delivery within Bakersfield College's area: 1) the College serving the north and central zones; 2) northwest center serving the west and northwest; and 3) south center serving the southern, southwestern, and southeastern areas.

In 2005, the district purchased a 225-acre site in the western part of the College's service area, at the intersection of Enos Lane (Highway 43) and Rosedale Highway about 12 miles west of Highway 99 for a northwest center location. In December 2007, the district acquired a 126-acre site (60 acres donated and 66 acres purchased) for a south center location at Highway 99 and Bear Mountain Boulevard. Both sites are near major roadways making them easily accessible and are located in or very near the most concentrated population growth areas.

The sphere of influence for the south center is just south of Highway 58 and widening in the east-west direction, spreading to the south, stopping at district boundaries. Within this sphere are five high schools: Independence High School, Golden Valley High School, and Ridgeview High School, all in southern Bakersfield; Nueva Continuation High School located in Lamont; and Arvin High School in Arvin.

Demographic projections to 2030 indicate that Bakersfield College's service area will grow by over 3% to the west, over 7% in the southwest, and by almost 3.25% to the south. Coupled with increasingly congested traffic, students from these areas would be traveling more than 30 minutes to the Panorama campus by 2030. Students on the outer fringes of these areas already experience these travel times especially during peak traffic.

Sites Considered for Bakersfield College South Education Center

Two site locations were analyzed in this study:

1) City of Arvin Site

The City of Arvin has offered to the District a land donation of up to 25-acres located across the street from Arvin High School where Bakersfield College's Arvin outreach operations is located. The vacant parcel is currently unused with an unoccupied structure slated for demolition.

Arvin, in the southeast section of the District, is 10 miles directly east of Highway 99 and Bear Mountain Boulevard/Highway 223, 22 miles south of Bakersfield. The community of Lamont, between Bakersfield and Arvin, is about 9 miles to the northwest of Arvin. These two close communities are often referred together as Arvin-Lamont. Golden Valley High School is to the west and Arvin High School is to the southeast of Lamont. Lamont's high school students attend classes at Arvin High with some students going to Lamont's Nueva Continuation High School. The driving distance from Arvin to Bakersfield College is 29 miles and takes at least 37 minutes. Arvin is the largest community in the southeast portion of the district; the district's southeast boundaries are sparsely populated.

Bear Mountain Boulevard/Highway 223 is a two-lane road from Highway 99 east to Arvin through an agricultural area. Bear Mountain Boulevard is one of the more well-traveled accesses particularly for traffic from Highway 99 east to Arvin. Other accesses to Arvin are by less traveled two-lane roads going both north-south and east-west through smaller communities.

Many Arvin-Lamont students lack personal transportation and due to economics and accessibility, do not have the opportunity to share a family car. The public transit system (bus) is cumbersome with many stops. Public transit is also infrequent and often takes several hours to reach the College with only one return bus in the evening that doesn't necessarily coincide with student schedules. The next closest community college is Taft College in Taft, 42 miles to the east with over an hour of drive time.

When compared to the overall District population, Arvin-Lamont residents are younger, with slightly more females than males, earning an average of 200% below the U.S. poverty level. Most of the area's workforce continues to work in agriculture-related occupations. The majority of those residents attending Bakersfield College are the first members of their families to participate in any higher education career.

Combining the summer session with the fall semester, from summer 2008 - spring 2009 terms, an average of 962 students per semester from Arvin-Lamont zip codes were enrolled in one or more classes at Bakersfield College. From summer 2009-spring 2010 (spring 2010 data may be incomplete), 855 students Arvin-Lamont students were enrolled.

Most of the students attending Bakersfield College from the Arvin-Lamont area were enrolled in credit courses (approximately 94%) such as math, history, English, physical education, and child development. About 44% of the students attending Bakersfield College self-declared that they were planning to transfer to a four-year institution. Annual full-time equivalent students for Arvin-Lamont students for 2008-09 and 2009-10 (estimate) average over 550.

A very limited number of classes, five in fall 2011, have been offered at the Arvin High School (outreach location) and met with mixed results. These classes have included but are not limited to math, communications, psychology, child development, history,

political science, and basic writing skills. Not all classes are offered every semester or summer term.

Interviews with Arvin community and public leaders repeatedly share that they have a need for an increased community college presence in the Arvin community providing opportunities for Arvin-Lamont residents and feel that the college can do more in their communities. They state that most of their students cannot afford computers or private transportation. They are also frustrated with the lack of consistent public transportation to and from Bakersfield College. District and College administrators interviewed also expressed that there is a need for a greater presence in Arvin and feel they are limited by lack of resources.

2) Southwest Bakersfield Site

In December 2007, the District acquired 126 acres (60 acres through a donation; 66 acres through purchase) located in the southwest intersection of Highway 99 and Bear Mountain Boulevard. The site is easily accessible from Highway 99 in both directions and also off Bear Mountain Boulevard. This parcel and the surrounding land are currently used as farmland. The site has no known physical hazards. The site is located in the south and southwestern portion of the projected high growth area.

Recommendations

Community colleges strive to be as accessible as possible. Particularly during lean economic times, balancing community needs with limited District resources requires the participation, compromise, and creativity of many parties including students, communities and District. The first recommendation attempts to address immediate concerns, and the second recommendation plans for the future.

The first recommendation is that Bakersfield College and the Arvin-Lamont communities partner efforts in developing a comprehensive outreach operation with strong basic skills and general education curriculum in the Arvin area and build the foundation for continued education.

Specifically:

- *Determine what Arvin-Lamont residents want/need* from community colleges and *expand educational opportunities* to south Kern Community College District residents by focusing on the goal of increasing opportunities for higher education in the south Kern community to the maximum extent possible. This can be achieved by implementing many of the strategies as outlined in the September 30, 2010 report to Chancellor Sandra Serrano prepared by Bakersfield College President Greg Chamberlain. The President's report provides a systematic approach to providing an organized academic program and plan to address barriers to access.
- *Improve student success* and retention by providing increased access to student services including financial aid, testing and assessment, counseling, advising, and associated programs.
- *Involve communities* to support community education of residents/students on the value of continued education and increased outreach efforts.
- *Remove barriers* by finding alternatives to access community college services including finding avenues for reliable public transportation to Bakersfield College, shared costs for securing the high school campus when both high school students and non-high school students share the site, and alternative instructional delivery methods such as distance education and on-line classes.

The second recommendation encourages Bakersfield College and the south communities continue to plan together for a south education center at the Bear Mountain Boulevard and Highway 99. This location best serves the future needs for the south and southwest residents in the Bakersfield College area.

Specifically:

- This centrally located site within the south education sphere of influence and in the middle of future rapid growth is highly visible and easily accessible. Students often attend more than a single college or center site to access needed courses within the same term and the location next to Highway 99 provides ready access.
- The site has quick access onto Highway 99 and Bear Mountain Boulevard, useful for establishing public transit routes, reducing commute times, and promoting campus uses outside of academics.
- With AB 32, there is pressure on community colleges to reduce carbon footprints and an easily accessible, well-located site helps the District comply. In addition to the issues of air pollution, water/sewer management, and energy generation, elements of “green” also focus on transportation - reducing the length of commute times by students, faculty and staff, round trip delivery time for transport of services and materials, and the ability to secure labor locally.
- Developing a center in the core of a sizable population pocket stabilizes the viability of a center so that it can better serve its immediate and surrounding communities. The higher number of students provides the critical mass for expansion of program course offerings making the site more attractive to students who might not have considered community colleges before and is especially beneficial to students who have not had access to these academic opportunities.
- There is no prescribed acreage for a college or center by the State; however, community college planners recommend from 50-100 acres for a center and 100-150 acres for a college, depending on the model of instructional delivery the District plans for. The 126 acres allows the site to build-out incrementally in a single location. Centers are designed to be permanent and this site’s size can most likely accommodate instructional needs for the next 50-75 years.

Resources

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Demographic and Enrollment Research, Lisa Fitzgerald, Director, Research Analysis and Reporting, Kern Community College District.

Google Maps.

Interviews

Barbara Grimm-Marshall, Grimmway Academy School

Bonnie Suderman, Dean of Learning Resources and Information Technology, Bakersfield College

Carlos Sardo, Principal, Arvin High School

Gema Perez, Greenfield representative of Steering Committee and Greenfield Community Leader

Greg Chamberlain, President, Bakersfield College

Jennifer Wood, Project Director, Lamont Weedpatch Family Resource Center, Lamont School District

Jim Young, Chancellor emeritus, Kern Community College District

Lisa Fitzgerald, Director, Research Analysis and Reporting, Kern Community College District

Melissa Donez, Assistant Principal, Arvin High School

Nan Gomez-Heitzeberg, Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs and Student Services, Bakersfield College

Sandra Serrano, Chancellor, Kern Community College District

Tim Chapa, City Manager, Arvin

Tim Tarver, Mayor, Arvin

Tom Burke, Chief Financial Officer, Kern Community College District