



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: W. Kowba *W. Kowba*
DATE: November 16, 2012
RE: **CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Purpose

This informational memorandum is provided to Board Trustees in conjunction with the November 27, 2012 agenda item F.4 requesting Board approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the California Center for College and Career (ConnectEd).

Overview

This non-binding MOU highlights a series of steps to implement high school Linked Learning programs as outlined in SB1070 and AB790. This approach enhances the current efforts of small learning communities/career academies and allows for their continued expansion.

Approval of the MOU allows the district to enter into a consortium agreement for AB790 grant opportunities. The Superintendent and SDUSD executive leadership have participated in meetings with ConnectEd to discuss and clarify roles and responsibilities. The district and ConnectEd acknowledge that the proposed model for small learning communities/career academies will not require the district to establish additional career-themed small high schools. Funding for this initiative is the sole responsibility of ConnectEd.

The MOU being brought forward for consideration is a consortium project between five districts: Oceanside, Escondido, Carlsbad, Grossmont, and San Diego. The Boards of each of the other districts approved the MOU in October 2012. This unprecedented collaboration of the five districts is intended to accelerate opportunities for Linked Learning in the region. The MOU is a starting point for a discussion with schools with College, Career and Technical Education (CCTE) currently implementing the California Partnership Academies rubric, which is the basis of the Linked Learning rubric for Pathways. The collaboration made possible by this MOU will support and enhance current small learning communities and allow participating sites the opportunity and framework for expansion if they so choose.

Small Learning Communities Background

The concept and practice of small learning communities began as a teacher-led high school redesign model in the mid-1960s in Chicago. It was noted that for many students, contact and attention from a small but consistent group of instructors over a longer period of time resulted in

higher academic performance and provided a more personalized and trusting learning environment for students and teachers. Research has shown that students participating in small learning communities perform at higher levels on standardized tests, are more likely to attend school and graduate, have fewer behavioral incidents, and higher college attendance rates. Recent analysis conducted on behalf of the California Department of Education supports these previous research findings.

Over the past decade, the US Department of Education has offered incentive grants for high school redesign efforts. In 2003, the San Diego Unified School District received a federal incentive grant to establish small learning communities. After federal funding sources ended, the district has continued to support the small learning community model with state California Partnership Academies (CPA) funds. In accordance with the district's career theme of small learning academies, the Office of College, Career & Technical Education (CCTE) provides oversight and support for the program. Small learning communities are currently in place at the following school sites: Clairemont High School, Crawford Complex, Henry High School, Hoover High School, Kearny High Complex, Lincoln High School, Madison High School, San Diego High Complex, and University City High School.

Pathways Background

The California Center for College and Career (ConnectEd) began to work with the district in 2008, on a grant to expand opportunities for students to engage in a Pathways concept that closely mirrored the district's ongoing work in meaningful, real world, project-based learning and small learning communities. During the 2008-2009 school year, ConnectEd worked with CCTE on a series of business and community forums that resulted in beneficial, synergistic connections. In the spring of 2009, ConnectEd awarded a continuation grant to SDUSD for the purpose of certifying two programs in their newly formed Linked Learning rubric. In 2010, SDUSD became the first district in the United States to have a program certified, and the first district to have two programs certified. The connections between ConnectEd and CCTE have continued with ongoing mutual collaboration on small learning communities, project-based learning, and curriculum development. Attached are background materials that provide additional information about Linked Learning Pathways

Conclusion

I strongly, enthusiastically support San Diego Unified's participation in the five-district consortium. This is the first time we have ventured into a regional academic collaboration of this magnitude. The partnership will be the first of its kind in the state. The MOU opens the door of opportunity to strengthen our career/pathway vision and do so in a collaborative manner with neighboring districts.

c: N. Meyer
Area Superintendents
S. Salazar
S. Loescher