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The California Center for College and Career

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Surprising “Multiple Pathways” Coalition Launches to Improve California High Schools

Coalition Members Pushing No-Cost Improvements Given State Budget Deficit

Sacramento, CA –The Coalition for Multiple Pathways, consisting of more than sixty K-12 education, higher education, industry, and labor organizations, launched today in Sacramento, with a focus on supporting high school improvements that don't require an increase in state funding (See <http://www.connectedcalifornia.org/coalition/> or attached for list of Coalition members.)

“When is the last time a teacher union, charter schools, school boards, business, a labor union, and the University of California all saw eye-to-eye on improving schools?” said Gary Hoachlander, president of ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career which recruited members for the Coalition and organized the launch. “So many people are tired of the debate about whether students should receive preparation for either college or for employment. Multiple pathways moves past the *either/or* option and prepares students for both college and career—which just makes sense to a lot of people.”

Multiple pathways connect learning in the classroom with real-world applications outside of school. It combines rigorous academic instruction with a demanding technical curriculum and field-based learning. Elements of multiple pathways have been shown to reduce drop out rates, increase academic achievement, and increase earning power after high school graduation. Most importantly, pathways prepare students for a wide range of options after high school—two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships, formal employer training programs.

Senate pro Tempore Elect Darrell Steinberg added, "With the state losing \$200,000 for every child who drops out of school, and the pressure to compete in a global economy, we can no longer afford to ignore the abysmal graduation rates of so many high schools. Even in tight budget times, we need to prioritize high school improvement *now*."

To that end, the Coalition has committed to expanding access to multiple pathways to ensure that more students graduate from high school better prepared for a wide variety of

postsecondary options and for today's rapidly changing economy. Coalition goals include:

- Building awareness and understanding of multiple pathways
- Presenting unified support for multiple pathways to encourage state, regional, and local decision makers to expand and improve pathway programs
- Optimizing resources and expertise to help promote multiple pathways
- Establishing state and local policy priorities that support multiple pathways

Coalition members have already taken active leadership to expand and improve multiple pathway programs even prior to today's launch:

- The **Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce** has introduced a package of bills promoting the expansion of pathway programs to ensure that more students have access to them. AB2648 (Bass) would develop a 5-year plan for pathway expansion; AB2078 (Fuentes) would improve the quality of and access to work-based learning; and SB 1677 (Scott) would determine the preparation and professional development needs of teachers providing instruction in applied learning programs.
- The **California State University** system is piloting four teacher preparation programs in the coming year (Fresno, Sacramento, San Diego, and San Francisco campuses) that will better prepare teacher candidates for multiple pathways. For example, candidates will learn to incorporate real world applications into academic courses, develop partnerships with local businesses, and connect classroom learning to students' work-based learning opportunities.
- The **Elk Grove Unified School District's** superintendent and school board have committed to expanding the number of career academies and pathways offered at their schools, based on the belief that technical education augments a strong college education platform.

For more information on the Coalition and ConnectEd,
please visit www.ConnectEdCalifornia.org.