

May 5, 2016

Via Email Only (sbe@cde.ca.gov)

To: **California State Board of Education**

From: **David Stern, Professor of Education Emeritus, UC Berkeley**

Re: **SBE May 2016 Agenda Item 02**

Developing a New Accountability System: Update on the Local Control Funding Formula

California has led the nation in developing high school pathways that combine preparation for *both* college *and* careers, as opposed to the 20th century practice of grooming one group of students for college and equipping another group of students for work. The California Partnership Academies, Linked Learning, and NAF academies are examples of the growing numbers of pathways in California high schools that embrace the dual mission of making students “ready for college and career,” the stated goal of the Common Core.

To recognize and sustain this progress, it is essential for the new accountability system to explicitly acknowledge students who satisfy *both* college *and* career readiness criteria. This could be done in several ways:

1. In the LCFF evaluation rubric that is currently being designed, a component that supports analysis of local data could include as a recommended indicator **the number or percent of graduating seniors who have satisfied a criterion for college readiness *and* a criterion for career readiness**. For instance, if one of the indicators of college readiness is completion of the a-g course sequence required for CSU and UC, and one of the indicators of career readiness is completing a sequence of connected CTE courses that meet state standards, then acknowledging college and career readiness would simply mean counting the number of students who do both. Currently about one-third of California’s CTE completers also complete the a-g sequence, so this is not a negligible number. But achieving the goal of the Common Core would mean increasing that number, and making this explicit in the new accountability system would encourage districts to do so.
2. The LCFF evaluation rubric also could include as a recommended local indicator **the number or percent of graduating seniors who have successfully completed the program of study in a qualified pathway that includes both the a-g course sequence and a CTE course sequence**. For instance, a qualified pathway might be a California Partnership Academy, certified Linked Learning pathway, or certified NAF academy. The next version of Aeries, perhaps the most commonly used Student Information System in California, will include a new table in which districts can routinely record whether a student is participating in one of

these pathways each year, so that information can easily be linked with the student's course transcript.

3. **If a College and Career Readiness Indicator (CCI) is created** that awards a certain number of points to a school for each student who meets certain criteria, **extra points can be awarded for a student who meets at least one college readiness criterion and at least one career readiness criterion.** The accountability system in the state of Kentucky, for example, awards bonus points for students who meet both college and career readiness criteria.

If California's new accountability system fails to recognize students who meet both career and college readiness criteria, it would signal to local districts that they need not pay attention to that group. Instead, **districts would be led to focus on simply preparing some students for college and other students for careers.** This is what high schools were designed to do for most of the 20th century, when some students were sorted into "college prep" and others into "voc ed." By contrast, contemporary career-technical education (CTE) in high schools is intended be part of a curriculum that prepares all students for postsecondary education.

California has pioneered the development of high school programs that effectively prepare students for both careers and college. Career academies, which combine a sequence of college-prep academic and CTE courses along with work-based learning experiences, have been found effective in increasing students' earnings after high school.¹ California's version of career academies, the state-funded California Partnership Academies (CPAs), have also been found to produce high rates of a-g completion: in 2010, 57 percent of CPA graduates reportedly completed the a-g sequence, compared to 36 percent of graduates statewide.² This result is especially notable since, by law, at least half the students entering CPAs in grade 10 must meet specified at-risk criteria. An earlier study found that CPA students graduating from a large district who enrolled at a local CSU campus were more likely to complete their bachelor's degrees than other students from that same district.³

¹ James J. Kemple, *Career Academies: Long-Term Impacts on Labor Market Outcomes, Educational Attainment, and Transitions to Adulthood* (New York: MDRC, 2008). For a review of research on career academies, see David Stern, Charles Dayton, and Marilyn Raby, *Career Academies: A Proven Strategy to Prepare High School Students for College and Careers*. Berkeley, CA: College & Career Academy Support Network, University of California, 2010.

http://casn.berkeley.edu/resource_files/Proven_Strategy_2-25-1010-03-12-04-27-01.pdf

² Charles Dayton, Candace Hamilton Hester, and David Stern, *Profile of California Partnership Academies 2009-10* (College & Career Academy Support Network, University of California, Berkeley, 2011) <http://casn.berkeley.edu/resources.php?r=293&c=1>

³ Nan L. Maxwell, "Step to College: Moving from the high school career academy through the four-year university." *Evaluation Review* 25(6):619-654, December 2001.

An ongoing study of Linked Learning in California also has found positive results.⁴ A Linked Learning pathway embodies virtually the same combination of features as a career academy: an integrated sequence of CTE and college-prep academic coursework, along with work-based learning and student supports. As of year 6, the study found that students in certified Linked Learning pathways outperformed similar students in the same districts on credit accumulation and graduation rates. Reports from previous years also found that students in certified Linked Learning pathways were more likely to report feeling engaged in and motivated by their schoolwork.

Explicitly including students who satisfy both college and career readiness criteria in the LCFE Evaluation Rubric would not compel local districts to adopt a Linked Learning approach or to develop career academies modeled on CPAs. But it would encourage districts to think about how to prepare as many students as possible *both* for postsecondary education *and* for career success, not just one or the other. This would further the goal of the Common Core, and would continue the evolution of high schools away from 20th century tracking toward college *and* career readiness for all.

Thank you for your consideration.

⁴ Warner, M., Caspary, K., Arshan, N., Stites, R., Padilla, C., Park, C., Patel, D., Wolf, B., Astudillo, S., Harless, E., Ammah-Tagoe, N., McCracken, M. & Adelman, N. SRI International. (2015). *Taking stock of the California Linked Learning District Initiative. Sixth-year evaluation report*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.