

March 2, 2026

David C. Andrus, JD
Interim Superintendent/President
Daylene Meuschke, Ed.D.
Vice President, Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

College of the Canyons
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

RE: IEPI Mini-Partnership Proposal

Dear Dr. Andrus:

I am writing on behalf of the Kern Community College District (KCCD) to solicit your support to establish a Mini-Partnership Resource Team (PRT), currently available as part of the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative. Over the past year, KCCD has developed our new Districtwide Strategic Plan, *Future Forward: Elevating Student Achievement Together*, which provided us the opportunity to reflect on our strengths, challenges, and opportunities. I'm pleased to submit the following for your consideration:

1. Description of areas that your institution is doing well.

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. To that end, each of our colleges earned commendations during their 2025 ACCJC Accreditation process. Bakersfield College earned a commendation for an *"institution-wide culture of inquiry and exemplary use of disaggregated data to drive equity-focused decision-making which reflects a mature, integrated approach to continuous improvement and student success."* Porterville College earned a similar commendation, *"The Commission commends the college for its exemplary commitment and culture of data-informed decision-making across all areas which has fostered equity-focused practices, increased student success, and mission fulfillment."* Cerro Coso Community College earned a commendation for *"its exceptional collaboration and coordination in serving students across a vast, rural, and multi-campus service area"*, commending the college's commitment to student-centered support and institutional effectiveness.

2. Description of your institution's areas of focus for Mini-PRT assistance that will help advance your institutional effectiveness.

Throughout the 2024-2025 academic year, a cross-functional team from 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 District 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. 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.

One priority within *Future Forward* is the Employee Ecosystem, in which Kern CCD strives to create an environment where employees thrive – one in which they are productive, feel valued, and understand the connection between their roles and the district's broader functions.

IEBC's *Caring Campus* has been implemented at more than 170 community colleges/districts nationwide and has empirically demonstrated increases in employee satisfaction and engagement, while also positively impacting student success indicators and closing achievement gaps. *Caring Campus* is now being successfully implemented college-wide at Porterville College. Our proposed area of focus is the District Office.

KCCD's 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 district's major population centers are in Kern and Tulare Counties. This expansive service area can lead to disconnects between the colleges and the District Office, located in Bakersfield. Moreover, Cerro Coso Community College's extension center in Mammoth Lakes is more than a five-hour drive from the District Office.

The geographic distances can lead District Office staff to not see how the work they do impacts student success and equity throughout the District's 24,900-square-mile service delivery area. We believe establishing a Caring Campus District through a shared Caring Campus approach with the Colleges will help bridge that connection, deepen understanding of how District Office's work impacts student success and equity, and improve employee engagement and job satisfaction.

3. Description of the rationale for these areas of focus

KCCD recognizes that a thriving, supportive workplace is foundational to advancing student success and equity. As outlined in *Future Forward*, we are committed to cultivating an environment where District Office employees feel connected, valued, and empowered to contribute at the highest level. This focus area centers on strengthening a culture of care, collaboration, and accountability—one that fosters trust, engagement, and professional growth. By investing in our people and promoting a sense of belonging and shared purpose, we strengthen our institutional effectiveness and enhance our collective ability to serve students and communities with excellence and equity.

4. Description of how these areas of focus relate to the Core Commitments in the Vision for Success and help advance Vision 2030.

Vision for Success – Goal 5: Reduce equity gaps across all outcome measures through accelerated improvement among traditionally underrepresented student groups

Advancing Vision 2030 requires more than programmatic interventions; it requires intentionally cultivating college environments where students feel seen, valued, and supported from their first interaction through completion. Research and experience consistently demonstrate that students are more likely to persist and achieve when they experience a strong sense of belonging and connection to their institution—particularly students from historically underrepresented populations.

Our areas of focus directly support Vision for Success Goal 5 by strengthening the human-centered conditions that enable equitable outcomes. While academic supports and structured pathways remain critical, they are most effective when embedded within a culture of care that affirms students' identities and aspirations.

Equally important, the workplace culture experienced by the employees who serve students—both directly and indirectly—shapes the student experience. A healthy, engaged, and aligned workforce contributes to a welcoming and inclusive environment where students can thrive. By expanding Caring Campus principles for

District Office staff, we reinforce a districtwide commitment to connection, equity-minded practice, and institutional accountability.

Ideally, we would like to begin this work in the fall of 2026, but we are open to a later start date, if necessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require any additional information. You may reach me via email at steven.bloomberg@kccd.edu or by phone at (661) 687-5214.

Best regards,



Dr. Steven Bloomberg, Chancellor
Kern Community College District