

## A Reflection on My Experience at the CCCT Board Meeting

Dear Colleagues,

I wanted to take a moment to share my recent experience at the **California Community College Trustees (CCCT) Board meeting** in Sacramento. The two-day event offered a critical space to engage deeply with the challenges and opportunities facing our community colleges, and I left with a renewed sense of purpose and perspective that I believe is relevant to the work we do here at College of the Redwoods.

One of the most impactful sessions focused on **Adult Dual Enrollment (ADE)**, a program that allows adult learners to pursue their high school equivalency while earning college credit. It's an innovative approach to addressing both declining enrollment and the workforce needs of our communities. Hearing success stories from colleges across the state reinforced the potential ADE has to significantly impact the lives of adult learners who may have previously felt left behind by traditional education pathways. I believe this is something we should explore further at College of the Redwoods, especially given our unique demographic and the needs of our region.

Another key theme that resonated throughout the meeting was the critical importance of **equity and inclusion**. During our discussions, we confronted the systemic barriers that continue to limit access and opportunity for underserved students. It was clear from the examples shared—such as students being turned away due to small policy oversights—that we must remain vigilant in ensuring that our policies and practices do not inadvertently create obstacles for those who need our support the most. This focus on equity is something we can't afford to overlook, particularly as we consider how to best serve our students at College of the Redwoods.

The meeting also underscored the importance of **reimagining the role of community colleges** in the broader educational ecosystem. As trustees, we have the ability—and the responsibility—to drive conversations about how our institutions can be more flexible, more responsive, and more supportive of the evolving needs of our students and the workforce. I'm excited about the potential for us to lead in this area, and I look forward to exploring ways we can integrate some of the ideas discussed at the CCCT meeting into our own strategic planning.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude to all of you for your continued support of my service on the CCCT Board. The insights and connections I've gained through this experience are invaluable, and I am eager to bring this knowledge back to College of the Redwoods as we work together to create more opportunities for our students.

Respectfully,



Danny Kelley

Trustee, College of the Redwoods

# Day 1: September 20, 2024

## Opening Remarks:

- The **Board Chair** welcomed attendees and set the tone for the meeting, emphasizing the need for strategic action in response to current challenges such as **enrollment declines**, **workforce needs**, and the overall financial health of California's community college system. The Chair reiterated the importance of collaboration with local districts, emphasizing that decisions made at this level would have far-reaching impacts on educational equity and economic growth.

## Key Discussions:

### 1. Enrollment Declines and Workforce Needs:

- A comprehensive review of data showed that **75% of K-12 districts in California** have experienced significant enrollment declines over the past five years, with a projection of further losses over the next decade. It was noted that by 2031-32, enrollment levels could fall below 5.2 million statewide.
- Board members expressed concern over these trends and discussed the state's workforce needs. The need for colleges to expand their **target markets** was emphasized, specifically through programs like **dual enrollment** (both for minors and adults), **adult education**, and **apprenticeships**.
- One member pointed out the role of **community colleges** as central institutions in preparing future workers, especially in underserved communities, suggesting that colleges need to innovate with **short-term credentials** and **stackable certificates** to meet these workforce demands.

### 2. Presentation on Adult Dual Enrollment (ADE) by Gary Adams:

- **Gary Adams**, Dean of Workforce and Economic Development, presented the **Adult Dual Enrollment (ADE)** program as a key strategy to address both enrollment declines and workforce gaps. He explained how **Senate Bill 554** (Roth, 2019) enables adult students pursuing a high school diploma or equivalency to enroll part-time in community college courses.
- The presentation highlighted:
  - **Equity impacts** of ADE, noting how it provides marginalized adult learners access to higher education and career advancement.
  - A steady upward trend in enrollment with an 18.5% growth in ADE participation over the past three years, despite challenges brought on by the pandemic.
  - **Benefits of ADE**, including accelerating the time to degree completion and offering adult learners exposure to college life while still completing their high school requirements.
  - **Regional highlights** showing a diverse range of participation: for instance, **Los Angeles-Orange County** leads with nearly 5,713 enrollees in 2023-24, while **North-Far North** saw more modest growth with 413 enrollees.

- Adams emphasized the need for **expanding partnerships** between community colleges and adult schools to support these students through wraparound services such as **counseling, financial aid, and transportation support**.

### 3. Funding, Infrastructure, and Support for ADE:

- A detailed discussion followed on the **funding challenges** of implementing ADE programs. **Innovative funding structures**, such as braided funding from multiple sources, were suggested to make the programs sustainable.
- Members explored **local governance models** that help ensure effective implementation of ADE programs. They stressed the importance of having **clear policy and purpose statements** at the district level to guide these programs.
- The session highlighted the **apportionment model**, which reimburses community colleges for students enrolled in ADE programs. Special Admit Credit FTES apportionment rates were increased to **\$7,425** for the FY 2024-25, helping to ease the financial burden on colleges.

### 4. Equity and Diversity in ADE Programs:

- A robust conversation about ensuring **equitable access** to ADE programs focused on addressing the systemic barriers that marginalized communities face. This included a deeper look into **structural racism** and its effects on educational outcomes.
- One speaker shared a poignant story about two young Black men being turned away from registering at a community college due to ID issues, highlighting how **small policy decisions can have huge consequences** for students seeking upward mobility. The discussion acknowledged that systemic barriers disproportionately affect **low-income students** and **students of color**.
- The board agreed on the need for **training staff and faculty** in understanding and dismantling these barriers. Suggestions included revising the **student intake process** and providing **cultural competency training** for administrators and counselors.

## Day 2: September 21, 2024

### Opening Presentation: Adult Dual Enrollment – Research and Data

- **Gary Adams** continued his presentation, delving into the data that underscores the **success of ADE programs**. He presented the following findings:
  - Over 12,000 students participated in **concurrent and dual enrollment** in 2023-24, an increase from 10,903 in 2022-23.
  - **Adult School enrollees**, who are concurrently enrolled while completing high school, made up a significant portion of the total enrollment, showing how ADE is providing opportunities to adult students without a high school diploma.
  - Notably, **Los Angeles-Orange County** leads the state in ADE enrollment, followed by the **Bay Area**. These regions were identified as model areas for other parts of California that are looking to expand their dual enrollment programs.
- The presentation highlighted the success of **pilot programs** in areas like **Fresno City College** and **West Los Angeles College**, which have developed robust partnerships with local adult education programs.

## Key Discussions:

### 1. Benefits of Dual Enrollment for Adult Learners:

- Board members discussed how ADE:
  - Provides **equitable access** to higher education for marginalized communities.
  - Allows students to gain college credits while still in high school, giving them a **head start** on their career or academic paths.
  - Contributes to local economies by creating a **more educated workforce**, which benefits both the individual and the broader community.

### 2. Challenges in Expanding ADE:

- Expanding ADE programs requires addressing **logistical and structural challenges**. Board members debated the difficulties of coordinating between **adult schools, community colleges**, and other local education agencies.
- Concerns were raised about the **lack of awareness** around the program, both among potential students and employers. It was suggested that stronger **marketing efforts** and **community outreach** were necessary to drive enrollment.
- The importance of **professional development** for faculty and staff was highlighted, ensuring they are equipped to support adult learners, many of whom may face unique challenges like balancing family responsibilities or full-time work while attending classes.

### 3. Funding, Infrastructure, and Support:

- Implementing ADE requires substantial resources, including funding for **infrastructure, technology, and personnel**. Several board members noted that these programs rely heavily on **state and federal funding**, which can be unstable. There was a discussion about how to secure long-term financial support for ADE programs through **grant writing, partnerships with businesses**, and **local district funding**.
- It was recommended that colleges focus on **scaling successful models** already in place at institutions like **Victor Valley College** and **Chaffey College**.

### 4. Looking Forward: The Future of ADE:

- The meeting concluded with a focus on the future of ADE and its potential to **transform California's workforce**. Board members expressed optimism about the program's growth but stressed the need for ongoing **advocacy** at both the state and local levels.
- The board committed to further exploring **policy changes** that would make ADE more accessible, including reducing administrative barriers and creating **stronger pathways** from adult education to community college programs.