Connecting Student Interests with Potential Careers

**Career Connection** is a new program from Educurious that supports schools to transform the education experience into an effective system in which young people learn in meaningful and inspiring ways. Educurious is pioneering a new chapter in secondary school education that reinvigorates teachers and inspires students to more fully engage with the world around them while meeting rigorous academic standards. Career Connection enlists businesses to make classroom learning more relevant. The program offers new ways to give high school students an up-close look at potential careers in a variety of fields and how their school-based learning will help prepare them for these professions. Students will have a greater connection between their in- and out-of-school experiences.

Educurious is teaming with Big Picture Learning and Washington STEM to deliver this first-of-its-kind project to give hands-on work experiences to high school students in south King County, WA. The project is funded by the Race to the Top Grant awarded to The Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) and the Road Map Region Race to the Top Executive Committee [www.roadmapracetothetop.org](http://www.roadmapracetothetop.org).

The Career Connection portfolio comprises five core student experiences that, when integrated into secondary school, create optimal conditions for a transformational experience for students that will change the trajectory for success in careers, college and life:

1. **Networking Events** - Students discover various career options and work experiences they may not be aware of. These events provide an opportunity for students to interact one-on-one with an array of adults outside their normal range of experience.

2. **Work Based Problems** – Teachers, students and representatives from local companies collaborate on classroom work to solve authentic problems found in the work place.

3. **Virtual Mentoring** - Connecting students in school with working professionals via an online platform gives them an invaluable window into professions they may have never considered before. Students are able to explore an expanding universe of career paths, research opportunities, and build their personal network while developing skills, knowledge and relevance in their coursework.

4. **Job Shadows** – A student spends time one-on-one with a working professional observing daily activities and learning about a job, an industry, and how the employee came to be there. A job shadow may be connected to the learning in a particular class or project, part of an exploratory process toward establishing an internship, or an end in itself.
5. **Internships** - Students work in the field with a work-based mentor over some period of time, building deeper engagement with the content and context of the mentor’s professional work.

“By high school, most students see little relevance in what they’re learning,” said Michael Golden, co-founder and CEO of Educurious. “This program will show students first-hand how their classroom work is relevant to their future employment. We plan to create a strong network for every student, especially those who may have few adult connections.” Golden said a key part of the program is recruiting businesses and other employers to be partners. “Most business leaders will tell you that finding qualified workers is hard,” Golden said. “They see too many high school and even college graduates who are not prepared for work. Here’s a way for them to help bring about the change they want. Career Connection will make it possible for them to show students what might lie ahead for them if they make the most of school.”

Career Connection is available to students in the Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Kent, Renton, Seattle and Tukwila school districts. The program will work directly with about 800 students in high schools in these seven districts and to other regions in the country. The project will also provide training and support to help educators and school counselors implement the program in their schools. Through partnerships with regional school districts, employers, and community partners, Career Connection will strengthen regional capacity to engage all students in deep and productive learning that prepares them for success in lifelong learning and careers.

**About Educurious**

Educurious is a national non-profit organization with headquarters in Seattle. Its mission is to have young people learn in meaningful and inspiring ways, with classrooms places they want to be. Educurious programs cultivate curious, motivated young people who are ready for college and tomorrow's careers by working on solving real-world problems through mentor-supported projects. Educurious is reinvigorating teachers with supportive training and inspiring students to more fully engage with the world around them. For more information, contact Educurious at info@educurious.org or at 206.402.4489