



NEWS RELEASE

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Historic and Groundbreaking Student and Community Workforce Agreement Signed *Will Build Career Pathways and Access to Economic Opportunity in Construction*

SEATTLE – Today, a groundbreaking Student and Community Workforce Agreement (SCWA), passed unanimously by the Seattle Public Schools Board of Directors on Sept. 23, 2020, was signed by key stakeholders in the agreement.

Signatories included SPS Board President Zachary DeWolf, SPS Superintendent Denise Juneau and Seattle Building & Construction Trades Council Executive Secretary Monty Anderson.

The signing event, held while attendees observed proper socially distanced health guidelines at the Construction Trades Skills Center located at Rainier Beach High School, was an open meeting that included the option for remote public observance. For more information about the agreement, please use the following link to the SPS website:

https://www.seattleschools.org/district/district_quick_facts/initiatives/student_and_community_workforce_agreement

The SCWA is among the first in the nation to build a construction training and employment program that has students, former students and student families at its center, and it is the second Community Workforce Agreement approved by a school district in Washington state. Key agreement highlights include:

- The SCWA will create priority training and employment for SPS construction projects at or above \$5 million.
- The agreement will prioritize career, training and employment for Seattle and community members including former SPS students who are ready to seek careers in construction and wage earners who have SPS students in their households.
- It will also prioritize Black, Indigenous and all People of Color, Women, and residents within an Economically Distressed Zip Code.

The SCWA was approved after years of advocacy and research, including a six-month research and deliberation process by a task force established by the SPS school board in June 2019. The task force included a diverse range of community experts and leaders from the construction industry, union organizations and training and education organizations.

Also present at the signing was Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle Program Manager Amesha Lawton. Joining remotely were members of the SPS school board, Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal, members of the Student and Community Workforce Agreement Task Force and other community partners and leaders.

SPS Board President Zachary DeWolf, who was instrumental in moving the agreement forward, stated at the event, “This agreement is groundbreaking. It is the first in Washington state, and likely nationally, to place racial equity as well as students, former students, and student families at the center of a construction labor agreement--this is but one way we can operationalize our commitment to becoming an anti-racist institution. I thank all of the leaders involved in building this exciting partnership that will have an impact today and seven generations into the future.”

SPS Superintendent Denise Juneau: “Congratulations to the Board and all involved for their visionary leadership on this agreement. Our district is committed to delivering fiscally responsible and high-quality public capital investments, and this agreement will build on that commitment. I am also pleased that this SCWA aligns so well with the district’s strategic plan, Seattle Excellence. This agreement will create systemic change to improve career outcomes for Students of Color furthest from educational justice, whether they are in our classrooms, have graduated, or are now adults seeking a career pathway in construction.”

Monty Anderson, Executive Secretary, Seattle Building & Construction Trades Council: “The Building Trades are building stronger communities by *building better* – with the highest quality craftspeople, by being inclusive, by being innovative and by working in productive partnerships such as this one. We believe job sites should reflect the community. Through our top-notch training programs and partnerships, we are helping build the next generation of construction workers from our local communities. This SCWA will bring new entrants into construction, through pre-apprenticeships and training that will help bring more inclusion of women, people of color, veterans and others who are disadvantaged into construction careers. This is a big deal. Let’s get to work!”

Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal: “I’m thrilled to see this legacy agreement come to fruition. Community Workforce Agreements increase opportunity and transformational access to construction careers. There is also a strong business case for CWAs for their benefit to increasing the predictability and worker pipeline for the construction industry. They are a smart business decision for school districts, and a big win for students and communities.”

Representing the many community leaders and training partners who will help implement the program, **Michelle Merriweather, President & CEO of the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle** said, “The path toward equity in career development and construction contracting has been a long one, but we are so pleased with this exciting new partnership, which will foster equity and opportunity, and support the community. The Urban League looks forward to being part of this tremendous progress.”

SPS will implement the SCWA working with construction industry contractors to prepare them for this new framework. The district will also conduct outreach to women and minority business firms to ensure they have access to the work and opportunities. A new pre-apprenticeship program aligned with the

school district's Construction Skills program will be established starting in the 2021-22 academic year. The district will also undertake and partner on marketing efforts to engage parents, families, students and the community about these bidding, job and career opportunities in construction.

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