

REGIONAL COALITIONS

INTRODUCTION

Regional approaches and coalitions have long been important to the effective delivery of educational services in California, largely due to the state's size and diversity. Regional coalitions and structures have developed in both educational and economic and workforce development sectors to address pressing needs through collaboration and leveraging of resources. This chapter describes collaborative regional ventures in relation to multiple pathways programs and identifies effective regional coalitions and partnerships. The chapter offers a brief overview of organizations and collaboratives whose work can be leveraged in the multiple pathways initiative.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

The Roles of Regional Coalitions and “Third Party” Organizations

Partnerships with industry, postsecondary institutions, and community organizations are essential to the multiple pathways initiative. These partnerships serve important functions at many levels. At the state level, various partnerships and coalitions, such as the Superintendent's P-16 Council, the California Workforce Investment Board, and statewide industry associations help set policy and priorities. At the regional level, partnerships harness and leverage resources to support regional needs and local initiatives. Locally, effective coalitions and partnerships promote districtwide coordination and development of pathways across a district. The partnerships ensure that their members represent all key stakeholders. Effective coalitions that support the multiple pathways initiative, while perhaps focusing on one aspect of the work more than others, promote a coherent agenda — the success of all students, irrespective of path taken.

A consortium of organizations, including the American Youth Policy Forum, Academy for Educational Development, Coalition for Community Schools, The Finance Project, Jobs for the Future, and New Ways to Work identified four essential roles for partnerships, coalitions, and organizations that aim to improve services for children, youth, and families (Blank, et al., 2003). The roles of these organizations include:

- *Engaging, convening, and supporting critical constituencies* — bringing together diverse constituencies to increase public and partner involvement, design new initiatives, strengthen local institutions, and promote tangible results.
- *Promoting quality standards and accountability* — helping service providers identify standards for assessing service quality and use data more effectively to promote continuous improvement and demonstrate positive outcomes and tangible results.
- *Promoting effective policies* — educating elected officials, funders, and policy makers about specific policies and investments that can strengthen local organizations and promote more effective services for young people and families.

- *Brokering and leveraging resources* — brokering and leveraging diverse public and private resources, which involves increasing the efficiency and impact of service providers and attracting resources that individual organizations often cannot secure on their own. Resources may be monetary or physical and also include access to knowledge (e.g., labor market information), and learning opportunities, such as internships.

Some organizations emphasize one set of functions more than others.

Engaging, convening, and supporting critical constituencies. Linking Education and Economic Development (LEED) (<http://www.leed.org/>) is a regional coalition. LEED has brought together top leaders from the six-county Sacramento region to develop partnerships among employers, educators, and civic interests that align educational resources to meet workforce needs and economic demands. LEED does so through a three-pronged approach: workforce, educational, and student development. Higher education — represented by executive leadership from UC Davis, CSU Sacramento, and the Los Rios Community College District — is at the table in addition to industry partners. LEED’s initiatives include the development of small schools and small learning communities to personalize learning for students, as well as employer roundtables in specific industries. LEED was directly involved in Sacramento Unified School District’s successful application for participation in the California Multiple Pathways District Initiative and will play a key role in assessing the region’s workforce needs.¹

Promoting quality standards and accountability. The Merced P-16 Education and Community Council supports student success and transitions to postsecondary education and has recently taken on the goal of supporting pathway formation. As a member of the Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success (ARCHES), its efforts are driven by rigorous data collection and analysis to continually assess progress in the achievement of its goals (WestEd, 2009).

Promoting effective policies. The California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (<http://www.sjvpartnership.org>), formed in June 2005 by Governor Schwarzenegger to ensure the economic success of the region, passed a resolution supporting the “creation of a college-going culture” and the alignment of CTE courses to target industry clusters. This resolution — with input from all the county offices of education — will influence policies in all seven counties in the region. Action items included:

- 1) Engage in important policy discussions focused on “testing” whether current policies, practices, and traditions lead to educational equity and access.
- 2) Promote a multiple pathways approach for postsecondary education and career opportunities for high school students.
- 3) Support at least one pilot project linking higher education, workforce development, and K-12 education.

At the same time, partnerships developed in Tulare County resulted in a grant from ConnectEd—the California Center for College and Career, to develop a multiple pathways system in

¹ Sacramento City Unified School District Multiple Pathways to Career and College Narrative. California Multiple Pathways District Initiative Implementation Grant Applications Provided by ConnectEd, June 20, 2009.

Porterville. The grant represented the culmination of years of previous partnership building, including work with the county's youth council and the National Academy Foundation (NAF), and participation in the national Intermediary Network. It is anticipated that the multiple pathways initiative in Porterville will shift the concept of career education from "college preparatory track versus career technical education to the realization that all students benefit from courses of study that integrate challenging academics with demanding technical components."²

In another example, the Santa Ana Partnership, an ARCHES collaborative with the leadership of Santa Ana College, influenced graduation requirements to enable students to take both college preparatory and CTE courses. This was accomplished by incorporating state standards previously covered in a stand-alone health class into science and physical education, and by taking a one-semester College and Career Planning class and expanding it into a series of content-related lessons in English-language arts and social science from sixth grade through high school graduation. These changes are being implemented in the 2009-2010 academic year.

Brokering and leveraging resources. Locally, partners play critical roles in brokering and leveraging resources. For example, partners serve on advisory boards and inform program development. They provide input on curriculum and projects; advise teachers on current industry standards; provide professional development opportunities for teachers through tours and externships; and provide work-based learning for students, including input on student work, even if experiences occur at school sites. Postsecondary partners provide campus tours and outreach programs and information to schools and districts about standards and transition programs. Community partners provide work-based learning opportunities, such as "social enterprises for learning." One West Contra Costa County educator noted:

Having worked in this field for 30+ years, the best outcomes that I have seen related to implementing work-based learning are the results of recruiting, growing, and valuing industry and community partners. They are key to helping districts. School districts frequently are uncomfortable about allowing partners true and equal access to influencing outcomes. They look to them for financial support and worksite support. Partners can bring a lot more to the table.³

Essential Elements of Successful Coalitions and Partnerships

No matter the function a given coalition or partnership plays, the quality of its efforts is critical. The California Alliance of Pre-K-10 Partnerships (The California Alliance of Pre-K-10 Partnerships, January 2004) identified the following eight essential elements for effective educational partnerships.

Shared vision and goals. The vision and goals for their work are based on identified, community needs, developed through consensus, and updated regularly.

² Porterville Unified School District System of Multiple Pathways Implementation Plan Narrative. California Multiple Pathways District Initiative Implementation Grant Applications Provided by ConnectEd, June 20, 2009.

³ Information provided by Web Dialogue respondent on May 19, 2009

Effective communication and decision-making. Communication channels and frequency of communications are specified. Leaders meet regularly, and paid staff lead and guide communication. The partnership communicates with the public about progress and services (e.g., via newsletters and presentations).

Respect for differences. If possible, the partners formally assess differences in organizations and their goals. The partnership focuses on the common needs of its partnering organizations, not just on differences.

Continuous process to stay relevant. Systems allow the partnership to remain relevant to the needs of the partners and the community (e.g., regularly surveying constituents about their workforce needs, and formal strategic planning processes). The partnership actively links educational and workforce partners so that they can support each other's goals and use research to inform their ongoing work.

Appropriate organizational model. The organizational model includes one or more broadly representative advisory committees (including representatives from the teachers' union, funding foundation, schools and school district, parents, and business community), with a partnership coordinator who manages day-to-day activities and has dedicated time to do so.

Committed members. Partners make strong commitments to support the vision and goals, including commitments from the top leadership in partner organizations. The educational community views the partnership work as a central initiative, not just as a small project.

Continuous evaluation. Evaluation plans obtain data from their partners that can inform decision-making about how to address their constituents' needs and as evidence of program effectiveness. If possible, the partnership has an internal or external evaluator.

In addition, the following factors in partnership building are critical in multiple pathways initiatives:

- **Make linkages meaningful.** Employer partners need to feel as if their contributions are meaningful and significant.
- **Develop community champions.** Effective partnership does not only mean holding meetings with partners, but also drawing strategically on community members to champion the work — sometimes more effectively than educators can do alone.
- **Allow time and resources for collaboration.** Effective partnership building requires time; otherwise, this time is spent beyond the regular workday.
- **Conduct effective meetings.** Technical assistance, tools, and templates are needed for effective coalition building.
- **Ensure follow through.** Employer partners need to see their efforts come to fruition, or they will not believe that their contributions are taken seriously. Follow through includes showing partners their results in student work — through performances, exhibitions, and student achievement data.

CURRENT STATUS

Multiple types of existing regional structure and coalitions can be expanded or replicated to support the development of multiple pathways programs in California. These entities have evolved or been created to serve specific purposes, although most serve multiple purposes. Some operate on both policy and operational levels, while others are primarily operational.

The following section provides examples and describes how each of these types of organizations supports the implementation of multiple pathways.

Broad Regional Partnerships

Most broad regional partnerships have both K-12 education and workforce development agendas. While these organizations operate largely at the policy level, they also catalyze action and facilitate program coordination and implementation. Large regional organizations hold promise for convening policy makers, organizational leaders, and stakeholders to support multiple pathways initiatives. The organizations can also facilitate implementation of new initiatives and advocate for statewide policy changes.

The California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley includes representatives from all of its county offices of education, with the goals of both strengthening K-12 education and promoting alignment of CTE with local workforce needs. Governor Schwarzenegger and the state legislature set aside \$2.5 million for seed grants.

The Bay Area Council (<http://www.bayareacouncil.org>) promotes workforce development through what it calls “the talent pipeline” — a demand-driven education and training system that will prepare all segments of the population to succeed in the knowledge economy. The Bay Area Council is a member of the Coalition for Multiple Pathways.

Regional Efforts Focused Primarily on Workforce and Economic Development

Many regional efforts link education to workforce and economic development in very specific ways, through labor market research, direct support to school districts to create career pathways, development of curriculum in alignment with industry needs, implementation of work-based learning, and other targeted initiatives.

Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) convene workforce, economic development, industry, educational, and community partners to promote workforce development. The 49 local WIBs are responsible for monitoring industry trends and needs; mapping the gaps between the needs of the economy and the current delivery system; and providing information about jobs and career pathways (California WIB, 2007).

Regional Occupational Centers and Programs (ROCPs) were established as regional programs or centers to allow students from multiple schools or districts to attend career technical training programs, regardless of the geographic location of their residence. Regionalization provides for efficient use of limited resources, while allowing student access to a broad array of

training opportunities that often require expensive technical equipment and specially trained and experienced instructors (CDE & CCCCCO, 2008). California has 74 ROCPs, with three distinct organizational structures: county-operated (42), joint powers agreement (26), and single district (6) (CDE, 2008). Additionally, ROCPs are organized into four regions: northern, southern, coastal, and central with CDE staff assigned to these regions.

ROCPs offer opportunities for strengthening regional collaboration to support multiple pathways efforts. ROCPs housed in county office of education are in a strategic position to participate in countywide efforts, including professional development that involves both CTE and academic teachers. Joint powers agreement and district-based ROCPs can also play these roles, on their own or with county offices of education.

A key feature of ROCPs is their direct link with industry and the requirement that they have advisory boards (CDE, 2008, pp. 15-16). Board members represent trade organizations, businesses, or government agencies, school district CTE advisory committees, and public and private postsecondary educational institutions.

Education Code Section 52302.2 requires each ROCP governing board to establish and maintain an advisory board for each pathway within an industry sector for which the ROCP offers courses. ROCPs may combine pathways if they deem it is appropriate for the subject area. They must meet at least once annually. They do not approve curriculum, but they provide the ROCP with information and confirm that the course meets employers' needs. Advisory boards assist in developing certificates that identify the skills and knowledge that students are expected to acquire; approve the criteria used to evaluate student acquisition of the identified skills and knowledge; review whether students possess the skills needed for success in employment in a given occupation; review the occupational sequences the ROCP offers; provide ROCPs with input related to internships, summer employment, and post-graduation employment for students, and creating college scholarships for students participating in the course sequences.

ROCPs are particularly focused on service delivery. In support of the multiple pathways initiative, ROCPs therefore have a critical role in bringing employers to the table, as well as lending their expertise in CTE and work-based learning within specific industries. While the California *Education Code* requires ROCP advisory committees to be created by occupational course, rather than by industry, the committee structures and processes could be built upon to support the development and sustainability of multiple pathways programs.

For example, the Palmdale High School Health Careers Academy, a member of ConnectEd's Network of Schools, began in 1991 as a school-within-a-school pathway model. It uses ROP instructors for career technical education classes and to facilitate work-based learning. It is a comprehensive four-year program serving approximately 500 students. The Academy has extensive partnerships with the local health industry. The program integrates medicine and technology into common core subjects, such as English, science, and social studies while involving students in service learning, job shadowing, and internships in the health industry (WestEd 2008).

SB 70 CTE Community Collaboratives

Senate Bill 70 provided an initial \$20 million to fund California's CTE Pathways and Workforce Development Initiative. The Initiative's aim is to align K-12 CTE, including ROCs, with California's community colleges, ensuring that this education is based on models consistent with the California Community Colleges' Economic Workforce Development Program (<http://www.cccewd.net/>). The ultimate goal is to better prepare California students to succeed in jobs requiring high-level skills and paying high wages.

Grant categories fall into two broad groups: 1) coordinated regional or local implementation grants, called CTE Community Collaborative Grants, which support programs directly serving students, faculty, and/or other stakeholders, and 2) statewide infrastructure grants, which support capacity-building, including research and development.

The Community Collaborative grants support local groups that provide coordinated and strategic leadership for CTE efforts. Groups applying for these grants are pre-approved by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and the CDE to ensure that all required partners are involved (e.g., community colleges, K-12, ROCs, business, and industry) as well as other partners needed to create a seamless system of CTE between secondary and postsecondary education. A collaborative is also required to have a shared management committee. The four required areas of activity for CTE Community Collaboratives are:

- Career exploration development for seventh and eighth grade students
- Career and technical education sectors
- Teacher and faculty externships with business and industry
- Professional development in CTE

Some CTE Community Collaboratives also receive Workforce Innovation Partnership grants and supplemental grants. The Workforce Innovation Partnership grants promote projects that identify high-quality career pathways and training priorities related to high-growth industry sectors and that develop innovative service-delivery projects.

SB 70 Community Collaborative grants have supported collaboration and program development, including the development of additional partnership academies. These resources can continue to be leveraged to develop CTE programs that may be the core of multiple pathways programs.

High School CTE Program Advisory Committees

Local CTE programs are required to have advisory committees. District programs with Perkins funds must have at least one annual business and industry advisory committee meeting and planned business and industry involvement. While not regional in nature, these advisory committees can also be viewed as part of the district's employer engagement system (WestEd, 2008).

Cross-Segmental Regional Coalitions to Promote Postsecondary Transition

Regional coalitions can facilitate student academic achievement and postsecondary transitions for students through “vertical” linkages among the educational segments. Regional coalitions established primarily for this purpose are defined by the service areas of regional postsecondary institutions (California State Student Association, 2009).

Tech Prep Programs

Tech Prep programs foster linkages between secondary CTE and community college programs. Funded through California’s 72 community college districts, Tech Prep programs link high school and two-year college programs in specific technical fields and occupational areas. The collaboratives bring practitioners together to develop articulation agreements and curricula. They also foster consortium-wide professional development.

ARCHES

ARCHES was launched in 2005 as an initiative of the California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP), a collaborative CSU administers on behalf of all the state’s educational sectors, and the California Education Round Table, the voluntary association of the chief executive officers of all educational sectors and its programmatic arm, the Intersegmental Coordinating Committee (CDE, 2009, January 30). ARCHES partners with California Engaging Latino Communities for Education (ENLACE), a three-year statewide initiative the W. K. Kellogg Foundation sponsors to increase the academic success of the Latino population (ARCHES & ENLACE, 2006).

There are currently 32 ARCHES-ENLACE collaboratives in California. Each collaborative defines its own regions, but it is required to have both K-12 and postsecondary members, including representatives from both the community colleges and at least one baccalaureate-granting institution, as well as at least two representatives from each of business, community-based organizations, and “family centered” organizations. While each collaborative identifies its regions, all fall within the service area of a four-year university campus.

The mission of ARCHES-ENLACE is to improve student achievement. The ARCHES initiatives not only facilitate the accomplishment of specific goals in participating collaboratives, but also promote learning among and within each collaborative.

The James Irvine Foundation provided ARCHES a three-year grant to support six new regional collaborative projects during their 2008-2009 planning year (December 1, 2009-June 30, 2009) to each launch two pathways. These collaboratives have been instrumental in the launching and supporting multiple pathway efforts (WestEd, 2009).

ARCHES-ENLACE collaboratives hold promise for facilitating multiple pathways efforts by leveraging their attention on student achievement, their focus on data, their commitment to

collaboration, and their past cross-segmental relationships. While ROCs and businesses have not had significant roles in many of the collaboratives to date, the six that are developing multiple pathways have included those partners to ensure that all of the pathway components will be put in place.

The Santa Ana Partnership has worked with ARCHES to create a new inter-segmental multiple pathways initiative that offers current high school students the opportunity to concurrently pursue college certificates in four high-demand career fields. The Partnership created not only “non-negotiable” requirements in math and English language-arts, but also a framework for sustaining this group by linking it to regular, year-round Santa Ana Unified School District administrative meetings and other partnership activities. The Partnership was a driving force at every stage of framing, designing, and preparing to implement the multiple pathways initiative as a component of its overall vision for college going and the achievement of a rigorous and relevant secondary school program of study.

Local P-16 Councils

The Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Governor have highlighted the need to coordinate reform efforts across the educational continuum from preschool through university. “P-16” efforts are also occurring locally. Approximately 32 P-16 voluntary councils have been launched in California, and a little over half of these receive some support and technical assistance from ARCHES. The State Superintendent’s P-16 statewide council has encouraged this development, and county superintendents have played a supportive role (Shulock, 2004; Shulock, 2003).

Local or county P-16 councils can facilitate the implementation of multiple pathways programs. For example, the councils can help ensure that students coming into high school are prepared to take on rigorous high school pathway curricula and then move smoothly to postsecondary education. Equally important, P-16 councils contribute to the elimination of thinking “either/or” about high school programs, fostering instead a focus on the high standards and skills required to succeed in both postsecondary education and careers, with the understanding that all students need to prepare for entry into the workforce. Some states, like Arizona, have even formed P-20 Councils that include graduate programs.

Counties and Regional Professional Organizations Focused on Dissemination and Professional Development

County Offices of Education

County offices of education can leverage county educational resources and promote efficient and coordinated dissemination of information and professional development of educators. County offices have responsibility for many services that districts would otherwise not be able to provide cost effectively on their own, such as special education services. The most important services for the multiple pathways initiative are professional development and technical assistance to districts. In providing these services to multiple districts, not only do county offices save money, but they also promote cross-district learning and information sharing. The county offices also

participate in local WIBs. The county offices are therefore well positioned to provide or facilitate professional development and technical assistance in the implementation of multiple pathways within and across districts. This effort can include a guiding integration of curriculum, implementing work-based learning, improving student support services, and selecting and distributing pathways by industry within and across districts in the county.

Further, in recent years, some county offices of education have also become District Assistance and Intervention Team providers, offering technical assistance to districts and schools in their counties in “program improvement” under the No Child Left Behind Act. In this capacity, the county offices have considerable influence over the kinds of interventions that are implemented, and they can play a significant role in encouraging districts to see the multiple pathways approach as a means to improve student achievement.

County offices can support existing small learning communities, bring academic and CTE teachers together, and share ways that programs are overcoming challenges. County offices can facilitate both the understanding and the implementation of the multiple pathways approach by bringing teachers together and working with their colleagues across counties to promote a cultural shift and include business partners.

County offices, especially those that manage ROCPs, also may be uniquely positioned to help broker other services, such as transportation — both for students who may need to travel to pathways or work-based learning. County offices can also leverage their technology services to facilitate access to integrated curricula, tools, and resources, especially in rural areas where pathway development may be challenged by lack of a critical mass of students with interest in an industry.

Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Regions

ACSA (<http://www.acsa.org>) has 19 regions that provide opportunities for professional involvement among administrators in neighboring school districts. The regional structure allows administrators to discuss statewide educational issues. ACSA regions offer workshops and programs and could support multiple pathways programs through advocacy, convening, and professional development activities.

Promoting Workforce Development by Industry

Many industry organizations are regional or have regional activities. Examples include local Building and Construction Trades Councils and the Hospital Association of Southern California. Industry groups can continue to support both local and statewide multiple pathways efforts in their industries.

At the school level, industry partnerships are invaluable. The Stanley E. Foster Construction Technology Academy, one of the ConnectEd Network of Schools, was founded with the construction industry’s support in San Diego to help address the industry’s workforce shortages in the area. It is an integrated, rigorous program that is aligned to various academic programs and related careers (WestEd 2008).

Academy-, School-, or District-Focused Support for Pathway Development *and* Transitions to Postsecondary Education

The organizations that work most closely with districts and schools are perhaps the most important to ensuring the expansion of high-quality multiple pathways efforts, according to J. D. Hoye (2009, June), former national School-to-Work director and currently the executive director of the NAF.

Academy Advisory Committees

Both California Partnership Academies and NAF academies require advisory boards. In CPAs each academy has a partnership with employers. Employer representatives:

- Serve on an academy steering committee that oversees the program.
- Help to develop the CTE curriculum.
- Provide speakers for academy classes.
- Host field trips to give students a perspective of the workplace.
- Provide mentors who serve as career-related role models and personal contacts in the field of training.
- Provide internships and summer jobs for academy students (CDE, 2009, August 24).

Districtwide Partnerships

Broader district or multi-district advisory organizations are needed when academy advisory groups succeed in their work and want to coordinate outreach to employers, or when districtwide efforts require coordination. The Multiple Pathways District Initiative required applicant districts to demonstrate broad-based support of “community coalitions” of their multiple pathways efforts.

Examples of district and multi-district partnerships that have supported pathways include the West Contra Costa Partnership and the Tri-Valley Educational Collaborative. The West Contra Costa Partnership focuses on work-based learning, curriculum and standards, and resource development. The Partnership has a board of directors with a key industry partner as chair. It includes a lead teacher from each academy in the district. Industry representation often includes individuals responsible for workforce development in participating organizations or other individuals who can bring both resources and visibility to the partnership, and who can in turn showcase partnership activities in their own public relations campaigns. Districtwide coordination of the partnership is critical, not only to ensure cross-school coordination, but because individual teachers often do not have the time to attend to nurturing relationships with business partners. The partnership was critical in helping West Contra Costa Unified School District secure its participation in the Multiple Pathways District Initiative.

Local Chambers of Commerce

Chambers of commerce can also support multiple pathways programs. Many chambers have education committees that support local district and school efforts for both academic achievement and workplace experience and can catalyze activity in their areas. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, for example, has played a key role in championing multiple pathways in Los Angeles.

Coalitions and Organizations that Support the Needs of Specific Populations

If multiple pathways are to serve students with diverse needs, the support of coalitions that target specific populations will bolster the effort. Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth councils, Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA), Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), and Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) programs are examples of programs that have their own structures, funding, processes, and constituencies. Collaboration with these efforts can bring greater resources and coordinated services to pathway programs.

For example, WIA youth councils, operating as subcommittees of their local WIBs, help allocate WIA funds for youth. These programs serve youth ages 14 to 21 (and up to age 24 for the summer youth employment program). Participation in youth councils can provide access to resources that will help support students in pathways and facilitate broader system development. For example, the Tulare County Youth Council assists the Tulare County WIB (<http://www.tcwib.org>) in developing and recommending local youth employment and training policy and practice. Beyond the practical function of the Youth Council, however, lies the much broader vision of an integrated youth development system responsive to the needs of all Tulare County youth. This vision drives the Council's work connecting and linking existing youth organizations into one system. The Tulare County Youth Council was instrumental in connecting the Porterville Unified School District with resources to pursue a multiple pathways strategy to high school reform.

Interest-Based Learning Within or Across Sectors

Technology can facilitate “virtual regions” — communities of interest that cross geographic boundaries — particularly for small rural counties or any dispersed communities (New Teacher Center, 2009). These online communities can share resources, facilitate professional development and problem solving, and promote innovation. Numerous examples of such communities exist that are already linked to multiple pathways efforts. For example, NAF academies are part of both “real” and virtual networks. ACME Animation is an online community for animation students, educators, and professionals that allows for widespread virtual mentoring, networking, and discussion in an industry that is otherwise largely geographically restricted to a few select areas.

Technologically based or supported communities will be vital for the multiple pathways movement in connecting teachers across districts and schools with pathways in the same industries, especially for small rural districts. Online communities may also promote collaboration between educators and representatives in those industries (Fischer, 2001).

CHALLENGES

Challenges exist both within and across existing coalitions. The range of initiatives summarized here speaks to the diversity of the efforts to form and deploy coalitions in support of increasing student achievement. In many cases, however, these coalitions and partnerships are disconnected from one another. While many partnerships stress the importance of preparation for both postsecondary education and careers, not every collaborative brings both industry and all segments of education together to shape a common agenda. At the broadest level, the Little Hoover Commission warned that “the state lacks a strategy for connecting education with workforce development and economic development” (Little Hoover Commission, 2007).

In addition, expanding the multiple pathways initiative requires sustained, coordinated efforts. Previous California efforts to connect education with workforce and economic development “showed early signs of success, only to fall by the wayside when leadership changed or when funding disappeared” (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). Often, collaboratives are formed in response to particular funding streams. When resources wane, collaboration also ceases unless it has been institutionalized. Long-term systemic change is difficult to measure in the short term, which creates an incentive to take on projects that have immediate appeal, rather than those that may have longer-term impacts.

Collaboratives are difficult to manage effectively. The disparate organizational cultures of industry and education can hinder success unless efforts are made to promote mutual understanding of a common goal. In addition, employers are not always utilized in meaningful ways and are not always provided a real voice in the development of programs, which can alienate them.

Locally, the multiplicity of advisory committees can create confusion for employers and dilute engagement efforts. As multiple pathway efforts expand, coordination will be necessary to avoid duplicative efforts. Finally, the lack of funding and time for collaboration make employer outreach and nurturing of strong advisory boards very challenging.

CONCLUSION

Many types of coalitions, partnerships and organizations exist to promote educational and workforce development efforts — many of which could promote the expansion of multiple pathways programs. Large regional organizations and coalitions are critical to convening high-level leaders, promoting policies that would support the development of multiple pathways, and coordinating program development. Industry associations provide important information on the skills and standards required in their industries. Counties offer important opportunities for leveraging and brokering resources and professional development, while organizations focused on the specific needs of certain students bring their expertise in tailoring or expanding programs to serve diverse student needs. Local chambers of commerce, partnerships, and advisory boards are foundational to building and sustaining pathways. Finally, “virtual coalitions” can be used to foster learning and pathway development across geographic areas.

The difficult work of creating and sustaining multiple pathways programs will be supported to the extent that organizations and coalitions recognize and publicly promote a common vision of postsecondary and career opportunities for all students.

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