Strategic Plan Priorities

The Health Science Learning Exchange (HSLE), which is part of the Illinois Pathways strategy for student college and career readiness, is focused on supporting school districts, community colleges, universities, employers, and other stakeholders to build local career pathway systems that empower learners to explore their academic and career interests in the health science field. Student success depends on partnering with education and the private sector, and the HSLE is committed to improving how public and private investment is coordinated across the health science sector in Illinois.

What are the immediate and long-term priorities for the Health Science Learning Exchange?

The vision of the Health Science Learning Exchange is to make it easier for students, parents, and schools to link class-time and work-based activities with active career and college exploration and preparation in the health science field.

The immediate priorities of the Health Science Learning Exchange are to:

- **Develop a Speakers Bureau:** As part of the commitment to supporting career exploration, HSLE has begun developing a Speakers Bureau database, which allows students live, virtual access to experts in the field, both in the classroom and as part of their personal career exploration. The HSLE is working with schools to consolidate and add to the existing library on career exploration and to ensure that access to this technology is broad enough that all students are able to utilize this resource.

- **Support Student Challenges, Faculty Mentorship, and Access to Equipment and Labs:** The HSLE has established a relationship with the Illinois Junior Academy of Science (IJAS) based on a collective interest in supporting an environment where students can present their research projects at regional and statewide competitions. For the 2013-2014 school year, the HSLE is seeking to pilot this partnership through the Aurora and Chicago Public Schools, because of their active involvement in the planning process and their capacity to take advantage of the effort this year. The HSLE is working with IJAS to:
  - Support collaborative scientific research
  - Improve high school faculty mentorship
  - Provide better access to
    - Labs and equipment
    - Qualified judges from employers
    - Facilities

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Out-of-the-Box Curriculum and Lesson Plans: The HSLE has worked with high school representatives across the state and Aurora, Rockford, and Chicago Public School districts to discuss their anticipated curriculum needs. Through these conversations, it was determined that basic foundational support was needed in order to offer up-to-date curriculum that is informed by educators at the university level as well as representatives from the health sciences industry. To this end, the HLSE is exploring some “out-of-the-box” curriculum and lesson plans, as well as funding for a curriculum designer/manager to work with schools to improve their existing curricula and lesson plans. This improved curriculum will be shared openly through the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE). Priority is given to courses that are additive to the work of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Pathways Resource Center (PRC).

The long-term priorities of the Health Science Learning Exchange are to:

- **Deliver Resources and Supports for Local Pathway Systems:**
  - **Increased access to technology:** Working with industry partners, the HSLE will change the way students learn about Health Science technology by increasing access to and knowledge about the technological skills that students need to have to succeed in the Health Sciences.
  - **Teacher development:** By working with education and industry partners, the HSLE will create opportunities for teachers to develop their own skills, which empowers them to create meaningful class-time connections for students.
  - **Personalized education:** By helping schools find the tools and resources that work for them, the HSLE will support better educational planning for students.
  - **Improve access to classrooms, equipment, and e-Learning opportunities:** Many schools do not have immediate access to labs, health science classrooms, and e-Learning resources. The HSLE will work with individual schools to provide opportunities for access to Health Science related resources which will allow schools to expand their Health Science curriculum in meaningful ways.

- **Expand Quality Work-based Learning Opportunities:** By partnering with industry leaders, the HSLE will provide real-time information on internships, work-based learning opportunities, and Student Challenges that empower students to make meaningful work-based experiences that will support their career development in the future.

- **Analyze Pathway Performance:** Working with industry, education, and community stakeholders, the HSLE will monitor and adapt the pathway models to suit local community needs and adjust to economic realities in a meaningful way. The HSLE will also use data from local programs to measure how successful it is in engaging with schools and preparing students for employment in the Health Science Sector.