

2011-2012

Grades K-12

Instruction in Independent Education

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I Introduction

Vision/Mission Statement

The mission of Pathways is to provide an individualized, home-based, independent study educational option to self-directed students from diverse backgrounds in grades K-12 living in North Bay Area Counties. Pathways provides a rigorous, standards-based learning plan for our students which addresses individual student needs and interests through a team model approach that includes strong, active collaboration from the family. Our focus is to facilitate the growth of our students so that they will become life-long learners, critical thinkers, able researchers, and cooperative learners by encouraging respect, community participation, self-expression, effective communication, and technological literacy.

Students and staff at *Pathways Charter School* are guided by the overarching vision that all students require individual attention to their specific needs in instruction and delivery. Students in the lower grades benefit from a *cross-graded* approach to learning, while secondary students are grouped into traditional grade levels. *Cross-grading* describes a process by which students may work across multiple grade levels according to their skill levels. For all grades, Pathways embrace the concept of individualization and “differentiation”—highly reflective and personalized forms of education, which will enable Pathways Charter School graduates to acquire the skills necessary to become educated citizens in the 21st Century.

Successful *Pathways Charter School* graduates will demonstrate competence in skill areas such as clear communication, cooperative learning, effective work habits, time management, self-discipline, and independent learning. Students will be able to communicate effectively through writing, listening and speaking. They will

effectively use technology to procure information, make connections and support advanced skills development which will enable them to pursue their own paths of learning throughout their adult lives. Students will develop research skills as well as have the ability to plan, initiate, and complete a project and the ability to reflect on and evaluate one's own and others' learning. Thus, they will be armed with the skills they need to pursue their future goals, be they higher education, or secure, sustainable employment.

Pathways Charter School holds that learning occurs best when teacher, parents, students and the community at large collaborate to produce an educational setting, which nurtures individual interest and independent thought, while meeting rigorous standards for academic achievement. Curricula at *Pathways Charter School* can best be characterized as holistic and individualized. We strive to use teaching styles that do not separate all academic disciplines, rather, *Pathways Charter School* designs personalized, integrated, education plans that meet the needs of students' varied methods of learning and encourages integration of many, traditionally isolated, subjects. By approaching core academic areas with a holistic approach to subject disciplines, students are more easily able to see the relevance of, not only one subject to another, but also applying learning in a way that makes the materials relevant to their personal lives. We also believe that a “team” of parent, teacher and students are necessary in creating, pursuing and assessing a student's individual learning structure and progress and therefore encourage parent participation while allowing young adults to experience the costs and benefits of making significant decisions.

Charter Structure and Our Sponsor District

Charter Schools are public schools that receive state funding based on average daily attendance of students. Pathways Charter School is sponsored by Harmony Union School District in Occidental. The role of the sponsor district is to ensure that we live up to the terms of our charter, but otherwise does not have direct influence on how we operate our school. When Harmony approved our charter, an “Operational Agreement” was signed between Harmony and Pathways that describes our relationship. The flow chart on page five illustrates the operational structure of our charter school.

Board

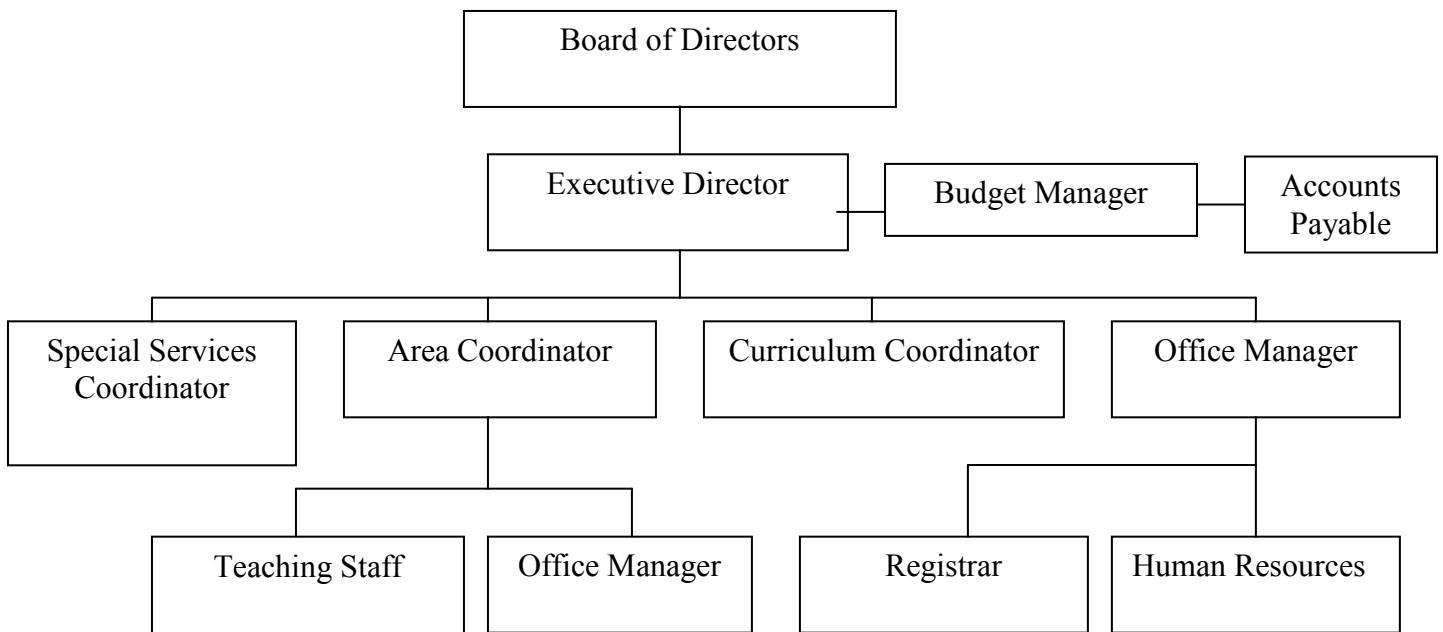
The authorized number of Directors shall be five (5). One (1) Staff Representative Director shall be elected by the Staff. Two (2) Community Directors shall be elected by the PCS Community. Two (2) At-Large Directors shall be chosen and appointed by the other Directors on the Board.

The Staff Representative Director must be a current employee of the School in order to be eligible to serve as a Director. The Staff Representative Director may not reside in the same County as his/her predecessor,

unless no person residing in a different County stands for election. Community Directors may not reside in the same County as each other. Community Directors (including parents) may not also be employees. Director candidates must attend at least one (1) board meeting in the prior calendar year to be considered for nomination.

The board seeks input from the school community and invites all interested parties to attend meetings. Call the school office for meeting information.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF PATHWAYS CHARTER SCHOOL



Advisory Council

A group that helps to facilitate parent participation in the school is the Advisory Council. These regional volunteer groups meet periodically as the need arises for specific tasks such as planning local events or fundraising.

The Advisory Council is open to membership from the ranks of local parents, staff and community members and Pathways board members (as non-voting members). The Advisory Councils have limited authority to create an operating plan that is attentive to the needs of students within that specific area. Any fundraising and use of those funds is overseen by the Advisory Councils, for example. The School Board creates the specific policies governing the Advisory Councils, and the School Director reviews all decisions so that compliance with state law, board policy and fiscal accountability is ensured.

Advisory Council representatives are encouraged to attend board meetings in order to update the board with a regular report on activities within their area.

The Educational Team



At Pathways, each student is supported through the concept of the "Educational Team." This team is composed of the Independent Study Teacher (or "IST"), the parent and the student. The team may also include other persons integral to the success of the student, such as other pertinent family members, tutors or specialists. The team meets a minimum of once each learning period to review goals, assess student progress and coordinate on-going learning assignments and plans. The team also determines how to use funds available to each student, though ultimately the IST is responsible for ensuring appropriate use of school funds.

At the elementary level, parents (as the daily instructor) take on the day-to-day implementation of the learning plan, making decisions about modifications of assignments and conducting interim assessments. At the monthly meeting, the IST works with the parent (and other team members as appropriate) to review and assess student work and make determinations as to the following month's goals and assignments. As students enter high school, students will meet weekly with their teacher. The IST is the primary person responsible for assigning and assessing student work, though the parent is still integral to monitoring and assessing the daily program.

Calendar

A printable version of our family calendar can be found on our website, www.pathwayscharter.org under "Calendar." The calendar documents several important events and time periods in the school year. You can also find an interactive calendar on the school's website.

Attendance Periods: Attendance periods are generally twenty-day cycles during which attendance is documented for the State. When work is turned in to your IST, it must represent only work from the same attendance period.

Field Trips: These activities are only shown on the interactive calendar, as they are updated regularly.

II Enrollment Procedures

Students come to Pathways Charter School in a variety of different ways. Families currently enrolled in the school might refer a student or family. Some students are referred by home schooling or charter organizations, while others, looking for a better academic program for their students, find us through local resources. When initial contact is made you are assigned to a Local Area (see box below). The central office will assist you in completing the enrollment process. Your questions about necessary paperwork can be answered at this time.

Local Areas of Enrollment

Lake/ Northern Napa: Encompasses the lower half of Lake Count and the immediate area north of the city of Napa to the Sonoma County/Lake County border and both west and east of the HWY 29 corridor between these two areas.

Solano/ Lower Napa: Encompasses Napa city proper and all areas south (including American Canyon), to Vallejo.

All of Solano county west and south of Vacaville.

Santa Rosa/ Marin Encompasses all of Sonoma and Marin Counties.

Once a family has contacted the office, they will be sent a pre-enrollment questionnaire to complete and return. The student(s) will be placed on a request to enroll list and, as space is available, will be called to schedule an in-person pre-enrollment interview. The family pre-enrollment interview is a formal way for our staff to come to an understanding of why you are choosing a home-based education. It is important that we get to know your family in order to help with teacher placement and curriculum development. This meeting is also an opportunity for you to ask questions about our school and the types of services and programs we offer. We want to help you in your decision-making process by providing you with all the information you need.

Independent Study in a home-based program is not right for every student so part of the purpose of the interview is to determine if the student has the necessary characteristics for success in our program. Sometimes in the interview process we come across students who might not be appropriate for placement in this type of academic program.

The following items are required before admission can occur.

- A teacher/family interview
- A completed enrollment form
- An official birth certificate
- Current immunization records
- Transcripts, including CAHSEE score sheet with dates (if high school)
- For special ed students, a copy of the current IEP

This is an excellent opportunity for the interviewer to discuss any concerns they might have about a student's ability to learn and grow in this unique environment. A student's education and personal development is our main concern and we are strongly committed to making sure students are provided with the tools needed for success.

For those students, who have an active Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), a two-step process will occur. The first level will be to determine if the student has the necessary characteristics to be successful in the program. The second step will occur, once the student has been approved as an appropriate candidate for Independent Study. The student and parent/guardian will meet the Case Manager/Special Education Teacher to review both the Special Education Program, and to sign a thirty-day interim agreement. It will be important to assess the identified needs of the special ed student IEP and discuss any other

issues the parents may have regarding transitioning into the home study environment. The family will be asked to provide a copy of the current IEP, and a signed “Exchange of

Information” with the previous school district, upon acceptance and prior to enrollment

For Probationary Enrollment, see page 19.

A Word about Student Files

Pathways student files are available to parent access with advanced notice. California law allows schools five days to make copies. Pathways charges .05 cents per page for student files. Student files generally contain grade, testing, health information and teacher reports, as well as samples of student work.

High school graduates receive one official transcript and one unofficial transcript at no charge. Any subsequent transcripts are \$2.00 per unofficial copy and \$3.00 per official copy.

III School Support Services

Parent Orientation

At the beginning of each school year, a regionally-based parent orientation takes place. It is extremely important that at least one parent from each family attend. For new parents this is an excellent opportunity to familiarize yourselves with policy and procedure. For all parents, it will be an occasion to find out about classes, field trips and other exciting opportunities available. It is also an excellent time for you to meet other parents. Isolation can be one of the most challenging aspects of schooling at home and we want to give you the opportunity to chat with other families, share experiences and network.

It is also important that teachers and administrators hear from our families. We use this orientation as a chance to get to know all families in attendance. It is critical that we know what your needs, wants and concerns are so that we can better serve you. Pathways staff use this information to plan future parent/student support gatherings, organize parent/student volunteer roles and coordinate local parent mentor and Advisory Council programs.

Educational Support Resources

We have a wealth of resources available to our students to support their educational program. The teacher, as the primary resource, will guide each family in finding and selecting curriculum and materials that meet the needs of their students. One of the founding principles of our program is individualization. We feel that the variety of resources that we offer allow students the flexibility and choice that they need to express their individuality. The resources available to all our families are identified below.

Teacher

Your teacher is your primary resource. Pathways teachers come from a diverse background and have had a variety of teaching experiences that enrich our program. They can offer advice on curriculum and community resources as well as lesson ideas. Your teacher will also help you set goals for each semester and plan assignments at your monthly or weekly

meetings, grade student work and award attendance. If your teacher cannot answer a question they can contact another teacher who is more experienced in that area. Our combined staff is an extremely valuable resource in and of itself, and we all work as a team to support student learning.

Curriculum Libraries

Our school has numerous resources housed in various locations. Our **central curriculum library** is located in Solano County. This library houses a vast collection of books, curriculum, videos and a variety of other materials. The library is also accessible to all families on-line. Specific instructions can be found on page 13. In most cases, materials are transported to your local learning center or forwarded to your IST. In some cases, materials can be shipped directly to you.

Another resource consists of **science materials** housed at both the Lake office and Coffee Learning Center. These “libraries” contain science kits and materials which can be borrowed for two weeks or longer. Check our website for a comprehensive listing of inventory available at the sites (click on Resources).

A majority of Pathways materials are reusable and upon return contribute to the investment in our community. Please keep up the spirit of community and share resources when not in use. When finished with any item, please return it to your teacher who will return it to the library as soon as possible. Our library offers us fast and easy access to a variety of materials. Prior to purchasing materials, the library must be checked for that particular item.

Educational Materials Resources (EMR)

Once the school library has been searched for materials, curriculum items may be ordered from our list of approved Educational Materials Resources, called EMR's. We have windows of ordering throughout the year when the bulk of ordering is done. Together, the educational team determines the materials that are still needed and then they determine which vendors are likely to carry such items. Once the team has decided which items they wish to order (the teacher has final approval authority), the teacher places the order through our on-line ordering system which

is then reviewed by the Area Coordinator. Materials acquired through EMR purchase are considered “checked out” to the student using it for that semester or year.

Classes

Pathways offers classes at a variety of locations for our students. These classes range from electives such as yoga and art to math, science and languages. Our hope is to provide families a variety of course offerings and to meet both academic and social needs. Your teacher will help you to identify classes that will benefit your student. Classes are open to all Pathways students, dependent on space. For further Information, go to www.pathwayscharter.org and click on the individual region for course lists, or contact your local office (see contact information on cover page).

Vendor Course Instructors (VCI)

Another great resource in our program is the ability to utilize the services offered through contracted “vendors.” We have a list of approved vendors that offer unique learning opportunities to students in a variety of subject areas. Students can take advantage of these services in order to help meet their educational needs.

While Pathways offers a great deal of flexibility and individuality in ordering, there are a few items that cannot be ordered

- Basic educational tools (writing paper, pencils and pens for general writing purposes, scissors or other cutting implements, rulers)*
- Standard English language Dictionaries
- Art pencil sets, pens or crayons above \$25 in K-3
- Art Pencil sets, pens or crayons above \$50 in 4-6
- Art pencil sets, pens or crayons above \$50 in 7-12 for beginning art students
- Any art paper that comes in large amounts (can be obtained through the office)
- Equipment such as microscopes, computers, etc. These are available to families for check out purposes from the site library.

**Restrictions on basic necessities may be waived if the family qualifies for free or reduced priced meals and has submitted the form to the office.*

If you would like to see a particular vendor on the list, please discuss it with your teacher. There is a process that vendors must go through

in order to be on our approved list. They must fill out an application, be interviewed and be fingerprinted. The state requires that ANYONE working with students in a public school must be fingerprinted and be cleared for T.B. BEFORE beginning work with a student. The school will not begin to pay for services from vendors until they are approved.

Community College Courses

Several community colleges are on our list of approved vendors. In order to enroll in a community college course the student and teacher must first fill out the “Request to Attend Jr. College” form, as well as complete a concurrent enrollment form*. All forms can be found on our website under “Downloads” or requested through our main office or resource center.

All community colleges require the concurrent enrollment form. A student must have prior approval from an Area Coordinator in order to receive transfer credit for more than 6 community college units per semester. Please contact your teacher or local Area Coordinator for more information about transferable college units and requirements for enrollment.

The college bookstores are also on the approved list so that students may order textbooks. See the High School section for more detailed information.

Public School and Secular Curriculum Obligation

As a public school, Pathways is obligated to ensure that only secular (non-religious) curriculum is purchased and used for educational credit with Pathways.

Our teachers are trained to be members of the Educational Team, and their role ultimately is one of oversight in goal setting, standards alignment, and assessment. For this reason, our teacher must see all work that students produce within the learning period and they must either work with the parent within the team setting, or alone, in assessing student work. Since our teachers cannot assign or assess work which originates from sectarian (religious) materials, Pathways cannot include such work within the student's learning plan or final grade reports.

* Generally, a school official must sign this form.

Student Budgets and Investment in Pathways

Curriculum funds are made available on a per student basis. However, determining this amount annually is a tricky business. The realities of public school finance dictate that we never know from one year to the next what we can expect. What we do know is that it is impossible to predict or guarantee any specific amount for the purpose of student materials spending far in advance of the school year. Once we know, usually around June, what funds the school can expect for the following year, we can feel comfortable predicting a conservative level of per-student funding for the fall.

Toward the end of each school year, the budget is reevaluated and any significant remaining funds are set aside for student use. However, this information comes too late for current year purchases and is instead used as a means by which current students may pre-order for the following year. This opportunity is referred to as the "Wish List," as it is contingent upon the existence of excess funds and as such, is a "wish." With the current State budget being very restricted, there have not been sufficient funds to develop a "wish list" this past year and it does not look good for the upcoming year.

At the center of any purchase for student materials is the understanding that the student's core educational needs are being met. Each semester as the Semester Learning Plan is developed, the team is required to identify how the student's needs in each subject are being met.

The student budget amount is the maximum amount that can be used towards meeting a student's educational needs. The educational needs are identified through discussions between the educational team of IST, parents and students; however, the ultimate determination and approval of budget expenditures lies with the Area Coordinator.

School Budget 101

As a public school, Pathways receives state funds, based on enrollment and attendance, just as every other school. Have you ever wondered where all the money goes? Charter schools are funded slightly differently than typical schools

and the specific dollar amounts per student vary according to grade level.

When building the Pathways budget, we must first consider laws and restrictions that make certain choices for us. For instance, we know that at least 50% of all revenue generated by students must go toward credentialed teacher salary and benefits.

From that base, we add costs mandated by special education laws. While the state has supported special education through a sizeable grant, it is projected to cost the school at least twice that much in order to meet our requirements. In the graphic illustration, note that mandated special education costs are *half* that of the per student monies allocated. By law, the State assumes that special education students account for approximately 12% of our population.

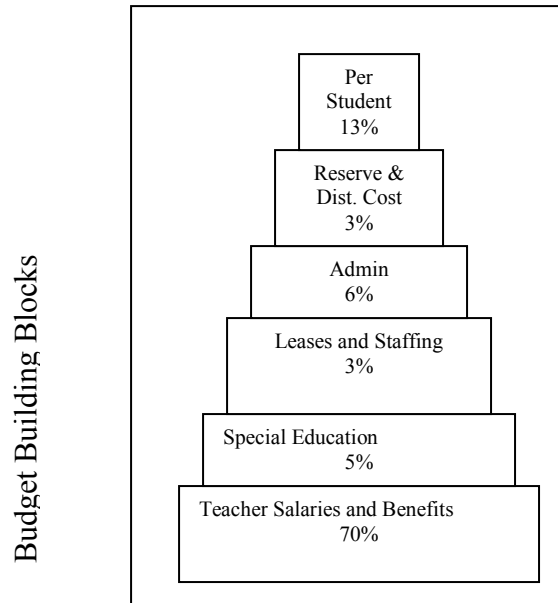
As a school which supports an individualized plan of education for each student, our resource centers and class options provide a necessary element of individualization. The cost of leases (2%) and staffing (1%) for resource centers and libraries adds the next 3% to our total.

To have a school at all, a certain level of administration is necessary. This must be factored in next. About 6% of all revenue goes toward administrative costs. There are two budget areas remaining before we can determine what is left per student. A very important category is the reserve for economic uncertainty. A reserve will always be somewhere between 3 and 5 percent, unless of course, we have to use it.

The last percentage that goes out before calculating our per student budget is the 1% cost to our sponsor district. Have you done the math yet? That leaves 13% of all revenue left to allocate for general education per pupil expenditures. In reality, this is where the school finds money for EMR materials, VCI expenses and miscellaneous items such as field trips and technology acquisitions.

As specific as this information has been, it's important to understand the flux of various items out of our control throughout the year. For example, in past years funding from the state has changed mid-year. We also are unsure of what special education will actually cost us until the end of the year rolls around. Staff related

costs such as benefits fluctuate every year, usually going up. In the past couple of years, benefits were up 20% over the prior year!



Hopefully this has provided some insight into why and where the school spends its public funds. Please feel free to call the school office with any questions you may have.

Ordering Protocols

With the exception of the Wish List (see explanation, p.11), orders are for the current year only. Individual orders under \$25 are discouraged, as we wish to reduce excessive shipping fees.

Orders are shipped to teachers, who have 48 hours to inform families of their arrival and five days to arrange for delivery of materials. Upon receipt of an order, the family will be asked to sign the Educational Materials Agreement, verifying that all items were received. All non-consumable items (textbooks, software, microscopes, etc.) need to be returned at the end of the year or upon completion so that they may be cataloged into the Resource Library for others to use.

Parents can expect to be invoiced by the school for lost or damaged items.

Newsletters

Each semester, a school-wide general information newsletter is mailed to families. The Newsletter updates students and faculty

about upcoming events, important dates, policy changes and procedural information. Other important information is featured as well, such as student success stories, teacher news and student submissions.

We also publish more frequent announcements via local eBulletins. These emailed newsletters are time sensitive, brief, and often single-topic informational notices.

To subscribe, simply visit the regional section of our website for which you would like to sign up. The following are the available eBulletins:

Lake_Napa_eBulletin	Sonoma_eBulletin
Solano_eBulletin	Marin_eBulletin

If you have information that belongs in either the Bulletin or the eBulletin please contact the central office at 707-585-6510 or email pathwaysinfo@pathwayscharter.org.

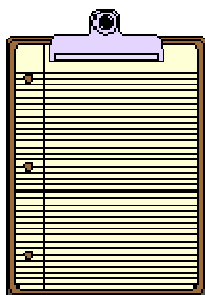
Complaint Procedure

Parents, students, vendors or community members may lodge complaints against Pathways Charter School or its employees by following our board adopted complaint procedure.

The underlying intent of this procedure is to provide a forum for communication, learning and respect of individuals. Toward this end, the first step is an informal process by which the individual with the complaint can communicate his/her concerns to the party with whom they have the complaint.

As an example, suppose that Parent A feels that their teacher has not been sympathetic to their curriculum needs. According to the complaint procedure, the first step is for the parent to communicate his/her frustration with their facilitator (teacher). If that conversation and any subsequent attempts to communicate fail to solve the problem, the complaint moves into a more formal arena and requires that the person making the complaint contact the school office within 10 days of the most recent attempt to solve the problem.

Complaints are levied for a number of reasons, as illustrated in the following examples: a parent would like to make the school aware that a local classroom space is consistently dirty, a student is informing the school that they are unhappy with a vendor, or a parent requests a change of teacher for some reason. When using the complaint procedure in order to request a new facilitator, the request must be accompanied by the "Request for Change of Teacher" form. This form may be requested from the office. Because the intent of the complaint procedures is to resolve communication and facilitate growth and learning, a facilitator change will be considered with all due gravity and respect to all parties concerned.



The exception to this policy on Teacher changes is the year-end "no-fault" request form for a change of teacher. This request does **not** require the initiation of the Complaint Procedure.

For a complete copy of the board approved complaint procedure, please call the office so that it may be sent to you.

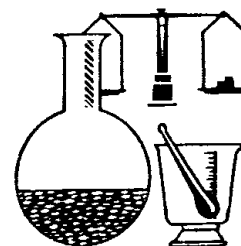
Safety & Hazardous Materials

In addition to the textbook type curriculum that Pathways offers students, lab science and other hazardous materials are often made available. In order to ensure that students are appropriately supervised and have access to all necessary safety devices, Pathways requires that parents and class instructors identify potential hazards they may encounter in the course of fulfilling Pathways educational requirements.

Hazardous materials may include chemical and biological substances, use of a Bunsen burner, rocketry materials and other explosive devices and under some circumstances, use of kitchen equipment (stoves, knives, etc) and motorized and electrical equipment and tools. This list is not all-inclusive. Parents and Instructors are expected to use good judgment in identifying what is considered "hazardous".

When a course instructor fills out the Hazardous Materials form for a class, parents have the opportunity to identify the risks associated with a class and can feel assured that the proper safety measures have been taken. When students conduct experiments or work with hazardous materials at home, the form reminds students to proceed with caution, the approval of their parent(s) and to use all necessary safety devices.

Please fill out the Hazardous Materials form prior to the initiation of any course which will make use of a hazardous device or substance, and turn it in to your facilitator, or to the school office.



Special Services Department Student Study Team (SST) & Special Education

At Pathways, our entire educational program is based on individualized education with support from the school budget to meet the unique needs of each student. Because of this, we are able to provide for most special needs of students through our general education program.

This is accomplished through our team approach; IST, parent and student collaborating with learning specialists.

General Education Program - Special Needs Support

Through our home-based general education program we are able to help families meet many student needs in the home, through:

- flexible individualized curriculum, arranged by the Independent Study Teacher (IST), in consultation with the Student Study Teams (SST) or Special Education staff, if warranted.
- *Student Study Team (SST)* In accordance with state and federal law, we offer the opportunity to for any student, parents or IST to request an SST as the first step in addressing specific learning needs. All students must have completed a Learning Styles Inventory prior to an SST, as a means to elicit personalized information on the student's individual and unique learning styles and profile. If warranted, the SST will be a forum to brainstorm strategies to address specific levels of intervention, and the impact that those supports have on the student's progress, in the regular education program (Response to Intervention). It should be noted that the SST is a three step process of reviewing the student's needs, developing intervention plans and reviewing the impact of the individualized plans on the student's ability to be successful.

The Student Study Team is chaired by the Student Study Team Coordinator. Members consists of the student's parents/guardian, regular education teachers and when appropriate, learning specialists. The team process is to follow state guidelines in meeting addressing the student needs by discussion and developing intervention plans that may identify various

levels of modifications, specialized curriculum and learning specialist support. Requests to have students participate in an SST can be made through the Independent Study Teacher, who begins the process by submitting a Request for SST form to the SST Coordinator.

When the implemented and documented interventions offered through the three- step (Response to Intervention) SST process do not show expected student improvement, only then do Federal and State law indicate the need to consider conducting a formal assessment to determine potential special education or Section 504 eligibility under Title 5.

The formal Special Education process governed by state and federal law, is as follows:

- Referral for Assessments: A referral is made for formal assessments only after all the levels of SST have been attempted, as required by state law.
- Eligibility for "Special Education" services is determined by an Individual Education Planning (IEP) team after a review of all assessments by the team. The mandated members of the IEP Team include the parent(s)/guardian, regular education teacher, an administrator (or approved designee), and a special education teacher (Case Manager). When appropriate, participation of the student is encouraged. When discussing assessment results or designated instructional services (i.e. Speech and Language), those specialists should participate.
- If eligible, an Individualized Education Plan document (also called IEP), will be developed by the IEP team. The IEP team will also discuss and determine if additional services and support to the homeschool program are warranted to allow the student to meet the "floor of opportunity."

All families of enrolled or potential students should be aware of state and federal mandates

which specify that a child with exceptional needs must be in a program that is the “least restrictive environment” for that child. The law states that the IEP must state “Homeschooling” as the “Least Restrictive Environment” and most appropriate placement for the student. Due to the nature of a home-based program, Pathway’s Special Education model is, primarily, one of consultation to the home classroom as a mainstreamed setting. In our program the home-based environment is both the general

education setting and the model for addressing a student’s exceptional needs. Direct Instruction and small class groups are also available, when appropriate.

For any questions about the above process, please contact Elizabeth Edson, Coordinator of Special Services, at the Pathways office, 707-585-6518.

Student Directory Information

Federal law and the Freedom of Information Act require that public school directory information be made available to anyone requesting it. It is the obligation of the school to identify what information will constitute the school’s Student Directory.

Pathways Board policy (enacted 9/2/2003) stipulates that our Student Directory contain only the name and grade level of students. Board policy requires Pathways to adhere to all state and federal laws related to the maintenance and distribution of directory information. Any non-directory information, such as phone, address and email will not be distributed.

IV STAR Examinations and Other Forms of Assessment



There are many ways of assessing student progress and achievement. Some forms of assessment are required by the state while others are required by the contents of our charter. Some of the most effective forms of assessment are the ones done formally and informally in the home by parents/guardians and during meeting times with your ISTs. Those having direct contact with students fully understand the capabilities and achievement of their students. We continue to look for authentic ways of assessing student work and are developing support systems and programs to help guide parents/guardians in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of their students.

Renaissance Assessment

Pathways is using the Renaissance Assessment program in English and math. Students will be assessed upon enrollment in the program and twice each year to monitor academic progress.

STAR Examinations

Toward the end of each school year the state of California requires all public schools, including Pathways Charter School, to assess student knowledge. "STAR" stands for "State Testing And Reporting System" and represents a program whose intent is to hold public schools accountable. One facet of the STAR system is the API – "Academic Performance Index". Each school receives an API "ranking", based partly on the results of the yearly testing associated with STAR. The state uses the information gathered from students' test scores to assess how well schools are educating children.

Charter law was written with the understanding among Legislators that charter schools would produce tangible evidence showing how much

better they were educating students than traditional schools. The only tangible evidence available, that the State is willing to look at, are STAR test and California High School Exit Exam scores. Further, they will only consider the STAR test scores toward an API rank, if testing participation is 95% or above. Although there are a variety of ways to assess your particular student's progress, **it is important to the success and viability of the school that as many students take this exam as possible.** A high rate of participation in the STAR exam reinforces our school's credibility in the eyes of the state. Historically, Pathways students have scored quite well on these tests, validating the success of our unique structure.

In addition to these *survival* reasons for participation in the yearly STAR exam, there are other, academic, reasons for having your child take it. Among them are:

1. Assess progress across a wide range of skills and strands.
2. Assess or "test" the curriculum we use to see if it is adequately presenting standards as identified by the state in the STAR testing.
3. A check of our teaching methods and emphasis: did we adequately address the standards reflected in the testing?
4. An excellent means for students to practice and learn test-taking skills they will need in the future.
5. Offer a reliable way to gain a comparative "snapshot" with regard to other students throughout the state at that grade/age level.
6. Offer individual student scores that can be compared over a number of years to help us see patterns of strengths or weakness.

Typically, STAR test results are mailed to schools late summer. Usually in August, schools also receive a "parent report" and a "parent letter" which the school is given 20 days to mail out to families. It is important that the school have your correct mailing address for this purpose.

If you have questions or concerns about STAR testing, please talk with your IST.

V Student/Parent Responsibilities

The Educational Team

The success of a student's educational program depends on the relationship between student, parent, and teacher. This relationship is formalized through the *Educational Team*. Board policy has delineated the roles, rights and responsibilities of this team; you may request a copy of the policy from the main office.

Made "user-friendly" this policy describes the "parent" role as that person who is primarily responsible for overseeing daily instruction. This person is usually the parent or guardian, though someone else designated by the parent as the "educational guardian" may fill the "parent" role. As team members and those who know the student best, parents are encouraged to participate in goal setting and creating the students' educational plan.

All members of the team take responsibility for attendance at monthly meetings. While non-instructor parents or guardians may also attend meetings, it is the input of the "educational parent" or guardian which bears weight on team decisions.

The "teacher" role on the team implies the credentialed employee of Pathways Charter School. While we respect all parents as in-home teachers, for purposes of our Educational Team language, "teacher" refers to your IST.

Finally, the student is the most important part of the team. At the lower grade levels, student participation may consist primarily of "show and tell." At the upper grades, students are encouraged to help design and give input to their learning programs.

The "Team" Work

Your Independent Study Teacher (IST) is responsible for providing a climate conducive to establishing a healthy relationship. Parents and students are expected to take advantage of the services provided, be they texts, classes, or field trips, and work with their teacher to incorporate these resources into a program that fits the needs of the student.

Teachers, parents, and students work together as a team, developing a learning plan, selecting materials, assessing, reassessing, and documenting student work. Student self-

assessment is particularly important, and is a significant component of our charter. Equally important is the parent's role as primary instructor in the home, giving one-on-one assistance to their child. Without the parent, our program could not exist!

In order to facilitate the greatest degree of mutual understanding, it is important that these processes be approached in an orderly fashion with each party willing to follow the rules and procedures set forth by the charter school. The section on Meetings and Documentation explain the requirements to be fulfilled by each student. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that adequate time for direct instruction and correction of student work has been set aside.

Equally important, the parent and student are responsible for ensuring the timely coordination of the required paperwork to be turned in to the teacher for each meeting date. Your IST will work with you on establishing a routine for fulfilling these obligations.

Acknowledgement of Responsibilities and Memorandum of Understanding

At the beginning of each semester the parent, student, and teacher will sign an Acknowledgement of Responsibilities that defines the responsibilities of each person to make the teaching and learning process successful. Additionally, if the student meets the following criteria:

1. probationary enrollment
2. below or far below basic on STAR
3. failure to pass CAHSEE by grade 11
4. failed a core class in previous semester
5. failed to show progress in core classes

then the student, parent, and teacher will also sign a Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Additional Student Support. This MOU will identify additional support that the student will receive in order to be more successful in the Pathways program.

Improvement Referral Process

We understand that families have hectic schedules and that unavoidable circumstances may arise that, at times, make completion of a

portion of coursework difficult. However, state guidelines for independent study do not allow for excused absences. Students are awarded attendance based on the work they complete. Therefore, missed meetings and incomplete or significantly unsatisfactory work are all factors that warrant student absences. Details of student attendance and other expectations are contained within the Master Agreement that students sign each semester. If a student does not uphold the rules and procedures outlined in the Master Agreement, his/her IST will support improvement through enacting the formal communication process entitled the "Improvement Referral Process." Some examples of instances that would inspire the Improvement Referral process are listed below and a full list may be found in the Student Expectation section of the Master Agreement.

- unprepared for meeting
- consistently late for meetings
- missing or incomplete assignments
- absent/truant
- missed meeting with IST
- violation of student rules of behavior

Teachers are required to advise you of this process within your first couple of meetings.

It is ultimately the supervising, certificated teacher's responsibility to decide if a student's academic program is at risk and if intervention is called for. Your teacher will confer with his/her Area Coordinator, school advisor and/or the School Director as he/she begins to implement the Improvement Referral Process. An improvement referral is an acknowledgement that the student has not upheld one or more aspects of the student agreement in the Master Agreement contract and the Improvement Referral Process is intended to provide a forum in which all parties in the educational team will provide and review input into a plan of evaluation and action to determine

if independent study is an appropriate placement for a student. Pathways' goal is that students are successful in independent study but we acknowledge that independent study is not the best learning environment for all students. We strive to ensure independent study is a good match for each of our students and we work to quickly suggest alternate placement for those students for whom the requirements of working independently are not a good match. Upon receipt of three Improvement Referrals in one semester, the School Director or his/her designee will review the student's files and make a determination if he/she can remain in independent study with Pathways.

The progression of improvement referrals is as follows:

First Improvement Referral- written document forwarded to Area Coordinator and placed in the student work file with a deadline for turning in any missing assignments or to correct any other problem.

Second Improvement Referral- written document forwarded to the Area Coordinator and to the School Director and placed in the student's work file. Additionally, documentation of conferences between the parents, student, teacher, Area Coordinator, academic advisors and/or the School Director is recorded and maintained in the student's work file.

Third Improvement Referral- written documentation is completed and forwarded to the Area Coordinator and School Director. School Director or designee will review student's file to determine if enrollment will be revoked and if the student needs to find a more suitable educational environment.

A Word about Probationary Enrollments:

Sometimes, students who were accepted into Pathways on a "standard" Master Agreement, demonstrate difficulty with Independent Study. As a result, they have received 2 or more Improvement Referrals.

Once a student has received the third Improvement Referral, Pathways has the option of dis-enrolling that student. The other option available to Pathways administration is to offer the student a "second chance," through a Probationary Contract. The contract term begins at the start of the next semester and proceeds month to month thereafter.

Whether enrolled initially as a "probationary" student, or assigned a probationary contract some time later, a student may only be enrolled under a Probationary agreement for one semester. At the end of that term, the student will have either shown enough evidence for continued "regular" enrollment, or will be asked to seek an educational placement more in line with his/her needs.

How to be a Successful Independent Study Student

Independent Study, or homeschool, is not for everyone. It is important to have a sense of whether student and family have the characteristics that we associated with success in our program.

If you can check off most of the items below, chances are you are well on your way to a positive and successful experience at Pathways!

Students:

- Understand and are committed to an Independent Study program.
- Exhibit the necessary maturity and active participation in their own learning goals.
- Are able to work independently with limited supervision.
- Are able to make all class commitments on a regular basis.
- Have access to a reliable mode of transportation and reliable means of communication (e.g., working telephone in the home)
- Demonstrate a willingness to participate in any internal assessments as mandated by our charter.
- have access to a parent/guardian at the home to assist and be responsible for daily monitoring and verification of subjects studied.

Parents and Student:

- Exhibit a cooperative attitude and readiness to work toward educational goals as a team with the supervising Independent Study Teacher.
- Exhibit the ability and willingness to keep scheduled appointments with the Independent Study teacher.
- Exhibit ability and willingness to come to meetings prepared with assignment sheet, completed assignments, and materials.
- Show respect for school property and personnel.
- Demonstrate ability to be responsible for all learning resources on loan to the student.
- Comply with terms of the Master Agreement.

Probationary Enrollment Qualifiers

Students who do not demonstrate the characteristics described above or who meet any of the criteria below will be enrolled at Pathways on a probationary basis.

- Expelled from another program within the last two semesters
- More than 25 units behind toward graduation (high school)
- Failed 2 or more classes in the prior semester
- Supervising adult at home is someone other than the parent or guardian
- Student was asked to leave an Independent Study or Homeschool program within the last two semesters
- Student was placed on Home and Hospital within the last full or partial semester before enrollment
- Prior placement with Pathways resulted in at least 2 referrals during either of the most recent two semesters (student has not been enrolled at PCS for at least one semester)

Probationary Contract Term

The initial probationary term is set at no more than 3 learning periods, and no less than 2. At the end of the initial probationary period, an evaluation within the Educational Team, in consultation with the Area Coordinator, will determine whether the student will be

- referred back to their local district
- given a one-time extension of probation for a term of 1 or 2 learning periods; or
- offered a standard master agreement contract.

If the teacher and/or administrators elect to dis-enroll the student, the family will receive a letter to that effect.

All families have the right to appeal a decision to dis-enroll, first through the School Director and ultimately through the Board of Directors. The process for the appeal is to use the school's Complaint Procedure, available on the Downloads page of our website.

Elementary: Meetings and Documentation

Each semester, you will meet with your teacher to plan a course of study. At this meeting the Semester Learning Plan form is filled out, identifying educational goals for the semester in each subject area and resources that will be utilized. All parties sign the form agreeing to its content.

In addition to this form, the teacher will review with you the Master Agreement which must also be signed. This form details the responsibilities of each group member: student, parent, and teacher. It is important that everyone understands their role and the consequences if those expectations are not met. At this meeting the materials for each subject will be chosen and a schedule set for the coming semester.

Families meet with their teacher at least once every 20 school days. At the beginning of the

year families and their teacher will decide on a meeting schedule, including location and day. This meeting is generally an opportunity to present what has been learned, plan assignments, request materials, ask questions, and collaborate with your teacher, as well as to complete necessary documentation. Your teacher is also available, via email and phone, throughout the month if you have questions or need additional resources. This monthly meeting is primarily about meeting your needs – the style and format of it vary from family to family and teacher to teacher. Teachers really enjoy seeing all of the exciting new projects your student has done or even getting to hear a new piece of music your child has mastered, so don't be shy about sharing your learning.

Before the teacher arrives you should have the following ready:

1. **Completed Attendance Accounting Form**

For each day, identify one representative assignment or project that was worked on. The parent is responsible for confirming that the student is engaged in learning each school day. The parent initials for an entire week and signs at the bottom at the end of the month. Please note any absent days in the space provided for the daily item description.

2. **One work sample from each subject area (language arts, math, social sciences, science and any electives)**: These original samples must be on file in our office and represent evidence that work is being done. Some examples of work samples are: written assignment, essay, book report, math page, grammar activity, pictures, video recordings, descriptions from science journal, etc. If you are having difficulty thinking of a sample for a specific subject area call your teacher before the meeting and they can help you think of a creative way to document your child's learning.

3. **Other work/projects**: The scope of a month's work is the domain of the entire educational team.

Your teacher will want to see all of the great projects your student has been working on, even if they are not complete, so that she or he can contribute, along with the parent, to the overall assessment. Your IST will also offer appropriate suggestions and resources in support of the creation of the next month's assignments. The families' role on the educational team is to keep a log of their child's activities each month. Your IST will provide you with a planner for this purpose, or you can bring your own record keeping system to the meeting. This is necessary for legal independent study documentation.

High School: Meetings and Documentation

The format for high school meetings and the required documentation are very similar to that of elementary. At the initial meeting, setting goals for the high school student is a more involved process, since high school courses are more subject-specific, and graduation requirements must be met. Once the teacher and student determine which resources the student will employ, the classes and credits being attempted are recorded on the Semester Learning Plan which is signed by the student, parent, and teacher. The teacher will review, with you, the course objectives for each of the courses on the Semester Learning Plan. The Master Agreement, which details the responsibilities of each member is also reviewed and signed by the student, parent and teacher.

The meeting format of the high school student differs from that of the elementary student. In high school, teacher and student meet weekly, with parent involvement necessary only once per month. The student and teacher must agree upon a meeting location, day and time. If either the student or teacher cannot attend, 24-hour notice must be given (see section in Master Agreement) to reschedule a meeting. During weekly meetings the student and teacher review work completed the previous week, set goals, and create assignments for the coming week. This process is recorded on the Student Assignment Sheet. To be considered “in attendance” the student must have the following items ready for the teacher at his/her weekly/monthly meeting:

Weekly:

All Assignments from the previous week: The teacher will review all of the work that was assigned at the last meeting. During the week, parents should be monitoring their student’s progress. Parents are expected to help correct work that comes with teacher books/guides, in their home support role as requested by the IST. During the meeting, teachers will complete a preliminary review of written work. They will conduct a thorough review of work to make a final determination of attendance credit either at this time or later if a complete review is not possible during the student meeting. (Students will be informed if they are not awarded full attendance credit.) Students should bring any assignments that they need help completing, including the textbook if applicable, so that the teacher can assist the student during the meeting.

Monthly:

Completed Attendance Accounting Form

For each day, identify one assignment or project that was worked on. The parent is responsible for confirming that the student is engaged in learning each school day. The parent validates daily work with initials and signs at the bottom at the end of the month. Please note any absent days in the space provided for the daily item description. **One original work sample from each subject area (language arts, math, social sciences, science and any electives):** These samples must be on file in our office and represent evidence that work is being done. The school can make available, upon request, an outline of “Acceptable Work Samples.” Some examples of work samples are: written assignment, essay, book report, math page, grammar activity, pictures, video recordings, descriptions from science journal, etc.

VI For High School Students and Their Parents

As a student enters high school many things about the academic environment change. Some of those changes can be very exciting while others make for quite a challenge. Pathways staff are here to support and encourage you in this transition. What follows are snippets of information about course work, graduation requirements and college preparedness and admissions. We have an excellent staff that is ready to answer your questions and help with guidance and support.

Pathways does not offer a certificate of completion in lieu of graduation. Students enroll in high school courses with the ultimate goal of earning a high school diploma. This means that students are expected to complete all requirements for graduation as outlined by the State of California.

Working with their teacher, high school students will agree to a body of coursework each semester. Pathways maintains a master list of courses students may choose from. We also work with families to develop courses for areas

of special interest to the student. Each class is awarded a credit amount. A list of Pathways coursework and credit requirements to be completed for graduation can be found on p. 29.

After choosing classes at the beginning of each semester parents, student and teacher will review the course contents required for the completion of each class. The student will then agree upon an amount of course material to be completed each learning period via the weekly Assignment Sheet. In addition to work samples the bulk of all coursework agreed upon should be brought to the weekly meeting.

Work Ethic and Responsibilities for High School Students

Teachers at Pathways Charter School are hired not only for their knowledge and expertise in the field of education but for their understanding of independent study. They are committed to helping families create unique and successful educational programs that help students grow

The Learning Contract

Because Pathways Charter School is an Independent Study School, students do most of their learning on their own. Success requires honesty, diligence, and integrity.

Independent Study – like self-employment – presents considerable challenges. Procrastination, distractions like television, sleeping in, solitude and lack of routine can be obstacles to success.

Students who undertake Independent Study must consider themselves to be self-motivated and capable of the self-discipline the program requires. By signing the Master Agreement at the beginning of their course of study, they make a commitment to complete sufficient work to meet or exceed the standards of the regular high school curriculum. Students are expected to spend at least six hours each school day completing work.

By co-signing the Master Agreement, parents agree to supervise their student's work, to provide support and encouragement where needed, and to maintain communication with their Independent Study Teacher to ensure that their student is fulfilling his or her responsibilities. They also agree to make sure that school materials are kept in a safe place and returned in good condition.

The Independent Study Teacher also signs the Master Agreement, demonstrating that she or he is prepared to provide the necessary learning materials and as much guidance as the responsible student may reasonably require in the course of study.

Independent study is thus a contract between students, families and the school to work together to ensure that the student meets the requirements of the program. Students who do not keep up their end of this agreement will be asked to leave the program.

academically and personally. Our main concern is that students leave our school prepared for their next venture in life whether it is to return to a local school, attend college, a vocational training program or a job opportunity.

In order to accomplish the goals set forth in the semester learning plan, students must learn to work collaboratively with their parents and teacher. High school is complex in that it requires the parents, students and teachers to keep close track of the graduation requirements, future educational/vocational plans and social/emotional growth. This requires developing good communication skills and a healthy relationship with your IST. It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure parents and students understand the requirements that must be fulfilled in order to be successful in our program. It is also the teacher's responsibility to listen carefully to students' concerns and needs and consider these when helping to plan and execute a student's educational program.

It is the student's responsibility to complete the assignments agreed upon to the best of their ability and turn them in on time to their teacher at their regularly scheduled weekly meetings. If for some reason a student is having difficulty with a part of their program it is very important that they communicate with their parents and/or teacher so the student's program can be appropriately adjusted. Communication should take place as soon as a student realizes there is a problem. Students should not wait until the end of a learning period as it may be too late to make changes.

Consistent problems may affect grades, the ability to learn and the positive relationship between student and teacher. We are committed to treating all students with empathy and respect and are here to support and encourage each student in both their struggles and their successes. We feel that learning to take responsibility for one's work is a valuable life skill necessary for future success.

Graduation Requirements

On page 28 is a table containing the graduation requirements of our school and the college entrance requirements for California's public universities. Upon entering high school a student is advised in the direction



of following either the standard graduation requirements pathway or a more college preparatory pathway.

College prep level coursework is intended for students who plan to enroll directly in a four-year college after high school. We work directly with the University of California system and have developed coursework content levels for each college prep course. Students engaged in college prep coursework are required to produce more in terms of both *quantity and quality* including a great deal of writing. We do feel this is achievable and will fully prepare our students for a rigorous college program.

Students who plan to enroll in a Junior or Community College, or enter the working world, do not need to be considered "college prep." Their coursework is considered "college-bound" or "general education," depending on the needs of each individual student.

Whatever pathway you choose should best serve your needs and goals and our staff is committed to assisting and supporting your course choices. Refer to the table on page 29 for standard and college prep course requirements and talk with your IST about choosing classes that are right for your needs.

Semester Unit Requirements

In addition to unit requirements for graduation, students must be enrolled with Pathways for a minimum of 30 units each semester (typically, 6 courses). Exceptions are high school seniors who have ample units to satisfy graduation requirements. These students may have as few as 25 units in a semester. Other exceptions may include situations in which students have requested and received permission to take community or junior college courses, enrolled in an ROP program, Work Experience, or have special consideration as a result of a special education IEP.

Students taking Junior College courses must have approval for both course content and number of units. Pathways allows a maximum of 6 college units (translated to 20 high school units) at any one time. Local community colleges have additional guidelines and parameters for attendance.

Exams for High School Students

Who Takes End-of-year Exams?

1. All students taking Algebra 1 or Algebra A/B who are not in a class setting.
2. Students NOT in a classroom setting taking CP classes in
 - A. Algebra
 - B. Geometry
 - C. Foreign Languages

End-of-Course Exams

End-of-Course Exams are given primarily to college-prep (CP) students who are undertaking certain subjects without the support of a class at Pathways or a local community college.

However, all students who are taking Algebra independently must take the year-end exam. Students will be notified by their teacher if they must take end-of-course exams in other subjects.

California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)

Successful completion of the California High School Exit Exam is a requirement for graduation. Its goal is to permit students to demonstrate their competence – and also to be one indicator of the educational performance in all CA school districts and schools. All students are required to pass both the ELA and the Mathematics examinations in order to receive a California high school diploma.

There are two parts to the CAHSEE, English Language Arts and Mathematics. The English Language Arts part addresses state academic content standards through grade 10 and consists of multiple choice questions and one writing task.

The Mathematics part addresses state academic content standards in grades 6, 7, and Algebra I and consists of all multiple choice questions.

Each year CAHSEE will be administered on state specified days. The two sections, ELA and Mathematics are administered on subsequent days. Please check the Pathways calendar for this year's administration dates.

Students who do not pass one or both parts of the CAHSEE will be given multiple

opportunities to retake the test. They need only retake the part of the exam not passed.

College Prep Guidelines for some High School Coursework under Independent Study

Each year, Pathways re-submits very thorough course outlines for the University of California to review and make a determination whether or not our college prep course offerings are challenging enough for them to award college prep (p) status. UC's acceptance of our courses is confirmation to CSUs and other higher education institutions that our college preparatory program is adequately challenging our students. The UC's guidelines for awarding college prep status to our courses frequently change and Pathways vigilantly watches for changes to UC guidelines and revises our course content accordingly. Your IST has access to all materials he/she needs to guide you through a college preparatory education at Pathways.

We have full articulation with the UCs and students have a vast array of approved course offerings available for meeting the UC's 15 a-g requirements. Following the progression of college prep course requirements, a student could potentially enter into a UC or other four-year institution directly after graduating from Pathways. This is unusual for an independent study-based school. It is unusual because there are some college prep requirements that are often difficult to meet outside of a classroom-based school.

College Prep Foreign Language

Independent study is a uniquely difficult setting for students of foreign languages. While Pathways will do all that it can to provide access to a variety of foreign language learning modalities, it is very difficult to ensure the appropriate amount of oral and written practice that a language student must ideally have in preparation for college level courses. To maintain a standard level of accountability in assessing and crediting students in foreign language, Pathways has instituted some basic requirements.

For a Pathways student in grades 9-12 to earn college prep credit for a language course, she or he must either:

- take a class at a local junior or community college or other institute which is approved by Pathways.
- take a language class offered by a Pathways teacher at one of our learning centers.
- take a language independently and pass the Pathways approved year-end assessment, which includes listening, speaking and written proficiency.
- take any other year-end proficiency test which Pathways has approved in a foreign language.

Languages for which Pathways has not approved a year-end assessment may be taken for “conversational” credit only.

Lab Science Credit

Lab science is second only to foreign language in the measure of difficulty it poses for independent study students. In order to provide guidance which will satisfy UC/CSU requirements for high school lab science, teachers are required to follow the criteria detailed in the “Authorization for Application of Science Lab Credit” form. This form applies to students in Pathways classes, as well as those undertaking lab sciences independently in the home. The Course Instructor or Independent Study Teacher must sign off that the course or the study undertaken by the student has met all of these requirements. Forms are available on our website under “Downloads.”

Community College Coursework

Pathways Charter School works with local community colleges in all regional areas to make college courses available to our students. Pending availability, Pathways will pay for tuition fees and required course text books for up to six Community College units. Pathways *does not* pay for other fees, such as health or parking fees, unless the student meets the criteria for low-income eligibility.

This is an excellent way for students to enroll in course work they may not be able to do at home. We also understand that college level course work requires a substantial amount of work on the part of the student. As a result, most JC/CC transfer credit is multiplied by a factor of 3.33, as in many other high schools. For example, if a student takes a transferable semester Spanish course worth 3 college units,

Pathways translates that to 10 high school credits, rounding up the decimal. Some colleges will even apply the original 3 units to a future college degree.** Check with the college for specific credit/unit information.

Students are required to fill out the “Request to Enroll in Community College” form prior to initiating concurrent enrollment at a local college. Without advanced approval, students risk the denial of transfer credit back to Pathways.

Check with your teacher for information about your local community college admissions process, text purchasing procedures and other important information.

Advanced Placement Coursework

While we always advise students to enroll in community college courses over Advanced Placement courses, Pathways offers certain Advanced Placement courses through APEX Learning, an on-line study option. Advanced Placement describes a specific course of study recognized by the National College Board. The NCB certifies credit through the successful passage of a standardized AP test that students take after (or sometimes a few weeks prior to) the completion of an AP course. Pathways’ access to AP courses is through APEX Learning. To be eligible for AP courses, students must satisfy 6 of the 9 categories below. The items marked with an * are not optional.

- *Grades earned in last two quarters of
3.5 gpa or higher
- *Teacher recommendation
Student Essay
- *Evidence of commitment (can be topic of
essay)
SAT/PSAT scores
Junior College/Community College
assessment information
Successful completion of a transferable
Junior College/Community College
course
Parental support at home
- *Evidence of excellent writing skills

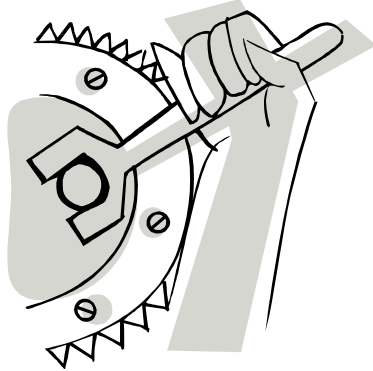
** It is the parents/students responsibility to make sure that their teacher/facilitator receives a copy of any semester report card or transcript. High school credits will not be issued until proof of completion of the class with a passing grade is received by a school official.

AP courses are given additional weight in the student's GPA, similar to university transferable credit taken at a community/junior college. No other courses taken directly through Pathways are weighted at this time.

Summer School

Pathways does not offer summer school. However, we recognize that many students are interested in continuing their work over the summer. The school will accept a limited number of summer homeschool credits, with the following provisions:

1. Teacher recommendation
2. Contract for summer work on file
3. All work completed must be saved and turned in to teacher and/or counselor at start of the fall semester
4. Student was enrolled in Pathways at least one semester prior to summer.



Work Permits

Students aged 12-17 must have a work permit issued by the school in order to be employed in most situations. Students who require a work permit must first fill out the "Intent to Employ" form, available from your teacher or directly from the school office. After the potential employer fills out their portion of information, the student forwards the form to the school office. The office will contact the IST for final approval of the student's maximum number of allowed hours per week.

ID cards

Students can receive school student identification cards by contacting their teacher and setting an appointment to be photographed at a local location. Some regions may offer a "photo day" sponsored by a local photographer and often times these orders come with an ID card. These cards are helpful for discounts at local stores and for identification purposes.

VII College Counseling and Guidance

College Entrance Requirements

Community/Junior College

Students must be high school graduates or have passed the California High School Proficiency Exam, or GED, or must be at least 18 years old to attend. There are no required subjects for admission.

University of California

Admission is based on a) the GPA in the required subjects completed in grades 10, 11 and 12, and b) the score on the SAT I or ACT **and** three SAT II subject tests. All of the UC campuses are competitive and they encourage a student to take the most rigorous program available.

At least 7 of the 15 units of approved college prep high school coursework (a unit is equal to an academic year, or two semesters of study) must be taken in grades 11 and 12.

All required subjects must be completed with at least a "C" including those in grade 9.

California State University

Admission is based on the GPA in grades 10, 11 and 12 and the score on either the SAT I or ACT.

All subjects must be completed with at least a grade of "C".

Because some programs are impacted, students with the highest grades and best preparation are given preference

Private Colleges/Universities and Out of State Schools

Many follow the University of California pattern for required subjects, but there is a great deal of variation; therefore, it is necessary to check each school individually. Catalogs for most colleges are available on line.

College Admission Testing

(None of these tests are required for high school graduation)

PSAT – (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) is administered nationwide every October to juniors who desire to take this test, which is a practice test for the SAT I. The test consists of multiple-choice or grid-in sections: Critical Reading, Math, and Writing Skills. questions are very similar to those on the SAT I, but this test is shorter and less difficult. This test is the qualifying exam for the National Merit Scholarship Program. National Merit Scholars score in the top 1% in the PSAT. This test is not administered through Pathways.

SAT I - (Scholastic Aptitude Tests) are college admissions tests, which are usually taken at the end of the junior year and/or the beginning of the senior year. It is offered 7 times each school year. The test consists of two parts - English and Mathematics - and takes 3 hours to complete. The English questions fall into 3 main groups: 1) vocabulary in context, 2) analogies, and 3) reading comprehension. The reading comprehension questions require the formulations of judgments ("What is the authors intent?"), etc. rather than locating factual information. The mathematics questions cover material included in the Algebra 1-2 and Geometry 1-2 courses. The questions are all multiple choice.

SAT II - (Subject Tests) are used by some four-year universities for admission and placement purposes, and colleges often specify which tests they require. These tests cover areas of English, foreign languages, mathematics, science, social studies, etc. Colleges may specify which tests are required. These are 1-hour multiple-choice tests, covering much more detail than the SAT I which are offered on the same days as the SAT II.

Courses Required for Graduation and University Admission

SUBJECTS	PATHWAYS Graduation Requirements	University of CA Admission Requirements	CA State University Admission Requirements
ENGLISH	4 years of English (40 credits)	Four years of approved courses	Four years of approved courses
MATHEMATICS	Two years of Math, including one year of Algebra I (20 credits)	Three years, including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. Four years recommended	Three years, including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. Four years recommended
SOCIAL STUDIES	Three years of Social Studies, including one year of U.S. History (10 credits) one year of World History, Cultures, and Geography (10 credits) and one semester each of US Government and Economics (5 credits each) (30 total credits)	Two years of History/Social Science, including one year of U.S. History or one-half year of U.S. History and one-half year of US Government; and one year of World History, Cultures, and Geography.	Two years, including one year of U.S. History or U.S. History and US Government and one year of other approved Social Science course.
SCIENCE	Two years of Science, including one year of biological and one year of physical science. (20 credits)	Two years of approved Lab Science courses required, chosen from Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Three years recommended	Two years required, including one year of biological and one year of physical science with lab.
WORLD LANGUAGES	One year of Visual and Performing Arts OR one year of a foreign language.	Two years in same language required. Three years recommended	Two years in same language required.
VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS (Art, Music, Drama, Dance)	One year of Visual and Performing Arts OR one year of a foreign language.	One year of approved Visual and Performing Arts courses chosen from the following: Dance, Drama, Music, or Visual Art.	One year of approved Visual and Performing Arts courses chosen from the following: Dance, Drama, Music, or Visual Art.
PRACTICAL ARTS	1 year of Practical Arts (10 credits)	-----	-----
HEALTH	¼ year of Health (2.5 credits)	-----	-----
PHYS. ED.	2 years of PE (20 credits)	-----	-----
ELECTIVES	Any area of study: Sufficient Credits for Student to earn a total of 220 credits	1 year of approved Elective courses from any of the following areas: a. History/SS b. English c. Advanced Math d. Lab Science e. Foreign Language f. Fine Arts (VPA)	1 year of approved Elective courses from any of the following areas: a. History/SS b. English c. Advanced Math d. Lab Science e. Foreign Language f. Fine Arts (VPA)
Total	220 credits	15 units (years) (At least 7 must be taken in 11th & 12th grade)	15 units (years)
TESTING	CAHSEE (Class of 2006 +)	SAT I or ACT and 3 SAT II Subject Tests	SAT I or ACT