

WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION TEAM

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CALIFORNIA'S CAPITAL REGION: BUILDING PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY

Employers, education leaders, and civic interests are expanding on the successes of the last twenty years to build a region-wide system of pathways, providing seamless connections for high school students into post-secondary education and workforce training. Pathways programs, which may include academies, are proven to increase student graduation rates and enhance college readiness.

Career pathways are an integrated collection of programs intended to develop students' core academic, technical, and employability skills. In addition to innovative teaching methodologies, the curriculum provides students with first-hand training to prepare them for high-demand jobs via work-based- or linked-learning opportunities that include job shadowing and internships. Pathway programs may start as early as elementary school and be linked via curriculum through post-secondary school with strong business associations to provide greater contextual learning. Thriving pathways undergird a skilled workforce development pipeline and have a direct impact on a region's economic prosperity.

In November of 2014, the Capital Region serving more than 2.4 million people in seven counties with 24 school districts and County Offices of Education came together to develop an educational strategic plan to support the recovering and growing economy. The consortium represented more than **100** pathway programs in over 60 high schools with **120,000** students. Six high growth industries were identified in the

consortium – engineering, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, construction and energy, healthcare and information and communication technology (ICT).

Working in partnership with business and NextEd, the education/workforce affiliate of the Sacramento Metro Chamber, the education partners garnered a total of **\$21 million** in funding from the **California Career Pathways Trust** to establish a region-wide system of support for high school pathway programs. This strategic approach provided for curriculum development for school sites, professional development for teachers, alignment with and direct articulation to post-secondary institutions, and work-based-learning opportunities for students. Designed to be jobs driven, the pathways work is in concert with the California Workforce Development Board's proposed strategic plan calling for alignment of education and workforce systems. This effort is also consistent with the California Community College Chancellors' Office "Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy" initiative and aligned with the Region's refreshed Next Economy plan, a region-wide economic development strategy.

The Capital Region benefits from seven community colleges, Sacramento State, UC Davis and numerous private higher education institutions. For example, Sacramento State has been instrumental in the collaboration between local K-12 school districts, community colleges, and universities in order to provide students and their families a clear path to college and career success. Curriculum developed by Sacramento State faculty and K-12 partners is now being used in local school districts in order to ensure high school graduates are ready for college-level math and English.

The CSU's Early Assessment Program (EAP) serves as an "early signal," that informs students of additional skills they need to gain in math and/or English in order to enter college without the need for remediation. The EAP Senior Year Math Course was created by faculty from Sacramento State, Sierra College, the Placer County Office of Education, and area high schools. The Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) is a full year college-preparatory English course for high school seniors. The ERWC addresses critical reading and writing problems identified by the CSU faculty. Over 800 high schools statewide have adopted the ERWC course, and over 8,000 teachers statewide have received training in the curriculum.

Sacramento State is also home to a number of Summer Career Academies, which provide high school students with the opportunity to explore various career paths during one-week, specialized courses while being introduced to the college experience.

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Federal funding and policies that support the continuance of this effort are critical to its success. Building a region wide system of pathways linked to the workforce requires infrastructure, communication, and collaboration. Working with K-12 institutions, higher education, workforce development, and veteran's services, the Capital Region's pathways effort is strategically positioning it for resurgence as a desired place to live, work, and play.

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