



Broadening Health Pathways and WBL Opportunities in SCUSD

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The California Endowment + Sacramento City USD

ISSUE

This is a unique moment for regional Linked Learning in the Sacramento, CA region. California Career Pathways Trust has invested \$21 million in the region to support work-based learning (WBL). Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) is the recipient of a \$6 million grant, alongside Elk Grove Unified School District.

Concurrently, the California Endowment (TCE) is partnering with SCUSD as part of their 10-year Building Healthy Communities (BHC) work in South Sacramento. The BHC initiative emphasizes upstream solutions to health challenges by supporting prevention efforts and health promotion in schools and neighborhoods. Through the South Sacramento BHC Hub, TCE supports over 30 local grantees who are working on the issues, mainly community-based organizations (CBOs).

TCE is interested in deepening their engagement with SCUSD. Two high schools in SCUSD offer health pathways: Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions High School (HPHS) and Hiram W. Johnson High School (HJHS). Health career pathway programs are a natural linkage between SCUSD's expansion of Linked Learning initiatives and TCE's focus on health. **Thus, our project aims to frame this alignment and articulate how TCE can leverage grantees' expertise to best support student-centered health pathways and WBL in SCUSD.**



- METHODS**
- Literature review of public health education curriculum, WBL, and Linked Learning policy documents;
 - Key informant interviews with 4 SCUSD district and school officials; 4 TCE-funded CBOs; and 5 experts, instructors, and activists in community health;
 - Site visits with 2 CBOs and 1 regional health pathway instructor.

FINDINGS **A shared understanding of health, grounded in the social determinants of health (SDH) framework, is key to aligning TCE's Building Healthy Communities initiative and SCUSD health pathway and WBL priorities.** This framework emphasizes linkages between individual and community health outcomes and social, political, and economic factors. In so doing, it facilitates an expansion of WBL opportunities beyond the current focus on healthcare industry. These opportunities are developmentally appropriate, make learning relevant, honor students' lived experiences, and advance community health objectives.

A SDH framework will advance SCUSD's efforts to recruit and retain young men of color into health pathways: A SDH framework critically examines the impact of racism on health disparities and provides linkages to the work TCE is already supporting to develop social and emotional learning programs in SCUSD with TCE grantee, the Men's Leadership Academy.



Current implementation of WBL in SCUSD health pathway programs is varied. The two health pathways are both focused on the healthcare industry, but current WBL opportunities do not meet students’ diverse backgrounds, skills and interests.

Numerous best-practice healthcare industry internship programs exist. Healthcare internship programs like FACES, based in Oakland, are eager to partner with SCUSD health pathways to strengthen existing WBL opportunities within industry settings. FACES integrates health careers exploration, academic enrichment, wellness support, and youth leadership development components into their program, and have already begun preliminary conversations with HSPS.

CBOs offer unique opportunities for WBL partnership under a SDH framework: CBOs are very interested in partnering with SCUSD but have found it difficult to establish meaningful and long-term relationships schools and students. Several TCE-funded CBOs currently have the interest and ability to partner with SCUSD health pathway programs under an expanded SDH framework. These include:

- o **La Familia:** expanding the Community Health Navigator program to youth; 2-3 interns
- o **Sacramento Chinese Community Center:** on-site gardening & nutrition programs; social and emotional learning curriculum
- o **Sol Collective:** *Curanderismo* series emphasizing indigenous healing practices; 5 interns
- o **Other Organizations:** Asian Resources Inc., Center for Community Health and Well Being (2-3 interns), and Yes2Kollege

Health pathway leadership is critical: Health pathways in SCUSD have experienced teacher turnover in recent years and need sustained, strong leadership in terms of teachers and administrators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Broaden the health pathways in SCUSD to align with a SDH framework thereby expanding WBL career awareness, exploration, and preparation opportunities for SCUSD students.

Leverage expertise of TCE-funded CBOs working in community health and youth development to expand WBL opportunities, particularly the pre-internship activities available on site.

“Students are very young and have not had a lot of real world exposure. Maybe the community organizations can provide people resources like mentors and work-readiness skills.”

- Larry Loban, SCUSD Interim WBL Coordinator

Support WBL infrastructure within SCUSD to include both community health and healthcare industry partners in any district-wide advisory councils.

Invest in social and emotional learning in SCUSD by incorporating it as an integral component of the health pathway.