



Peralta Community College District

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To: Members of the Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees
From: Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson, Chancellor 
Date: December 1, 2025
Reason: Recommendation to Name the Laney College Fieldhouse in Honor of John Beam

In accordance with Peralta Community College District Board Policy 6620: Naming of Buildings and Facilities, this memo formally proposes the naming of the Laney College Fieldhouse as the John Beam Fieldhouse. Under the criteria outlined in AP 6620 for naming in recognition of distinction, this proposal includes (1) biographical information about the individual to be honored, (2) a description of the facility and proposed name, and (3) justification for why the individual's contributions merit this designation.

1. Biographical Information: John Edward Beam

John Edward Beam was a transformative educator, coach, and mentor whose 46-year career shaped the lives of more than 2,500 student-athletes and left an enduring legacy in Oakland and across the state. Beginning his tenure at Laney College in 2004, Coach Beam quickly became a central force in the football program—first as a running backs coach, then as offensive coordinator, and ultimately as head coach beginning in 2012. Under his leadership, Laney earned league titles, playoff appearances, and a state championship, raising the program's visibility and setting a new standard of excellence.

Coach Beam's influence extended far beyond wins and trophies. He believed deeply in the potential of young people—especially those whose talents had been overlooked elsewhere: his holistic approach centered on academic success, structured study support, and consistent mentoring. Hundreds of students continued to four-year universities, and more than 30 eventually reached the NFL, including Super Bowl participants.

His former students—now leaders in medicine, business, public service, education, and the arts—credit him with instilling the values of perseverance, discipline, and a commitment to one's community. Coach Beam was equally devoted to his family, grounding his coaching philosophy in responsibility, compassion, and love. His humor, determination, and unwavering love for Oakland made him a pillar of the community.

The District's proclamation (November 18, 2025) honors his extraordinary contributions and affirms the immense impact he made on Laney College and the City of Oakland.

2. Description of Facility and Proposed Name

The Laney College Fieldhouse is the central home of the college's athletics program, classes, team meeting spaces, student-athlete support areas, and faculty offices. It serves as the daily hub for coaching, instruction, training, mentorship, and academic guidance—functions that reflect the core of John's philosophy and legacy.

Proposed Name: The John Beam Fieldhouse

This designation reflects the alignment between the facility's purpose and John Beam's lifetime of service to student-athletes, academics, and community development.

3. Rationale for Naming in Recognition of Distinction

John Beam's contributions to Laney College and the Peralta Community College District merit recognition for the following reasons:

- **Transformational Educational Impact:** Coach Beam built a model student-athlete academic support system, achieving exceptional graduation and transfer rates and demonstrating his steadfast belief in education as the foundation of opportunity.
- **Unmatched Mentorship:** His ability to see potential in young people changed life trajectories, helping thousands of students access higher education, meaningful careers, and personal stability.
- **Athletic Excellence and Leadership:** Through decades of coaching, he elevated Laney's football program to statewide prominence and shaped the careers of athletes who competed at collegiate, professional, and national levels.
- **Community Legacy:** His leadership extended into the community, strengthening bonds across Oakland and serving as a role model for perseverance, responsibility, and compassion.
- **Enduring Influence:** The values he instilled—hard work, belief in oneself, and lifting others—continue through generations of alums who carry forward his teachings in diverse fields.

Naming the Fieldhouse in his honor is an appropriate and enduring acknowledgment of his exceptional service, leadership, and transformative impact on students and the community.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Peralta Community College District Board of Trustees approve the naming of the Laney College Fieldhouse as the **John Beam Fieldhouse** in recognition of his extraordinary legacy of educational excellence, mentorship, and community leadership. The recommendation is supported by Laney College's Campus Naming Workgroup and the Laney College Interim President.