Oakland Unity High School Measure N 2-pager, Fall 2019-2020

From our first exposure to Measure N in the Fall of 2015, Unity has been excited to participate in an Oakland-wide movement to transform high schools into pathways to professional success. We have taken each year of Measure N participation as an opportunity to evaluate our strengths and weaknesses as a school program and to grow our own pathway as a collaborative community. We have appreciated and profited from this process as a way to learn, grow, and challenge our notions of what Unity is and can be.

In the Fall of 2018-19, Oakland Unity High School launched our Academy of Technology and Digital Media, with a four-year career technical sequence beginning with Exploring Computer Science and culminating in on-site classes offering IT certification to interested seniors. Since shifting our Pathway to Technology and Digital Media in the Fall of 2018, we are proud of our progress: this year, 293 students enrolled in CTE and Pathway courses, up from 180 students last year. Next year, we will start our first cohort of 9th graders who will be Pathway Completers - students who will have had access to a full 4-year CTE sequence in Technology and Digital Media by the end of 12th grade. Finally, our Internship Program provides structured opportunities for students to apply their technical skills both at our school site and at mentor sites, culminating in a semester-long internship senior year. Our goal is to provide Unity graduates with the technical skills to find employment in Information and Communication Technologies.

Moving through this process has required a sustained commitment to continually revamping our master schedule, developing teaching expertise in Computer Science and Digital Media, and developing an on-site technology internship program. We are very proud of our Unity Tech program, in which student interns repair school Chromebooks and help to manage our school on-site technology needs. We are also excited by the growth of the Unity Student Store, which consistently demonstrates our students' capacity for entrepreneurship and business organization and will provide us over time with an opportunity for students to apply their technology and digital media skills to on-campus entrepreneurship. Overall, we believe that our deliberate and steady approach to pathway development will yield strong outcomes over time. However, we recognize that we are still very much a work in progress as a Pathway School and we welcome feedback.

For example, we received extremely useful feedback from our fall site that now that structures are in place for our pathway, we need to build and articulate pathway culture at our school. With a strong team of content experts and support from our academic teachers, it is our goal to provide students with a holistic education in the role technology will play in their lives. This of course includes instruction in the types of technical skills that will form the foundation of their resume. However, it also extends to a critical awareness of technology's impact on their lives: personally, socially, economically, and environmentally. Our pathway completers will be prepared not just to earn money with computers, but to leverage their capabilities to empower themselves and their community.

Teaching about an all-encompassing topic such as technology would not be possible without careful coordination across academic and pathway courses. Through interdisciplinary projects leveraging digital skills to power entrepreneurship, we link our pathway focus to our core values of academic excellence, community

service, and self-advocacy.

Last year's Tech Fair was a success amongst students and staff alike, with students showcasing everything from touchless synth pads to tesla coils and mini self-driving cars. This year, we plan to build upon that positive momentum while elevating the impact of student projects with an emphasis on social and environmental change. We expect our students not just to make something, but to do something: to create a product, app, or business plan with real-world impact. To match this lofty goal, we have made preparation for the Tech Fair the primary focus of our project-based learning team. These four teachers, two pathway and two academic, are collaborating to develop connections between content areas and open up space in their curriculum sequence for student-directed learning activities. Tech Fair 2020, scheduled for late March, will be an opportunity for students to showcase their technology skills and entrepreneurship before school staff, their families, and our industry partners.

One central tenets of the PBL Leadership Academy attended by our team was the concept of "Four inviting four." In essence, this is the principle that what excites teachers the most is seeing students succeeding, and that the best way to earn buy-in from master teachers is to invite them to see students thriving through their engagement in a new initiative. With this in mind, the two year arc of professional development for the PBL team is to bravely pilot this year's Tech Fair in their own classes, then use the Tech Fair as an opportunity to develop interest amongst other attending staff members. In doing so, we hope to gather commitment from four additional staff members so that Tech Fair 2021 will be supported by eight committed staff members excited to infuse PBL into their curricula.

Pathway leadership heard loud and clear the Commission's urging to ensure that the Pathway is a route to career as well as college. With that in mind, we have begun implementing a plan for a Career Fair that will unite the efforts of our Senior Transition, Learning Through Internship, and industry contacts. The Career Fair will be a one-day event open to members of the school community and general public. It will feature informational booths and keynote presentations from some of our most engaged industry contacts, as well as presentations from students about their experiences selecting a career path and preparing to enter the world of work. We hope that this event will offer our students who have decided against the college track the opportunity to demonstrate their own plans and gather interest amongst their junior peers.

As we further to strengthen and interlink our pathway structures, we must continue professional development opportunities for teachers to understand and implement Linked Learning as a whole staff. To do so, Linked Learning will be the topic of a session during our pre-service week professional development next August, as well as the topic of monthly professional development sessions. This will ensure that our staff is fully aware of the opportunities the Linked Learning model presents for their classroom, as well as for their students.

Our Technology and Digital Media Pathway allows us to target an industry sector that offers a multitude of local partners. We will support the pathway with an Advisory Board, enabling us to build from existing school relationships with Bay Area technology companies including Google, KhanAcademy, EdPuzzle, Code HS, and TechBridge.