



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 28, 2024

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

Re: **Pima Vocational High School Post-Surrender Vote Update 1**

Following the Board's March 19, 2024 vote to surrender the Pima Vocational High School and assist students and families with transfer planning, I requested that Community & Workforce Development (CWD) provide regular updates on wind-down, focusing on planning for the future of current students and addressing other key items.

Attached is the first of these regular updates from CWD Director Dan Sullivan. The memorandum outlines the department's transition planning and communication with students and families to date; assistance provided to staff to transition to future employment; current status of school operations; communication with the Arizona State Board of Charter Schools and Arizona Department of Education; and school finances, facilities, and equipment. We will continue to provide regular updates on school wind-down.

JKL/dym

Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Dan Sullivan, Director, Community & Workforce Development

VAR 28-24M1130PC CLK OF BD



Date: March 27, 2024

To: Jan Leshar
County Administrator

From: Dan Sullivan 
Community & Workforce Development
Director

Re: **Pima Vocational High School – Post-Surrender Vote Update 1**

This memorandum provides the first of what we anticipate will be weekly updates surrounding the wind-down of Pima Vocational High School (PVHS) and transition of students, following the Board of Supervisors' March 19, 2024 vote to surrender the school's charter. For convenience, an appendix with links to prior updates is attached and will be updated with each new memorandum.

Student Transition Planning

A letter, in English and Spanish, was sent out to all students and, if applicable, parents/guardians, notifying them of the Board's vote and summarizing the transition process. As noted in the March 19 meeting, Community & Workforce Development (CWD) leadership have prepared a five-point transition plan:

1. A transition team of four, including Youth Manager Daphanie Conner, two youth specialists, and one teacher, will meet with each student and, if applicable, parent/guardian, and explain the process and status of the school.
2. The team will review each student's transcript with the student and parent/guardian.
3. The team will review three or more schools in the area where the student lives with the student.
4. The team will contact the schools and request a site visit, and PVHS staff will drive students to the schools for tours.
5. Once the school is selected by the student and parent/guardian, the PVHS team will provide a complete transfer packet to the new school.

In addition, CWD will arrange for an on-site school fair so that alternative schools can come to campus and recruit PVHS students on site.

The following anecdote provides an example of the level of care that will be provided to all students and parents/guardians. The parent who spoke up after the Board vote on Tuesday, March 19, called Youth Community & Workforce Manager Daphanie Conner to inquire about the outcome of the meeting and decision. Daphanie was empathetic and explained in detail the plan to assist students/parents with the transition. Daphanie shared with the parent that a letter was sent out that same day (March 22) to all parents notifying them of the process for the school closure of which this parent was thankful to receive. The parent asked questions about school choice so Daphanie explained how the team would work with each student/parent to find the best school option. The parent asked if her daughter could still participate in the Youth Summer Program. Daphanie happily stated, "absolutely she can." Daphanie further shared that her daughter could participate in the Credit Recovery Program offered through the Youth Center. Moreover, she explained how the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program and funding work so there may be future opportunities for her daughter. Daphanie also emphasized that she would not be left alone and that they would be a partner until a school option is chosen. The parent expressed gratitude and stated, "wow," as she felt the situation was definitely much better than she realized. Daphanie explained

these options would be topics of discussion at the assembly on Monday, March 25. The parent has Daphanie's contact number and will reach out with questions as they proceed through this process. This will be the type of care shown to all involved with PVHS.

Staff Planning

There are thirteen PVHS positions, eight of which are vacant. Vacant positions will be surrendered. For the five employees impacted, CWD will provide "rapid response" services designed to help transition them to other employment, be it within the department, within the County, or elsewhere. As the home of the One-Stop Career Center, CWD is very well positioned to offer these services and has done so successfully with its own employees before, most recently with the wind-down of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. Additionally, a draft layoff plan will be prepared and submitted to Human Resources for review by April 5, to ensure timely completion of a layoff plan.

School Operations

Instruction resumed following spring break on March 25. There are 37 students. We currently expect that seven of those students will be eligible to graduate in June, meaning we anticipate preparing transition plans for 30 students. Graduation will be held in early June (date to be determined). We are not actively recruiting but continue to be under a legal obligation to enroll any student who asks to. Any student who asks to enroll will be given up-to-date information about the school's status, including the coming closure, before being enrolled.

A school assembly was held March 25 to provide information about school closure and transition planning. Interim staff reported that the assembly was generally positive, as the students were receptive to information about resources available for transition.

One of the more urgent operational challenges is the lack of a registrar after March 29, the last day of employment for the current employee filling that role. We have made the following efforts to temporarily fill that role.

- Contacted the County School Superintendent, who does not have personnel available to assist but is exploring what he can do to help.
- Contacted Express Services, Inc., which provides substitute teaching services to PVHS under a contract (CT-CR-22*453), which is exploring whether they have personnel to assist.
- Contacted Chicanos Por La Causa, which operates two charter schools included on the list of alternative schools provided to students and families, to inquire whether they can provide temporary help part time (CWD could arrange to pay for these services through an existing staffing contract or another mechanism). A meeting is scheduled for March 28.

Governing Board Actions

The PVHS Governing Board met virtually March 21 but did not take significant action. Governing Board President Mary Fellows asked CWD leadership for additional information about the rules applicable to employees or contractors attending the March 19 Board meeting. After consultation with the County Attorney's Office, the following email communication was distributed to the Governing Board on March 25:

At the March 21 Governing Board meeting, President Fellows requested follow-up regarding use of leave vs. work time for those who attended the March 19 Board of Supervisors meeting. We have consulted with the County Attorney's Office as requested.

Pima County Personnel Policy 8-119(B) directly applies to County employees: "Report to work on scheduled work days at the proper starting time and remain at assigned work station for the scheduled periods, unless permission to leave has been granted by the supervisor or Appointing Authority."

Contractors are expected to bill only for work that is in scope and requested by Pima County. Contractors should not bill for time spent at the meeting, or time spent lobbying the Board of Supervisors.

Any staff or contractors who have follow-up questions should be directed to contact Daphanie, who can elevate issues within chain of command as appropriate.

During the Governing Board meeting, staff inadvertently displayed a document identifying students by name and including their credits earned and credits needed. It is not believed that any members of the general public were in attendance, but staff will ensure that if any member of the public requests a recording of the meeting, the identifying information will not be included, nor will it be reflected in the minutes.

Charter Status

We met with the Arizona State Board of Charter Schools (ASBCS) Executive Director and staff on March 22. We explained the Board vote and provided an overview of our transition and wind-down plan. On March 25, ASBCS provided us with a draft termination agreement, which must be brought back to the Board of Supervisors for approval. We anticipate that will happen at the April 16 meeting. School records will be transferred to ASBCS in the fall, and ASBCS will provide guidance about how to organize and transfer those records.

School Finances

We have begun conversations with the Finance and Grants Management & Innovation (GMI) departments, Arizona Department of Education (ADE), and the County's consultant Aspire Business Consultants about winding down the school's finances. A meeting is scheduled with Arizona Department of Education staff March 26. Aspire is assisting in preparing a close-out list of important dates and items to be completed.

ADE will withhold the final payment of state equalization funding, normally paid June 30, until Average Daily Membership is recalculated in the fall. We will continue to work with the relevant experts to refine projections and ensure necessary expenditures are covered, but do not anticipate any problems ensuring PVHS expenditures are covered through the remainder of the fiscal year. Below is a high-level picture of the two largest PVHS units through Period 8:

Unit	Actuals through P8	Cash Balance/Budget Capacity as of P8	Projected additional need through FY24
3319 – PVHS General Fund	\$348,887	\$323,274	\$176,000
3321 – PVHS State Equalization	\$427,075	\$579,154	\$216,000

Contracted services and subscriptions will generally either not be renewed or will be canceled effective June 30. Staff are working on an inventory of affected vendors and will ensure they are notified in a timely manner. The County will be in need of continued accounting and auditing services from Aspire Business Consultants (CT-CR-23*346) for at least some portion of Fiscal Year 2024-25. The contract has four renewals, has an annual not-to-exceed amount of \$35,000, and is currently funded by the General Fund. CWD will work with Procurement and Finance to renew it and ensure funding is available.

Facilities & Equipment

The Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (RWRD) has already expressed interest in taking over and using the Ina site as soon as July 1, and staff are coordinating to determine a feasible transition schedule. The Irvington site will be made available to the Health Department, which operates the Women, Infants & Children program out of the same building, and if they do not need it thereafter to other County departments. There will be a need to continue to securely store physical student records at the site or relocate them to another site until they are transmitted to ASBCS in the fall.

Equipment will either be repurposed within the department or surplus in compliance with County policy, unless specific requirements apply to funding purchased with state or federal funds. We will be exploring this subject in more detail in the coming weeks.

c: Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator and Chief Medical Officer

Attachment

APPENDIX – LINKS TO PRIOR UPDATES

[March 15, 2024 – Further Information for the March 19, 2024 Board of Supervisors Meeting – Agenda No. 14 – Pima Vocational High School](#)

[March 11, 2024 – Additional Information for the March 19, 2024 Board of Supervisors Meeting – Agenda No. 14 – Pima Vocational High School](#)

[December 7, 2023 – Pima Vocational High School](#)