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Ten California School Districts Awarded \$1.25 Million in Planning Grants to Expand High School Pathway Programs

Promising Approach to Education prepares students for college and career by combining rigorous academic instruction with demanding technical curriculum and field-based learning

Berkeley, CA – As part of ConnectEd's District Initiative for Expanding Pathways, 10 California school districts will each receive \$125,000 grants to develop action plans for expanding multiple pathways in their high schools. Multiple pathways, a promising approach for improving secondary education, connects learning in the classroom with real-world applications outside of school. Districts will work closely with the local community to develop a curriculum and program of study that brings greater relevance to academics, exposes students to real-world work experiences, and prepares students for a full range of options after graduation.

Districts receiving planning grants include:

- Antioch
- Los Angeles Unified, District 4
- Long Beach
- Montebello
- Pasadena
- Porterville
- Sacramento
- San Diego
- Stockton
- West Contra Costa

ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career, which awarded the grants with the support of The James Irvine Foundation, is managing the initiative and will provide the districts with technical assistance.

“These ten districts have already created programs that demonstrate how multiple pathways prepare students for today's economy and tomorrow's world,” said Gary Hoachlander, president of ConnectEd. “As demands for a skilled and educated workforce increase, it is all the more important that our high schools prepare students for both college and career, not just one or the other.”

Multiple pathways combine rigorous academic instruction with demanding technical curriculum and field-based learning. Districts in the Initiative are developing *systems* of pathways, with at least six to eight pathways in a district, that offer students more options to increase their

preparedness for the demands of college and career. While hundreds of pathway programs exist throughout California, districts often have not developed a comprehensive system that offers *multiple* pathways, which give students a choice of industry-themed programs of study within a district. Such pathways include biomedical and health sciences; construction and building design; agriculture and renewable resources; and arts, media, and entertainment, among others.

The planning grants will help districts convene community planning committees, conduct needs assessments of pathway programs, identify which additional pathways to develop, and designate priorities for professional development, work-based learning, and other aspects of pathway programs. ConnectEd will offer implementation grants to five to seven of these districts next spring.

“This initiative can help ensure that students don’t need to choose between academics and technical skills, since both are necessary for a complete education and a successful future,” said Irvine Foundation Program Director, Anne Stanton. “As pathway programs expand to more students and more districts, we believe this promising approach can transform California’s high schools.”

This district initiative is part of a growing movement to expand multiple pathways in California. The recent passage of AB2648, which requires the state to complete a feasibility study for expanding and establishing multiple pathway programs, further demonstrates broad support. The bill was sponsored by Speaker of the Assembly Karen Bass, co-authored by Senate President pro Tempore Elect Darrell Steinberg, and signed by the Governor. In addition, more than 80 key business, education, and community organizations have expressed support for this approach by joining the Coalition for Multiple Pathways.

For more information on ConnectEd, visit www.ConnectEdCalifornia.org.

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