

General Questions about Linked Learning

Q: What is Linked Learning?

A: Linked Learning is a successful approach to education based on the idea that students work harder and dream bigger if their education is relevant to them. The Linked Learning approach integrates rigorous academics that meet college-ready standards with sequenced, high-quality career-technical education, work-based learning, and supports to help students stay on track. For Linked Learning students, education is organized around industry-sector themes. The industry theme is woven into lessons taught by teachers who collaborate across subject areas with input from working professionals, and reinforced by work-based learning with real employers. This makes learning more like the real world of work, and helps students answer the question, “Why do I need to know this?”

Q: How does Linked Learning work and what are its components?

A: Linked Learning is an integrated, systemic approach involving collaboration between high school and postsecondary educators, employers and community leaders. Linked Learning’s power comes from the close integration of four core components:

- **Rigorous academics** that prepare students to succeed in college.
- **Career-technical education** courses in sequence, emphasizing real-world applications of academic learning.
- **Work-based learning** that provides exposure to real-world workplaces and teaches the professional skills needed to thrive in a career.
- **Comprehensive support services** to address the individual needs of all students, ensuring equity of access, opportunity, and success.

Q: Why Linked Learning?

A: Linked Learning addresses some of the fundamental challenges facing California’s high schools. Many traditional academic programs do not feel relevant to students’ lives and aspirations. At the same time, career and technical education (CTE) often lacks the academic rigor required for admissions to and success in college. Linked Learning provides students of all levels and abilities with the best possible chance for success in college and career.

Q: Are Linked Learning pathways proven to be effective?

A: The Linked Learning approach already has transformed the lives of thousands of students in California. Districts and schools certified in the Linked Learning approach consistently demonstrate better student outcomes than traditional high schools. Research shows that compared with their peers, students in certified Linked Learning pathways earn more credits and are more likely to complete high school. And the State of California is betting big on the Linked Learning approach, supporting district and regional implementation of Linked Learning through AB 790, SB 1070, the California Career Pathways Trust and the CTE Incentive Grants.

Q: How is Linked Learning different from career technical education (CTE) and career academies or charter schools?

A: Linked Learning is defined by a central commitment to college *and* career success for all students, rather than tracking some students to a college path, and others to a career path. Linked Learning is

unique in its approach that encompasses effective features of CTE and the flexibility of charter schools, tightly integrated with rigorous and relevant college-prep academics and work-based learning in the real world, to prepare students for college, career and life. Linked Learning allows students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world situations, and answers the question, “Why do I need to know this?”

Q: Who is an advocate of Linked Learning?

A: A broad and diverse community of educators, employers, policymakers and community-based organizations champion Linked Learning, aiming to expand and improve programs and offer them to more students across the state. The Linked Learning Alliance, a statewide coalition comprised of more than 250 educators, industry professionals and community leaders, is a hub of information and works to build awareness about Linked Learning, advocate for policies that support high-quality implementation and expand Linked Learning opportunities for students.

Community Partner-specific Questions

Q. What role do community partners play in sustaining and expanding Linked Learning?

A. Community organizations play an important role in Linked Learning’s success by advocating for Linked Learning within their networks and in their communities and by educating the public about Linked Learning and about how to start Linked Learning pathways in their local school districts. Some community partners may act as “intermediaries,” and connect employers and students together in work-based learning opportunities. Currently almost twenty community organizations and advocates are members of the Linked Learning Alliance (www.LinkedList.org/linked-learning-alliance/our-members).