

VCAEC Regular Meeting Minutes

Aug 1, 2025

Simi Institute for Careers & Education
1880 Blackstock Ave.
Simi Valley, CA 93065
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Participants:

Facilitator: Greg Hill Jr., WestEd

Recorder: Isabella Cisneros, WestEd

Member Representatives: Sean Abajian **P** (Consortium Chairperson), Scott McNutt **P** (Consortium Co-Chairperson) (Sean Bell **A**, Admin Delegate, VACE), Eric Saavedra **P**, Cynthia Herrera **A** (Brenda Acomb Forbes **P**, Admin Delegate, VCCCD), Blanca Mendieta **P** (Isaac Huang **A**, Admin Delegate for Fillmore), Marty McGrady **A**, Alex Mejia-Holdsworth **A**, Stacy Cashman **P**, Gina Ramirez **A** (Miguel Magana **A**, Admin Delegate for Santa Paula), Jason Klinger **P**

Guests: Derek Papa, Essential Education; Jenny Cardona, CTE Coordinator, Oxnard Adult School

Meeting Called to order at 1:16 PM by Greg Hill Jr. with permission of Sean Abajian

MINUTES **OPEN SESSION**

ROLL CALL AND WELCOME

- Roll Call

PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comments

GUEST SPEAKER

- **Derek Papa, Essential Education.** Derek Papa, representing Essential Education, provided an overview of the organization's online learning programs and resources, emphasizing support for English Language Learners (ELLs) and career-focused training opportunities. These programs, including GED Academy and TABE Academy, are designed to support adult learners in achieving high school equivalency and foundational skills.

Derek highlighted the flexibility of these platforms, noting that they are accessible to learners in both traditional classroom settings and hybrid or fully online environments. He emphasized the capacity of the programs to track student progress in real-time, providing actionable insights for instructors and administrators. Derek also provided guidance on integrating the

- ☐ Derek will provide trial access for interested members to allow for hands-on exploration of the platforms.

online resources into existing adult education curricula, offering examples of how other California adult schools have successfully used the programs to supplement in-person instruction, support high-flex learning, and enhance student outcomes.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPDATES

- **Q4 Member Expenditures.** Greg reminded members that the deadline for submitting Q4 expenditure reports for CAEP is approaching. Members were encouraged to review expenditures for accuracy or adjust numbers prior to submission.
 - **WIOA Funding Update.** Greg provided an update on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding, noting that awards for the upcoming year had been released. He mentioned that overall, allocations for consortium agencies increased compared to the prior year.
 - **Marketing Booklet and Video Update.** Greg shared updates on the consortium's marketing materials. A new marketing booklet will be circulated to members including recent updates for approval. A promotional video produced by Medulla Creative was viewed, and members were encouraged to utilize them in local outreach efforts.
 - **Facebook Marketing Campaign.** Greg provided an update on the Facebook marketing campaign, noting that the Akkedis marketing team is in the process of gathering course offerings from each adult school in the consortium. Brenda highlighted the importance of ensuring prospective students are apprised of the array of educational opportunities provided by the consortium. Sean raised concerns regarding the significant funding disparities between adult schools and community colleges, which impact how programs are resourced and promoted. Greg acknowledged the issue and suggested holding a follow-up meeting with Brenda and Sean to discuss further.
 - **Supporting Immigrant Students:** Sean emphasized the consortium's commitment to supporting immigrant students. Strategies under consideration include expanding online/hybrid course access, providing culturally responsive instruction, and connecting students to community-based resources and employment opportunities. Members discussed challenges and shared best practices for ensuring that immigrant learners are engaged, supported, and able to progress toward educational and career goals.
- ☐ Members will update and recertify budget allocations to accurately reflect Q4 numbers
 - ☐ Members must approve marketing updates
 - ☐ Sean will share the contact information for Medulla Creative with all members
 - ☐ Members are to provide current course lists to Akkedis
 - ☐ Brenda and consortium leadership will schedule a follow-up discussion on community college involvement
 - ☐ Sean will share news reports on recent ICE raids and resources with all members

CORRESPONDENCE / EVENTS CALENDAR

- Greg Hill Jr. reviewed key consortium deadlines and upcoming events. Members were reminded to plan for timely submissions to ensure compliance and maintain alignment with consortium

objectives. Greg explained that the annual plan must reflect activities aligned with the three-year CAEP plan and encouraged members to review assigned responsibilities and provide input prior to submission.

- Annual Plan for 2025-26 due: August 15 2025, in NOVA
- Q4 Member Expense Reports due: September 1, 2025, for 2023-24 and 2024-25
- Certification of Allocation Amendment: September 1, 2025
- Member Program Year Budget and Work Plan due: September 30, 2025
- Q1 Student Data and Employment Follow-Up: October 31, 2025

- ☐ Greg will circulate the draft three-year and annual plans to members for review and feedback
- ☐ Isabella will remind consortium members of upcoming due dates

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion 1

- Motion to approve minutes from Jun 6, 2025 by S. Abajian
Seconded by E. Saavedra
All present Yes | Motion passed

DISCUSSION

- **CAEP Three-Year Plan Review.** Greg briefly presented the three-year plan, outlining core strategies and measurable outcomes for adult education in Ventura County. He emphasized high-level goals, including enhancing online/hybrid learning opportunities, expanding workforce-aligned programs, and promoting equity for underserved populations. Discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining flexibility to adapt programs to local needs while ensuring accountability. Members were encouraged to provide feedback before finalizing the plan for submission.
- **CAEP Annual Plan Review & Next Steps.** Greg described the process of aligning the annual plan to the three-year plan. Members were reminded that each activity in the annual plan must align with a three-year plan goal, and they were advised that any significant additions or corrections should be communicated immediately to avoid delays in submission.

- ☐ Greg will send out the draft annual plan for review
- ☐ Members are to review annual plans and provide essential revisions and feedback

Round Table Discussion

- Members provided updates on current initiatives, program developments, and student success stories:
 - **Simi Valley Adult School:** Stacy Cashman shared that her site is exploring new plumbing and electrical programs. She also announced the upcoming grand opening of their student resource center.

- **High-Flex Learning Options:** Members discussed strategies for offering high-flex learning to accommodate students affected by external challenges, including immigration-related concerns. Programs aim to maintain continuity and accessibility while aligning with CAEP goals.
- **Oxnard Adult School:** Jenny Cardona reported that accounting, marketing, and IT programs are being reinstated, with externship opportunities as a key focus. She shared a student success story: one of their top-performing students recently completed her high school diploma, earned a Medical Assistant certificate, and interviewed for a position at Dignity Health. This exemplifies the impact of career technical education (CTE) programs and the importance of workforce partnerships.
- **Public Service Fellowship Opportunities:** Brenda Acomb Forbes introduced the county Public Service Fellowship program, emphasizing its potential for students aged up to 28 who have completed adult education programs. Greg Hill Jr. elaborated on the value of public service jobs, noting their stability, pay, and career advancement opportunities. He stressed the importance of building regional partnerships to increase student access to high-quality employment pathways.

Meeting adjourned at 3:06 PM. The next meeting will be held at Moorpark Adult School.