

## **Orange County Career Pathways (OCCP) Partnership**

Imagine what the world looks like to a middle school student in Orange County in 2014. She is a digital native, surrounded by screens and carrying a smart phone that links her to worlds of information. But her world is full of uncertainties and the future may seem daunting. How can she identify her gifts and passions? How can she link those gifts and passions to a career that will provide for herself and her family? How can she identify the courses she'll need to take in high school to prepare her for post-secondary learning that opens that career to her? How can she formulate her goals, pursue and achieve them, and become a responsible adult who can contribute to a thriving family, community, and economy?

These are the challenges facing Orange County students, families, educators, community organizations, and businesses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Orange County is a diverse and dynamic region that has the resources, human and economic, necessary to lead the nation in college and career readiness and success. The California Career Pathways Trust grant can significantly contribute to this vision, as Orange County school districts, institutions of higher education, businesses, and community partners join in a regional consortium to ensure that county students have the opportunity to explore their interests, participate in career pathways of their choosing, and acquire the necessary competencies for college and career success.

### **Vision Statement:**

The Orange County Career Pathways Partnership will create a county-wide, self-sustaining infrastructure that builds and supports rigorous educational pathways in partnership with schools, colleges, and regional businesses. Pathways will provide a streamlined sequence of courses and linked learning experiences that produce competent graduates capable of securing high-skill, high-wage, and high-growth jobs that fulfill students' dreams and strengthen the region's economy.

### **Overarching Goal:**

Build career pathway partnerships among employers, schools, and colleges to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace and improve the transition into post-secondary studies and career preparation.

### **Priority Sectors for Immediate Focus:**

The OCCP partnership will build a regional infrastructure that supports many different career pathways. The focus of the four-year project will be on developing pathways in high-need, high-wage, and high-skill sectors of central importance to the regional economy, all of which fall into the "STEM" (Science,