

Coalition for Multiple Pathways

Evolution of Coalition Governance

I. Setting the Stage

The California Coalition for Multiple Pathways is an alliance of educators, policymakers, industry, and community stakeholders dedicated to improving California's high schools by preparing students for postsecondary education *and* careers, both objectives and not just one or the other. The Coalition has five major goals:

1. Build awareness and understanding of multiple pathways
2. Expand student access to high quality pathways—locally, regionally, and statewide
3. Leverage resources and expertise
4. Develop and advocate for policies supporting pathways
5. Grow participation in the Coalition to expand support for pathways throughout California

Since its inception in May 2008, the Coalition has grown to include more than 140 organizations and individuals—a “surprising alliance” of the state's primary secondary and postsecondary systems, teachers unions, educational administrators and school boards, advocacy organizations, state and local chambers of commerce, industry and labor representatives, and concerned individuals. The Coalition is advancing its goals through the work of three working groups: 1) Policy, 2) Building Awareness, and 3) Pathway Development.

With support from the James Irvine Foundation, ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career has helped develop, lead, and manage the Coalition's work. As the Coalition expands and matures, the Foundation and ConnectEd have continued to engage in discussions about how best to strengthen the Coalition's governance and staffing to achieve the Coalition's objectives and better serve all of its diverse members.

In September, a small group of members active in the Coalition met to explore possible options for transitioning ConnectEd from the managing agent for the Coalition to an active member, with the Coalition assuming independent responsibility for leadership, governance, and staffing. The group sought first to establish some underlying principles that could guide the design of the Coalition's governance and operations and second to propose some possible options for moving forward.

In October, a larger group of about 30 active Coalition members met to review and refine the recommendations of the initial planning group. They are recommending that the Coalition form a leadership council that would establish a formal governance structure for the Coalition and finalize a strategy for leading and managing the work of the Coalition. To help facilitate the Coalition's ongoing work, the James Irvine Foundation has graciously offered to help support the future governance and staffing of the Coalition. Some guiding principles and organizational options are summarized below.

II. Underlying Principles for Coalition Governance and Leadership

1. Foster and support a cross sector alliance with student success at the center of all Coalition work.
2. Represent all members of the Coalition and give voice to the broad movement—expanding and amplifying the Coalition’s contribution to advancing pathways throughout the state.
3. Give high priority to convening Coalition members, developing and communicating the Coalition’s goals, educating policy makers and advocating for policy changes.
4. Facilitate securing sufficient commitment, involvement and resources to achieve Coalition goals.
5. Strive for simplicity and flexibility.
6. Promote transparency of decision-making to all Coalition members.
7. Promote collaboration among members, recognizing and supporting the varied interests of the individual members.

III. Options for Implementation

The underlying principles are based on the agreed-upon goals of the Coalition. These principles, and the goals that they reflect, are intended to inform the Coalition’s structure and operations.

- A leadership council comprised of members of the Coalition should oversee the work of the Coalition
- Essential functions would include:
 - Ongoing administration and management
 - Convening the Coalition
 - Facilitating regular communications among members
 - Communicating and promoting the goals and positions of the Coalition
 - Analyzing and developing policy
 - Advocating on issues that affect the Coalition as appropriate
 - Conducting other work of the Coalition (as defined by its leadership council)
 - Stewarding membership growth and expansion

Options for the organization’s structure follow, along with recommendations for implementing the new organization.

A. Proposed Structural Options

Option 1: A Member-Driven “Near-Virtual” Organization

- a. Much of the work is done by members
- b. 1-2 staff (either employees or contractors)
- c. Spokespeople for the Coalition would be members, not staff

- d. No new 501C(3) would be created; an existing foundation would provide the legal and financial framework
- e. A leadership council would provide oversight

Option 2: A Member-Driven Organization with Designated Strong Leadership

- a. Designated leadership presence is “public face” of the Coalition who facilitates members as primary spokespeople
- b. Strong staff (contractors and Coalition Staff)
- c. Membership drives policy
- d. No new legal organization is established
- e. Fiscally sponsored by a partner organization
- f. As an initial step this option would not establish a 501c3, leaving the option to do so in the future if needed

B. Leadership Council

- a. The recommendation is that a Leadership Council should be granted authority to determine a governance structure for the Coalition. This group would initially be composed of active members of the Coalition and represent each of the major stakeholder groups: K-12, each of the three public post-secondary sectors, teachers and administrators, intermediary organizations leading multiple pathways reform efforts, industry, philanthropy, and community-based and statewide advocacy groups. The Leadership Council would be drawn from the active coalition members who have been involved in the Multiple Pathways Advisory Committee which has been regularly convened by the Irvine Foundation and the co-chairs of the Coalition working groups.
- b. This Leadership Council will consult and decide on the best way to ensure the ongoing leadership needs of the organization are met:
 - Nominating process
 - Election process
 - Terms and term limits
 - Size of leadership council
 - Committee structure
 - Composition of committees
- c. Once the organization is established, it is recommended that the leadership council also develop the following (this is not meant to be an exhaustive list):
 - Policies and bylaws
 - Budgets and financial controls
 - Systems and processes to assure transparency of deliberations and decisions
 - Membership levels (and membership fee structure)