



COALITION FOR MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

Policy Development Working Group

Friday, August 8, 2008

Meeting Notes

Participants

Patrick Ainsworth, California Department of Education (CDE)
Kristine Alexander, The California Arts Project (TCAP)
Marisol Avina, Assembly Education Committee
Pamela Bachilla, California Association of Regional Occupational Centers & Programs (CAROCP)
Julienne Degeyter, California Association of School Business Officers (CASBO)
Nancy Farnan, School of Teacher Education, California State University, San Diego
Jeff Freitas, California Federation of Teachers (CFT)
Beth Graybill, Senate Education Committee
Paul Gussman, California Department of Education (CDE)
Erika Hoffman, California School Boards Association (CSBA)
Karen Humphrey, California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC)
Cris Johnson, California Teachers Association (CTA)
Lloyd McCabe, California Department of Education (CDE)
Jack Mitchell, California Department of Education (CDE)
George Montgomery, California Association of School Counselors (CASC)
Michelle Oliveira, California Department of Education (CDE)
Steve Pinning, California Association of Regional Occupational Centers & Programs (CAROCP)
David Plank, Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE)
Lee Angela Reid, Senate Office of Research (SOR)
Ana Rodriguez, Office of Senator Wiggins
Patricia Rucker, California Teachers Association (CTA)
Mia Stizzo, Child & Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIC)
Jean Trieman, California Subject Matter Projects (CSMP)
and
Gary Hoachlander, Penni Hudis, Roman Stearns, Jose Hernandez, and Candace Hamilton,
ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career

Welcome & Introductions

Gary Hoachlander, President of ConnectEd, introduced himself, ConnectEd staff, and asked participants to introduce themselves.

Gary reminded participants that, at the first meeting of the Policy Development Working Group (July 16, 2008), 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. Today is the first of those meetings, with the attention on curriculum and instruction.

Review of Policy Ideas and Resource Materials

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

1. A list of resources and Internet links related to standards, frameworks, curriculum and instruction

2. A list of curriculum & instruction related policy ideas that have been generated at ConnectEd hosted meetings and events (Brown Bag Lunch series, Policy Site Visits, Stakeholder Policy Discussions, etc.)
3. A list of definitions of related terms
4. A legislative history of bills related to curriculum and instruction, from 2001 to present
5. A list of filtering questions through which to consider policy ideas

How Curriculum & Instruction Relate to Multiple Pathways

In order to establish a common foundation for the discussion about curriculum and instruction, Penni Hudis, Director for Pathway and Curriculum Development, ConnectEd, reviewed the unique features of Multiple Pathways curricula and instruction, as follows:

Unique Features of Multiple Pathways Curricula

- Academic core classes deliver standards-based content through authentic, career-related applications
- Technical core classes challenge students to develop *both* technical and academic knowledge and skills
- Students are expected to master *both* academic and technical content standards by completing sequences of academic and technical courses
- Teachers collaborate to develop multidisciplinary lessons
- Academic support efforts are an integral part of the curriculum

Unique Features of Multiple Pathways Instruction

- Teachers deliver challenging academic and technical content through problem- and project-based assignments, combining these approaches with traditional teaching methods
- Students learn from classroom teachers and experts in business, industry, and other technical and professional employment
- Teachers collaborate to deliver multidisciplinary lessons and conduct learning assessments
- Assessments of student learning include opportunities to demonstrate skills through authentic applications
- Industry professionals participate in the assessment process

Discussion

To launch the discussion, Roman posed the question, “*Given the unique needs for curriculum and instruction in multiple pathway programs, what are the most promising strategies for moving this agenda forward?*”

Rigor and “a-g”

Cris Johnson asked for the meaning of “challenging” curriculum. Does it mean solely a-g? Is the intent of defining the curriculum as “challenging” to promote an a-g default curriculum? Gary Hoachlander explained that, when we talk about a pathway and the academic core, in particular, we do expect that a pathway is designed to offer students the math, English, science, social studies, and foreign language courses that they need to achieve UC and CSU eligibility. Even though the majority of students will opt not to pursue a four-year degree, including those courses as part of a pathway program increases the number of options available to students.

Cris asked if this would apply to a course like auto mechanics. Gary explained that a pathway that includes auto mechanics (e.g., transportation) would include the core academic component so that that the pathway could be equally appropriate for someone that wants to be a mechanical engineer as it is for someone who wants to be a technician. Gary further clarified that although pathway students should be encouraged to complete pathway courses, it should not be a requirement for program completion or graduation.

Jose Hernandez suggested that using a thematic approach to teach core academic courses (e.g., a biomedical algebra class) does not reduce the rigor of the algebra taught in the class. Steve Pinning responded that both academic rigor and technical rigor are valuable in their own right. The concern some have with biomedical algebra is that it would not remain true to the algebra standards. Just as there may be concern that such a course might water down the academic rigor, there is a similar concern that it might water down the technical rigor. We may need to define what constitutes an academic course and a technical course. With all the push on a-g, there has been some loss of technical rigor in CTE courses.

Roman Stearns commented that there have been some misunderstandings that *integrated* means taking two courses and making them one. While that may happen in some cases without comprising either academic or technical rigor (e.g., agricultural biology), it is neither the only way nor the most common way for it to happen. For example, an algebra course in a construction and engineering pathway remains an algebra class that meets the state standards, but when appropriate, introduces problems from construction and engineering to bring real-world relevance. Similarly, a construction tech course in the same pathway should, as appropriate and necessary, reinforce algebra concepts, but, first and foremost, it remains a construction course.

Pat Rucker identified two important policy distinctions. First, she correctly clarified that it is *not* a requirement for tech courses in pathways to be a-g approved. Gary confirmed to participants that a student would take at least four technical courses in a pathway, and that it is neither appropriate nor desirable for all of them to satisfy the a-g requirements. Second, Pat noted that an algebra course has a statutory requirement (i.e., if it does not meet the 25 algebra standards, a student will not receive high school credit). As such, algebra may not be the best example.

Integrated Curriculum

Nancy Farnan suggested that a strategy may be to develop integrated curriculum standards and frameworks that would complement or supplement existing standards and frameworks. Roman indicated that one of the recommendations in the ConnectEd's *Expanding Pathways* policy guide is similar – to augment or supplement the frameworks in the academic subject areas to provide guidance for teachers who want to bring more real world examples into the classroom.

Lee Angela Reid opined that it's important to keep that choice at the local level. Gary agreed with Lee Angela that many of those decisions need to stand at the local level. Jeff Freitas questioned whether it would be appropriate to integrate courses that are required for graduation, such as civics and economics. He questioned whether ConnectEd and a multiple pathways approach is trying to create "cookie cutter" programs. Gary assured him that doing so is not the intent. However, he expressed a related concern: Development of integrated curriculum is necessary for successful implementation of pathways, but it is also tremendously time-consuming and challenging. We cannot expect all teachers in pathways to create their own integrated curriculum. It is unrealistic.

Nancy commented that teachers want models and examples and descriptions of processes that have worked. That, however, in no ways precludes local development of curriculum. Roman asked if there is a role for the state to support teachers who are interested in developing their own curriculum. Pat Rucker suggested that teachers with preliminary credentials are particularly challenged. If induction programs focused on integration, then the state can nurture the development of a greater number of teachers with that capacity. County offices need to provide guidance.

Teacher Professional Development

Karen Humphrey suggested that, as we talk about these issues, we need to carefully consider teacher professional development needs. She does not see a widespread commitment for teacher collaboration. Teachers who are successful seem to be those who are able to take state materials and work collaboratively to develop them in a unique way. We have to think about how this shapes the resources for professional development.

Lee Angela suggested that there is frustration with the current limitations on funds for supplemental instruction. There may be interest to expand use of supplemental instruction because that provides an

extra layer of flexibility. It may be difficult to remove these barriers without data and policy briefs to support recommended changes.

Lee Angela also suggested that there must be administrative professional development.

Program Improvement

Steve asked if there are any program improvement schools that have used pathways as a means to get out of program improvement. Gary responded that, within the next few months, ConnectEd will be issuing a request for proposals (RFP) to a sample of districts throughout the state that have expressed interest in developing a system of multiple pathways at the district level that would be part of a major strategy for high school improvement. From the RFP, ConnectEd will award eight planning grants. We expect that most of those districts will be in year 3 of program improvement.

Pat Ainsworth commented that barriers certainly exist, but we are masters of not taking advantage of opportunity. Consider the recent discussion about dropout data. In the department, for every program we administer, we ought to be asking districts: How are your efforts (to implement this program or grant) going to lower dropout rates and increase graduation rates? All the money the department puts out always fosters integration of academics and careers, whether or not we have the explicit authority to do so because we think it's good practice. We know that when you give kids a reason to learn they engage and they take responsibility for their learning. So if it's such a good idea why aren't we embedding it in everything we do? Roman asked if Pat had any suggestions about how to go about this. Pat suggested that we should look at what is currently in place and see how we can embed our concepts in what already exists.

Gary said that ConnectEd is very interested in looking at data using multiple pathways as a program improvement strategy, but we were explicitly told that, as promising as multiple pathways sounded, the DATE process would never allow that to occur in a PI school. So, the barrier is there. Gary requested help understanding what one might do to change that. Paul Gussman suggested (perhaps in jest) to get rid of NCLB. He said that we need to think differently about what we are doing (i.e., How would Google solve these problems?).

Collaboration

Steve has observed that getting CTE and academic teachers to work together is a challenging process. How can we incentivize or promote that collaboration? Penni said that her experience often has been the same. Fortunately, they have found that when academic teachers see that integrated curriculum has genuine high level academics blended with authentic CTE applications, their attitude changes. Nancy said that is one of the reasons they are piloting a single subject credential with a multiple pathways lens. CSU San Diego has 25 candidates in the pilot program this fall. Steve applauded the pilot, but said that it is important to get buy-in from existing teachers too.

Assessment & Accountability

Gary indicated that one of the large barriers to effective implementation of multiple pathways is *time*. The places that are implementing effectively are on a 7 or 8 period day or some type of block or flexible schedule. Those who are on a 4x4 block schedule say one barrier they encounter is that California Standards Tests (CSTs) are given in the spring and students who complete a course in January are at a disadvantage. Should we offer state tests on-demand upon course completion? Steve liked the idea, but asked if there would be concern about test security. Jeff responded that there is already a testing window that allows students to take tests over a period of weeks. Lee Angela reminded the group that there are some federal requirements that we have to administer to. Gary asked those who understood the issue better than he to help him understand the technical challenges.

Closure – Desired Outcomes

Jean Treiman asked, "What's the itch you'd most like to scratch? What would be a great event that you would most like to report?" She commented that she believes that there should be less policy at the state level unless it's a response to a real barrier. She recalled a district RFP that gave mini-grants as incentives for teachers to work collaboratively. They found that a small amount of money produced a lot of teacher effectiveness. Teachers are often untapped human resources.

Gary responded that, by the end of the year, we would like to (1) remove barriers where we think we can identify them and have some evidence that they are real (e.g., DATE process/requirements); and (2) provide clear guidance, but not requirements (e.g., provide clear guidance to teachers who want to develop integrated curriculum). So, ideally, from this group he would like a set of concrete suggestions about how to remove barriers and/or how to provide clear guidance. That wouldn't cost much money and could help a lot. Beth Graybill suggested that we collect information about barriers that exist in order to address needs more concretely. David Plank added a potential third strategy – (3) to create incentives. In addition to money, evidence of success is the strongest incentive.

Steve added that, they are starting a series of forums in San Diego about barriers to CTE. As such, they might have more to say from districts very soon.

Next Convening of the Coalition

Roman shared that the next convening of the entire Coalition is tentatively planned for December 12. We anticipate that the primary focus of this convening will be the Coalition's policy agenda for 2009-10, based upon concrete recommendations from this working group. He suggested that, in the last few minutes, we try to draw out the key policy ideas that have been generated during the discussion. They are listed below.

Policy Ideas

The following policy ideas were identified from the discussion reflected above. They are grouped by the three strategies identified.

Remove Barriers

1. Modify requirements for teacher induction programs in order to require new teachers to utilize project- and problem-based learning methodologies and understand how to develop integrated curriculum
2. Create more flexibility in the use of funds for supplemental instruction
3. Offer state tests on-demand in order to better accommodate scheduling flexibility
4. Modify the DATE parameters and requirements

Provide Clear Guidance and Support

5. Develop standards and frameworks for integrated curriculum that would supplement the existing academic and technical standards and frameworks
6. Augment or supplement the curriculum frameworks for the academic disciplines to provide guidance for academic teachers who want to bring more real-world relevance and/or utilize problem- or project-based instructional methodologies
7. Create an online repository of high-quality integrated projects and curriculum for teachers to access and contribute to
8. Develop professional development modules for teachers (perhaps similar to CDE's *Taking Center Stage*)

Create Incentives

9. Incentivize collaboration between academic and CTE teachers to develop integrated curriculum and multi-disciplinary projects
10. Embed the concept and goals of multiple pathways in the funding and implementation of state programs (e.g., ???)

Next Steps

ConnectEd will distribute meeting notes.

ConnectEd will develop the agenda and gather resources for the next meeting, scheduled for September 5.

ConnectEd will consolidate the 100+ policy recommendations from earlier events into issue areas for upcoming meetings