Pathway Leadership and Direction

Since opening in 2014, the East Bay Innovation Academy (EBIA) has grown as a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) focused school with a mission and vision built around preparing students to be 21st century ready. Over the past year, our team has worked to ensure that our mission fully aligns with the design of our pathway. Initially, the feedback that we were provided indicated that we did not have a clear vision and direction for our pathway. To this end, we have focused our pathway from STEAM to computer science, and specifically around the information and communication technologies (ICT) industry sector. It is our belief that skills such as coding/programming, data analysis, and visualization and design are integral to the 21st century workforce and will support students in college and career readiness. Strategies that support this alignment include keeping ICT course offerings central to our pathway program of study, as well as focusing our work-based learning opportunities and supports around this pathway theme.

Further, we have built out our leadership team to better support our pathway's success. While last year our computer science teacher was split across both campuses and worked to support the technology infrastructure of the school, our current configuration has focused our computer science teacher on curriculum development for the pathway in our current (9th and 10th) grades, while building out course sequencing for 11th and 12th grade. The growth here is particularly noticeable as there is stronger communication between the pathway CTE teacher, other faculty, and the administration related to the Linked Learning approach and our pathway theme; development of ICT curriculum and a-g course descriptions by the ICT teacher, as well as collaborative work to infuse the pathway theme in projects and units throughout EBIA.

Regarding distributive leadership, EBIA has taken on an increased responsibility for ensuring successful program implementation. First, we have hired and begun to work with a pathway coach. This coach has provided us with resources to better align our school programming to CTE standards and align our pathway focus to core courses. Further, our administrative and work-based learning teams have clarified goals for their programming and developed a regular meeting and monitoring system.

Equity

EBIA has worked over the last year to ensure that our computer science pathway has admission processes and practices that ensure open access to students regardless of their academic achievement or background, as well as pushing for greater diversity in participation within our program. To do so, we have made completion of our ICT sequence of courses a graduation requirement for all students, akin to that of core subject areas. We are therefore able to ensure that 100% of all students have access to the full pathway program of study, and that all subgroups are equitably represented in having access to pathway courses.

Program of Study and Master Scheduling

Working with our pathway coach, we have begun the process of vetting our pathway theme through a review against CTE standards, A-G requirements and industry and postsecondary partners. While initially we used a broad umbrella of STEAM, this analysis has helped us to focus our pathway on computer science and information and communication technologies.

This focus has allowed us to highlight the key skills that we want students to graduate with, so that they can be more easily integrated into the majority of our academic and technical coursework. For example, given our theme, as we plan out our physics, ELA or pre-calculus courses for next year, we can build them around the mastery of skills such as designing and running computer based simulations, analyzing and creating visual representations of data or have students built website to communicate core knowledge. Further, as we are a school that is in a growth pattern (adding a grade a year), we have worked to build out a course expansion sequence that prioritizes academic and technical courses that best align to our pathway theme (e.g., Exploring Computer Science, AP Computer Science Principles).

Building a Rigorous Academic Core: Student Conditions and Teacher Conditions
EBIA's core instructional model is project-based and blended learning. We believe that these instructional practices ensure that classrooms are student-centered, research-based and standards aligned. In order to further this model and ensure that our classrooms adequately reflect the processes and products of industry professionals, in the 2018-2019 school year, EBIA will add the AP Capstone program. This program allows students to take on independent research, collaborative project planning and presentation of work in a socratic format. The inclusion of public defense of high-quality products as a part of this program furthers both collaborative and rigorous, relevant and integrated learning at EBIA.

During the school year, EBIA provides 15 days of full professional development for teachers. These PD opportunities focus on supporting teachers in analyzing and using student data in a cycle of inquiry to inform and redesign curriculum and instruction. Further, teachers have recurring coaching cycles where they meet with a supervisor weekly or biweekly to review instructional plans as aligned to their three yearly formal observations. Based on the feedback provided, we will be expanding this professional support system to include greater opportunities for collaboration time -- including time for the development of interdisciplinary, thematic projects and links between classroom learning and work-based learning -- and sharing of best practices. This also will involve pairing teachers to review one another and provide feedback, along with lesson studies as grade level teaching teams.

Work Based Learning
Our work based learning (WBL) is one area in which we anticipate seeing the most dramatic change in the next year from our current design. Currently, students have three intersession opportunities across the year for "micro" internships - short 1-2 week intensives - that are predominantly arranged and independently managed by students. For the 2018-2019 school year, we will hire a work based learning coordinator as a part of our growth plan. This coordinator will ensure that all students complete outreach to industry partners and take part in at least one work-based learning experience during the school year. The work-based learning coordinator will also lead the effort to connect WBL with classroom learning and to incorporate learning strategies such as Learning Through Internships that maximize the learning potential of workplace experiences. In addition, as we develop new a-g course descriptions and revise old course descriptions, we are working to embed the signature elements of Linked Learning --- including work-based learning -- in all of our pathway courses.

Personalized Student Support
Currently, EBIA's model includes an advisory program that loops with students across grades and meets each morning to implement a social-emotional learning curriculum. This model assures that each student is well known by their advisor, and that advisors are well positioned to manage timely intervention and acceleration based on student need. Based on feedback, EBIA plans on hiring a college-and-career counselor for the 2018-2019 school year. The goal of this hiring will be to ensure that all pathway students are supported in

identifying career goals and in creating plans to reach these goals, while navigating the college application process.