



COALITION FOR MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

Policy Development Working Group

Friday, November 7, 2008

Meeting Notes

Participants

Mallory Angeli, California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC)
Rae Belisle, EdVoice
Cynthia Borges O'Dell, California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership
Susanna Cooper, Office of Senate Pro Temp Steinberg
Julienne DeGuyter, California Association of School Business Officers (CASBO)
Max Espinoza, Office of Assembly Member Speaker
Francisco Estrada, Campaign for College Opportunity
Nancy Farnan, California State University, San Diego
Jeff Freitas, California Federation of Teachers
Erika Hoffman, California School Boards Association (CSBA)
Cris Johnson, California Teachers Association (CTA)
Brian Lee, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids CA
Rick Miller, California Department of Education (CDE)
Tiffany Mok, ACLU Foundation of Southern California
George Montgomery, California Association of School Counselors (CASC)
Steve Pinning, California Association of Regional Occupational Centers & Programs (CAROCP)
Joe Radding, California Department of Education (CDE)
David Rattray, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Lee Angela Reid, Senate Office of Research (SOR)
Ana Rodriguez, Office of Senator Wiggins
Patricia Rucker, California Teachers Association (CTA)
and
Gary Hoachlander, Roman Stearns, and Jose Hernandez,
ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career

Welcome & Introductions

Patricia Rucker, co-chair, welcomed the Policy Development Working Group and asked working group members to introduce themselves.

Gary thanked Pat and David for their willingness to co-chair the group. There is a growing number of schools that have implemented pathways in a variety of forms and quality. More often than not, these pathways develop in spite of the system, rather than because of it. There are not a lot of clear policy obstacles, but there also is not a well-defined structure to support the expansion of multiple pathways. At the district level, the challenges are even greater. Many students have access to a pathway, but few have access to multiple pathways. Our charge is to continue to think about how the state can recognize multiple pathways as a strategy for bringing about an improvement in student achievement, high school completion, and postsecondary transition.

Gary announced that ConnectEd received 27 proposals from school districts in CA interested in planning and adopting *systems* of multiple pathways. First, we assembled an internal review team and then an external review team to read and score proposals. Originally, we expected to select 8 districts. We had many strong proposals and the James Irvine Foundation offered to fund two additional districts. They are Antioch USD, Los Angeles USD District 4, Long Beach USD, Montebello USD, Pasadena USD, Porterville USD, Sacramento City USD, San Diego USD, Stockton USD, and West Contra Costa USD. ConnectEd will provide support during this planning process, through June 2009. The James Irvine Foundation expects to fund 5-7 implementation grants following this planning cycle.

Steve Penning asked if any of these districts are in rural areas. Gary replied that Porterville is. It is an interesting district and a good example of ways to do this in smaller, rural districts.

Review of Policy Ideas and Resource Materials

Roman reminded participants that, at the first meeting of the Policy Development Working Group (July 16), participants prioritized policy areas of focus: (1) Curriculum & Instruction; (2) Teacher, Counselor, and Administrator Preparation; (3) Alignment with Postsecondary Education and the Economy; and (4) State Endorsement of Multiple Pathways. At that meeting, participants decided to hold four meetings before the end of the year, focusing on each of the issue areas. Notes from the previous meetings are available on the Coalition web pages (at www.ConnectEdCalifornia.org/Coalition). Today's meeting focuses on statewide endorsement of multiple pathways. Following today's meeting, a sub-group will review the priorities established during the four issue-specific meetings and present to the working group at its December 12 meeting a proposed policy agenda for 2009-10. Based on that discussion, the agenda will be refined and presented at the next convening of the full Coalition on January 7, 2009.

Roman reviewed the materials prepared by ConnectEd staff and distributed at the meeting – all intended to stimulate and support the discussion – including

1. The meeting agenda;
2. Notes from the previous meeting of the working group;
3. A list of policy ideas related to statewide endorsement of multiple pathways that have been generated through ConnectEd hosted meetings and events (Brown Bag Lunch series, Policy Site Visits, Stakeholder Policy Discussions, etc.);
4. Language of AB 2648 (Bass, Furitani, Steinberg), signed into law in October 2008.

State Endorsement of Multiple Pathways

Given the growing support for multiple pathways as a promising strategy for transforming high school education in California, in what ways might the state endorse multiple pathways?

Pat opened a general discussion about policy options. Gary put on the table a question of *should* the state endorse multiple pathways. Steve noted that some of the smaller, rural districts have a concern that, if multiple pathways is endorsed by Ed Code language, it may become the default approach. We need to calm that concern. Lee Angela suggested that the state needs to practice a little restraint. In eagerness to promote something, we need to be cautious not to create resistance.

David clarified what we mean by "endorse." The bill already establishes multiple pathways in Ed Code (section 52372.5). That represents some form of endorsement. What do we mean beyond that? Steve suggested that we may be getting hung up on the word endorse. It may be better to talk in terms of removing barriers that hinder pathway expansion. We can learn a lot from the local districts. Rae Belisle state her understanding that the bill defines multiple pathways solely "for purposes of this section (report)" Max commented that the passage of the bill demonstrates at least some level of endorsement, but the more important work will bear out in the bill's implementation. ConnectEd's district initiative may help to inform the study. Max agrees with Lee Angela that we don't want to get ahead of ourselves.

Pat asked Rick to comment since the Superintendent of Public Instruction is charged with conducting the study. Rick agreed that we should wait for the study to be conducted; it may be counterproductive to push more legislation. He is concerned about any attachment of multiple pathways to DAIT (District Assistance and Intervention Team) and PI (Program Improvement). That association may be limiting and counterproductive. There was strong suggestion that a mandate would not be helpful or desirable. What kind of information could be provided to the DAIT teams to add to their arsenal of tools and resources? Jose suggested that LAUSD serves as a local example of a district that views multiple pathways as a program improvement strategy. It is up to the site principal to reconcile the expectations of a DAIT provider and other school improvement strategies.

Lee Angela is grateful for the CDE study (AB 2648) and the district initiative because both will provide critical data about our needs and help establish a direction. We also should consider what legislation is moving forward and determine how and to what degree they fit into the bigger picture.

Gary said that many districts have applied for funds to upgrade and/or build facilities for CTE. He understands that some districts that were interested in building CTE through a pathways approach were told doing so was not an appropriate use of the funds. He recognizes that multiple pathways was not recognized in Ed Code before the proposition was passed, but in the future hopes that we can avoid a similar scenario that seems to be a barrier to multiple pathway implementation. How can we be purposeful about defining the boundary between CTE and academic classes and the flexibility for them to blend?

Steve suggested that, at some point, we need to define what constitutes a CTE class and what constitutes an academic class because it affects funding sources, credentialing, and other areas. Pat, Nancy, and George suggested that there are many practical considerations, such as common planning for teachers, teacher preparation, teacher collaboration, credentialing regulations, preparation and training of counselors, etc. The new counseling standards may also provide assistance and guidance to counselors because it incorporates career guidance as well as academic and social/personal counseling. How can we nurture this work?

Gary suggested that it may help to follow a principle of being explicitly permissive. District folks tend to be conservative in how they interpret regulations. If we can be explicit about permissiveness, that might give local practitioners freedom to implement programs in more flexible ways. Rae doesn't view the Ed Code as very helpful because people don't pay attention to it. She says that district folks think there is language in the Ed Code that does not exist. The Ed Code should not be, and she thinks, is not an obstacle. If a district is inclined to implement pathways, they should consult with others who have been successful and advance their agenda. If we are not going to mandate multiple pathways, then the Ed Code is a distraction.

Policy Priorities

Do some clear policy recommendations emerge? What should be the priorities for pursuing them?

A few clear conclusions have emerged:

1. Live with the question
2. Whatever we do, it cannot be a mandate
3. We need to create flexibility so that districts may implement pathways using models that are appropriate to the local context
4. From the state perspective, let the study go forward and actively monitor any policy ideas that may emerge

Lee Angela observed that one reason we look positively upon multiple pathways is because it emerged from the field. We need to let the field identify obstacles.

Jose pointed out that the bill is identified by Legislative Council as "CTE;" the legislature needs to recognize that multiple pathways is broader. David identified the list on p. 3 of the bill and asked if there are other areas that should be addressed. Max hopes that the study will address resource issues that may be needed to implement pathways.

Steve suggests that we start with the end in mind. Evaluation is one way to see if the strategy is working. Achievement data may be the best way to market the benefits of multiple pathways. We should examine ways the accountability system informs us of whether pathways are working. Erika stated that data collection must be a priority. Lee Angela suggested that we also must look at what is out there. For example, through SB70, CTE Online is hoping to tie their work to test scores.

On the list of policy recommendations (handout), she noticed a recommendation to grant flexibility for use of district funds. Districts may not use them to implement multiple pathways, but that is fine – it benefits all. Many of the recommendations do not require legislation, but do require legislative involvement. She is concerned that any attempt to put multiple pathways into the accountability system may kill it before it begins because the costs may be an insurmountable obstacle. Gary cautioned about rushing to accountability system; perhaps we should look at interim measures. For example, California Partnership

Academies (CPA) serve as a model for implementing multiple pathways with an existing data collection effort. Policy could support evaluation of CPAs by providing longitudinal data on students, student level data on CST scores, and 8th or 9th grade control for student proficiency coming into the academy (to avoid selection bias).

Lee Angela said that, because of changes to API, we can tease out how many students were involved in pathway programs. We can use data to shine a light on program and student effectiveness/success. Pat asked, "What are the types of multiple measures that are not currently part of the accountability system?" Susanna expressed a concern that K-12 data systems do not connect to kids beyond high school graduation. If we want to measure readiness for college and career, we need to be able to determine postsecondary transition, persistence, and completion rates.

Rick agreed that we need to collect data, but would caution considering anything that is not outcomes based. Anything beyond student achievement and dropout would be counterproductive. Gary suggested that, in order to get to those measures, we need 8th/9th grade prep, CST, and (ideally) connection to postsecondary and labor market data systems.

Mallory offered that CPEC collects unitary data at public postsecondary institutions, if it is helpful. Lee Angela shared that CALPASS (Jordan Horowitz) is hoping to do more. Is there a way to involve them? Cynthia noted that the Stewart Foundation is doing some related work. There may be some non-education agencies that can provide other pieces of the puzzle – e.g., workforce preparation, pipeline data.

What are some of the other priorities beyond accountability and linkages to the workforce? George and Tiffany highlighted the need for conversations between high schools and postsecondary education. What are the incentives in the workforce for people to come back into the classroom as teachers?

Lee Angela asked what we know about teacher externships as viable options for professional development? Hopefully, the LAO study will help shine light on that question. How do we bring experts from the private to public sector to teach?

Nancy suggested that the data conversation and recruitment conversation are important, but we also need to engage counselor and administrator preparation programs. Perhaps we could create a clearinghouse of ways in which teachers can receive training and/or a clearinghouse for data that shows the outcomes of this work.

Steve shared that Education Trust West (ETW) is promoting a-g for all in San Diego, but not through a multiple pathways perspective. There is a big push to close the achievement gap. As we move forward, it might be worthwhile to have conversations with ETW to establish some common goals. Gary shared that ConnectEd and ETW have had several conversations. ETW is working in some of the districts that have received planning grants (e.g., Montebello) and there is an opportunity to work together. ETW has some concerns about multiple pathways, but he is optimistic that we can work together. David added that Jeannie Oakes and he have talked to Russlyn Ali to come to a common understanding of these issues. If we look at the LAUSD resolution, it brings together multiple pathways and a-g for all. Lee Angela suggested that coordination between a-g for all and multiple pathways also may occur through the Achieve American Diploma Project.

Pat suggested that any priorities that emerge requires CTA staffing to support in terms of professional development, mentoring, facilities and resources, etc. Programs do not happen invisibly. She suggested that there is still more to discuss about standards. What is a CTE course? Can a student take an algebra course or CTE course to meet algebra standards?

Julienne stated that, as a CBO, she would like to see a funding framework. There are many funding sources that can be used, but it would be helpful to have them identified and to be explicit.

Gary suggested that he has heard three themes emerging:

1. Exercise restraint – i.e., be careful about rushing forward with legislation

2. There is a continuing need for evidence that multiple pathways works, particularly with respect to key outcomes related to student achievement
3. Offer districts explicit permission to ensure that existing policies don't impede their work to implement multiple pathways

Next Steps

- ConnectEd staff will work with co-chairs to distill priorities from the past four meetings in order to establish materials and a process for final prioritization at the final meeting on December 12