

LINKED LEARNING STUDENT SURVEY

College and career pathway students report their takeaways from the 2024–25 academic year and its impact on their next steps.



This year is pivotal as school communities across California translate \$470 million in Golden State Pathways funding into action—building career-integrated, college-preparatory learning experiences modeled on the Linked Learning approach. And with growing attention to postsecondary success and the next generation of California's workforce, the foundational K–12 years take on heightened importance.

Centering student voice remains mission critical. The Linked Learning Alliance surveys* thousands of Linked Learning students statewide so their voices may drive this work. This document presents findings from the most recent academic year.

Young people are clear about what they need: high-quality learning experiences that clearly connect to thriving in the real world and their aspirations for the future.

ABOUT SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

1,920

students
responded

81%

of respondents
identify as a
student of color

44%

will be a first-
generation
college student

School districts represented:

Antelope Valley UHSD,
Fresno USD, Los Angeles USD,
Oakland USD, Porterville USD,
San Bernardino City USD,
Visalia Unified School District

*This is not considered a scientific survey, and results should not be interpreted as applying to a larger audience of students beyond those who responded.

“Adults making decisions about my education should not decide... without my input.”

– Sophomore, Los Angeles Unified School District

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

Linked Learning pathways are valuable.

Learning comes to life for students in educational pathways that are enriched with real-world examples and experiences. For many, this leads to engagement in lessons and future plans.

81% say they feel **motivated to learn** in their pathway

85% say they have a chance to **try out new things** and **discover their interests**

96% of students rate their high school experience as **valuable**

"I started to connect deeply to my learning so I can get good grades and get accepted into a college I want to go to."

– Junior, Fresno Unified School District

"When I discovered what it is I wanted to do for my future, I realized how much more I wanted to be involved in my academics."

– Senior, Antelope Valley Union High School District



Pathways provide meaningful connection and support.

The attitudes, relationships, and resources students experience within their pathways add up to a supportive environment where they can explore interests and develop their potential.

80%
feel they are in a **supporting and inviting** place to learn

78%
feel **seen and respected** by the adults in their pathway

75%
feel their **life experiences** are valued

75%
say their school experience has allowed them to build **meaningful relationships**

"My teachers care for me a lot. They ask me questions about my life, things I want to do in the future, and they give me meaningful answers that help me think about my future more."

– Senior, Oakland Unified School District

"We all help each other and I feel not only supported but also secure. If I have any issue about school or even about other things they are always willing to help me."

– Junior, Porterville Unified School District

"I felt like I was actually a part of something, that my skills and creativity were actually wanted for once."

– First Year, Visalia Unified School District

Pathway learning translates to the real world.

Exposure to college and career experiences demystifies life after high school for students. For many, it also helps them imagine new possibilities for their future.

79%

felt able to **apply what they're learning** in academic classes to real-world opportunities

"In aviation—going from the classroom to the actual airplane flying in the air shifted something in me. Suddenly everything, no matter how tedious or extensive, had a purpose and I loved learning about it!"

– Junior, Porterville Unified School District

80%

feel **better prepared** to work as part of a team

"I was baking with a group of 4 people... we all worked well as a team, got it done and they were very supportive."

– Sophomore, San Bernardino City Unified School District



"Talking to businesses, figuring out schedules... I felt as if I really was a filmmaker and connected to the work I've studied and worked hard on."

– First Year, Visalia Unified School District

71%

say they had opportunities to **build relationships** with business professionals

"When I was in my public safety class and every time the marines, army, navy, police officers showed up, I would feel like that was for me."

– Senior, San Bernardino City Unified School District

85%

experienced opportunities to **collaborate with their peers**



Students feel confident and ready for a full range of postsecondary options.

Whether earning college credit while still in high school, sharpening their interest in future work or studies, or building experience in an internship or career technology shop, Linked Learning students are already on the paths to their futures.

74% feel **confident about their future** after high school

79% have **built confidence** that they can be professional and **have the skills necessary for success**

75% have a **good idea** of what they **want to study in college**

"I attended a field trip to UCLA and participated in a lab with my class, where I had the opportunity to apply my knowledge and experience while also gaining new insights into more advanced learning."

– Senior, San Bernardino City Unified School District

"The adults in my pathway are very encouraging and inspiring... they give us the hardest assignments they had to do in college and then tell us we could do all of it even with our eyes closed."

– Senior, Oakland Unified School District

"I realized I wanted to go to college."

– Junior, Fresno Unified School District

"Teachers and other adults like my college advisor have truly helped me significantly to become prepared for college. I can rely on them for any academic or college advice."

– Senior, Los Angeles Unified School District

"I learned how to weld which is a personal skill that I can apply to resumes."

– Junior, Antelope Valley Union High School District

77% say high school has made them more **well-rounded and capable**

79% plan to attend a **four- or two-year college** immediately after high school

74% say high school has helped them better understand how they want to **contribute to their community**



Linked Learning students value their high school experience and want the same for young people across California.

79%

feel fortunate for their college and career pathway experience

80%

wish others could have the same opportunity to experience a college and career pathway education

"Give us the opportunity to prepare for the real world."

– Junior, Visalia Unified School District



TAKING NEXT STEPS TOGETHER

The evidence is clear from extensive third-party research on [student outcomes](#) and these student voices: Linked Learning works and should continue to be expanded and strengthened to serve all adolescents.

The Linked Learning Alliance is part of a vast community of educators, business leaders, and community partners committed to keeping young people linked to the futures they deserve. Contact the Alliance to find out more about how you can support students in your community:

[LinkedLearning.org](https://www.linkedlearning.org).