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\$11.3 Million Awarded to Expand High School Pathway Programs in 10 California School Districts

Grants a Major Step in Building California Multiple Pathways Field to Prepare Students for Both College and Career

Berkeley, CA – The James Irvine Foundation and ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career, today announced grants to 10 California school districts as part of the California Multiple Pathways District Initiative. The Initiative aims to transform high schools districtwide by offering students a choice of at least six high-quality pathway programs that prepare them for success in both college and their careers. Multiple pathway programs connect learning in the classroom with real-world applications by integrating rigorous academic instruction with a demanding technical curriculum and work-based learning.

After extensive district-led planning processes including community involvement, a systematic assessment rubric was used to award the following six school districts two-year grants of more than \$1 million each to develop systems of multiple pathways:

- Antioch USD
- Long Beach USD
- Pasadena USD
- Porterville USD
- Sacramento City USD
- West Contra Costa USD

The following four districts will each receive grants of \$125,000 to continue preparations for the adoption of a multiple pathways system in the near future:

- Los Angeles USD District 4
- Montebello USD
- San Diego USD
- Stockton USD

“We must make our high schools more challenging, more engaging, and more flexible”, said Gary Hoachlander, president of ConnectEd. “We need schools that help students connect core academics with demanding technical education, preparing them for lasting success in both further education and career.”

“These pioneering districts are committed to making the kinds of systemic changes needed to transform high schools,” added Anne Stanton, youth program director for the Irvine Foundation. “We believe this Initiative can elevate multiple pathways from a promising approach to a proven approach for transforming high schools across California.”

Districts in the Initiative are developing *systems* of pathways, with at least six to eight pathways in a district. While hundreds of individual pathway programs exist throughout California, this Initiative represents the most comprehensive effort to create districtwide systems that offer *multiple* pathways — giving students a choice of numerous 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 programs are suitable for any high school student and will be accessible to all.

“Choice is central to the pathways model, and with a variety of pathway options available, students and their families can choose a program that best suits their needs and interests,” added Hoachlander. “By better engaging students with a project-based curriculum, multiple pathways can increase attendance, graduation, and postsecondary transition rates.”

The two-year implementation grants will enable districts to develop and improve the quality of four pathway programs within two years to a certified level. The grants will also help the districts achieve a long-term goal (3-5 years) of developing systems of six to eight certified pathways. Districts awarded planning grants will further develop their plans for multiple pathways, including deepening their collaboration with local communities and businesses to ensure that their pathway programs are sustainable and benefit from broad-based support.

ConnectEd awarded the grants with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. The Irvine Foundation seeks to expand and strengthen California’s multiple pathways field by supporting activities required to bring multiple pathways to scale, including curriculum development, leadership and teacher development, and work-based learning programs. The Foundation also builds public support for multiple pathways and promotes educational policy that paves the way for broader adoptions of multiple pathways. ConnectEd was selected to manage the Initiative and will provide the districts with technical assistance, leadership training, and coaching support.

The development of the California Multiple Pathways District Initiative is informed by research conducted on California Partnership Academies and career academies, programs often adopting the pathways approach that are currently being implemented in hundreds of California schools. Among the studies utilized is a recent thorough evaluation of the ConnectEd Network of Schools, 16 demonstration sites offering pathways programs throughout the state. The evaluation includes promising evidence that students in multiple pathway programs have higher graduation rates, are more engaged in their education, and are more prepared for a range of postsecondary and career options.

This District Initiative is part of a growing movement to expand multiple pathways in California. The passage last year of AB2648, which requires the state to complete a feasibility study for expanding and establishing multiple pathway programs, further demonstrates broad support for the approach. The bill was sponsored by Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, co-authored by Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, and signed by Governor Schwarzenegger. In addition, more than 100 key business, education, and community organizations participate in the Coalition for Multiple Pathways.

For more information on multiple pathways and the initiative, visit www.ConnectEdCalifornia.org.

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