



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Health Sciences High and Middle College receives a national 'Schools of Opportunity' Gold Recognition

**SAN DIEGO – Monday, January 22, 2018** — Health Sciences High and Middle College (HSHMC) in San Diego, Calif. is one of only eight schools from across the country this year to receive recognition as a “School of Opportunity,” a designation honoring excellent public high schools that engage in research-based practices that build on students’ strengths and create rich, challenging learning opportunities for all students.

“All students attending Health Sciences can access internships that meet their college and career interests,” said School of Opportunity project co-director, Dr. Linda Molner Kelly. “This helps students make up their minds about that age-old question: what are you doing after graduation?”

Health Sciences joins 44 other public high schools that are part of [Schools of Opportunity](#) network, an initiative of the National Education Policy Center (NEPC) based at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Dr. Adam York, the project’s manager, stresses that the mind-set behind Schools of Opportunity recognitions is very different from other recognition programs that focus on things like test scores. “We highlight the programs and policies that are closing the opportunity gaps that create achievement gaps,” Dr. York said. “Our focus on what schools are actually doing. We want to hold up schools that use best practices to give all students an even chance to access deep, challenging learning opportunities.”

NEPC evaluates schools on [10 possible criteria](#), with each school choosing six to address in its application. As part of the comprehensive evaluation, recognized schools go through a six-phase review process that includes a self-assessment; criterion-based and holistic reviews by school district and university experts and by past awardees; and site visits by project evaluators. Gold schools demonstrate exemplary practices on a minimum of three criteria, while silver schools demonstrate exemplary practices on at least two criteria. Each of the eight recognized schools was also required to earn advanced designations on at least two additional criteria.

Health Sciences, a charter school with nearly 600 students, provides students with numerous opportunities to challenge themselves. These opportunities are for all students not just some. Through multiple internship paths, students can “try out” what it is like to be a firefighter, a Medical Assistant or even see what it is like to work in Mental Health. For students with interests in advanced healthcare careers and medical futures, the school also offers students more advanced coursework from local two-year colleges and options to take enrichment courses to “get ahead” during the summer. These options are available to all students, and everyone is encouraged to do their best.



“Students need a wide range of opportunities, and the support to succeed in those opportunities, to realize their aspirations,” says Douglas Fisher, Dean of academics at HSHMC. “We have learned to hear our students and to align the experiences we provide with their hopes and dreams. We are thrilled with the recognition that our efforts are appreciated.”

Next year’s application cycle is open. To learn more about this year’s Schools of Opportunity or to nominate a school, please visit <http://schoolsofopportunity.org/>

### **About HSHMC**

HSHMC is a place where people want to learn about health, healthcare and other industries as part of a world-class education. HSHMC is a home away from home, an open door, a place of rigor and academia where students earn a diploma that matters. Through hands-on experiences students are exposed to new opportunities and discover their leadership potential. For more please visit [HSHMC.org](http://HSHMC.org).

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