



Getting Started with Linked Learning

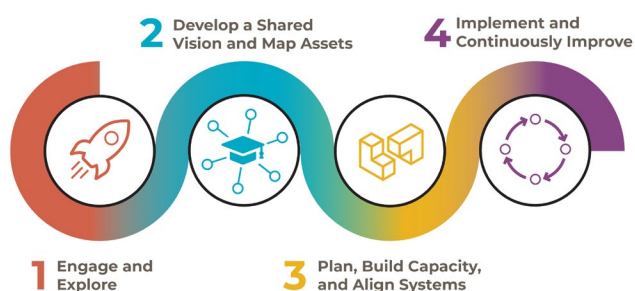
A GUIDE FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

In this ***Getting Started with Linked Learning*** guide for school districts, you'll find information and resources needed to lay the groundwork for change, develop a robust plan for action, build capacity, implement the plan, continuously improve, and sustain momentum.

The guide consists of two parts:



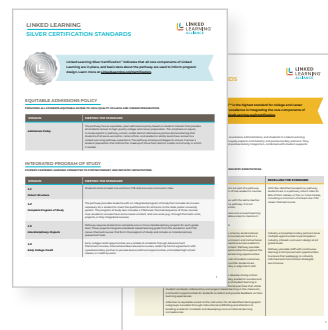
The ***Linked Learning District Framework*** describes the essential district systems, conditions, and capacities necessary to support a Linked Learning approach.



The ***Linked Learning District Roadmap*** describes a step-by-step, multi-year approach to using Linked Learning to transform student outcomes, schools, and entire districts.

Throughout, you'll find links to helpful resources. The Linked Learning Alliance can provide additional supports as you begin to plan and implement this approach—including connecting you with an experienced Linked Learning coach who can guide you along the way.

We recommend that you download and review the Linked Learning [Silver](#) and [Gold Certification Standards](#) before using this guide.



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Linked Learning District Framework

Linked Learning is a comprehensive approach to creating equitable and high-quality pathways across a district and community. Many schools and districts have a programmatic approach to pathways or career technical education (CTE) that can create inequities in access, student experiences, and outcomes. Implementing a robust and equitable system of pathways requires districts and partners to effectively leverage and maximize existing district and community resources.



This framework, aligned to the [Linked Learning Roadmap](#), describes the essential district systems and conditions needed to implement and sustain a comprehensive system of high-quality pathways. This framework is applicable whether a district is implementing “wall-to-wall” pathways for all students or a cohort of pathways within a menu of high school options.

Ultimately, the Linked Learning approach improves secondary schools and strengthens the communities they serve. There are three critical areas for equitable and impactful pathway development: shared and aligned vision, district systems and capacities, and community engagement and partnerships.



1 Shared and Aligned Vision

The district, school, and community establish a clear vision for college and career readiness and an equitable system of integrated pathways.

- The **school board** establishes a shared community vision or graduate profile and goals for all students to be ready for college, career, and community success. The Linked Learning approach is an integral part of the high school improvement strategy.
- The district has a community-developed **graduate profile** with clearly articulated student competencies to assess (measure) readiness for postsecondary success in college, career, and civic life.
- District and community vision is informed and aligned with **postsecondary, community, civic, and workforce priorities** and goals.
- District and community vision is aligned with other **district priorities**, strategies, plans, and initiatives (e.g., district strategic plans and goals, California LCAP).



2 District Systems and Capacities

A vital component of developing a system of Linked Learning pathways includes considering essential district and site structures, policies, and capacities needed to implement a district-wide school transformation strategy using Linked Learning.

- **Shared Leadership:** Responsibility for Linked Learning planning and implementation should be inclusive, with broad ownership of the approach. Articulated leadership roles, structures, and teams are vital for pathway planning and implementation. Some of the key roles include:
 - District cross-functional Linked Learning leadership team (including key district staff such as accountability, HR, etc.)
 - District Linked Learning director
 - Site administrators
 - Pathway leads and leadership teams
 - Work-based learning coordinator(s)
 - Pathway coaches
 - Counselors and student support staff

- **Principal Leadership:** Principals, other site administrators, and leadership teams must have a deep understanding of Linked Learning; see the implementation of Linked Learning as part of their job responsibilities; and have the support needed to build facilitating structures. Site principals' and administrators' investment in Linked Learning is essential to planning and implementation because they control the systems necessary to sustain successful pathways, including schedules and professional development.
- **Capacity Building:** Deepen local capacity through ongoing, job-embedded professional learning, coaching, and professional development. Pathway staff is provided with common planning time within the school schedule for program coordination, aligning student supports, and curriculum planning and integration. Critical areas for capacity building include:
 - Principal and pathway **coaching**
 - **Instructional practices** that utilize student-centered, collaborative, and project-based learning in the classroom and opportunities for students to reflect and provide feedback on their learning experiences
 - Effective **pathway teams** and collaboration
 - Effective **advisory boards** and partnerships
 - **Leadership development** at the pathway, school, district, and community level
 - Equitable **master scheduling** that supports flexible use of time, cohort scheduling, teacher collaboration, and capacity building
- **Supportive Policies for Staff Continuity:** Successful Linked Learning implementation requires favorable human resources policies to recruit and retain pathway educators, and develop experienced, collaborative pathway teaching teams. The district and school sites should have a plan for proactively addressing staff turnover to ensure new staff and administrators have the capacity to support or be part of the pathways.
- **Equity and Access:** For districts to achieve equitable pathway enrollment, they must be intentional about the distribution and location of pathways and the policies and practices that influence student preferences and access to pathways. Key elements to ensure pathway equity and access include:
 - District and site enrollment and student **recruitment policies**
 - District and school leaders regularly review pathway **enrollment data** to ensure each pathway reflects the demographic mix of the school, including underrepresented student groups and English language learners
 - District and school leaders regularly review disaggregated **student outcomes** for equity to ensure equitable access and success
 - District and schools have supportive **master schedules** that allow pathway student cohorts and pathway common planning time
 - District and school provide regular opportunities for students, families, and employers to provide **input and feedback** on pathway programs and develop new pathways when needed

- **Accountability and Assessment Systems and Policies:** Accountability and assessment systems are aligned to state metrics and articulated student competencies in a graduate profile, and designed to consider the needs of the most underserved populations.
- **Data and Metrics:** In collaboration with partners, the district establishes a broad set of indicators and metrics critical to successfully implement pathways and assess college and career readiness.
 - There are **cross-organizational data** sharing agreements and data collection
 - **Reporting processes** supports pathway development, certification, and continuous improvement
 - The district and community regularly **review data** related to the student experience, academic success, and teacher quality or qualifications
- **Aligned Resources:** The district and community leverage existing and develop new resources/funding to support the district's vision and Linked Learning implementation.
 - **Facilities and equipment** needs for pathways are part of short- and long-term planning
 - The district identifies how existing **state and federal funding**, and other financial resources can be aligned and used to support pathway development and improvement
 - Pathways are included in the district's **budgeting and funding processes**, and the district actively identifies new resources for sustained fiscal stability and the continuous improvement of pathways





3

Community Engagement and Partnerships

Community connections and commitment are critical early on; they help create an integrated program of study based on an industry theme, ensure alignment with postsecondary programs, and ensure that Linked Learning is sustained even in the face of district staff turnover.

- **Broad-Based Community Coalition (Steering Committee):** A coalition of K–12 educators, workforce partners, and community leaders is crucial for developing mutually beneficial partnerships, supporting work-based learning, and sustaining Linked Learning.
- **Sector and Site-Based Advisory Boards:** Postsecondary, workforce, and economic development partners assure that pathway planning and implementation align with regional workforce needs, community goals, and postsecondary programs. Advisory boards can ensure collaboration and coordination related to strategies for learning and teaching across secondary and postsecondary institutions. Pathway leads, counselors, and work-based learning coordinators actively engage and support the advisory board as needed. Advisory boards should actively support:
 - Pathway **workforce and postsecondary alignment** that maps the program of study from secondary schools to careers in high-wage, high-growth careers
 - Pathway **postsecondary articulation** and early college credit that ensures seamless transitions to postsecondary programs
 - Pathway secondary and postsecondary **institutional collaboration** that includes staff, counselors, and administrators
- **Communication and Messaging:** There is a clear strategic communications plan to ensure consistent messaging, deepening of community commitment, and ongoing engagement of all stakeholders.
 - Consistent **messaging** to provide sustained stakeholder commitment and support for Linked Learning pathways as a primary strategy for improving student outcomes and equity
 - Clear communications **protocols** to ensure consistency of messaging to the broader region/community

Linked Learning District Roadmap

The Linked Learning District Roadmap describes key phases, questions, and resources to review as you consider how the Linked Learning approach can support your district's goals and vision for school transformation. Although the roadmap consists of four general phases, the actual sequence and timing of activities, some of which may happen concurrently, should be adapted to suit your local needs and context.

ROADMAP AT A GLANCE

Phase 1: Engage and Explore

- Learn about the **Linked Learning approach** and its impact on student outcomes
- Consider your community's **local context and goals** related to equity, college and career readiness, and pathway development
- Assemble a **diverse and inclusive** group of stakeholders of K-12, community, postsecondary, and workforce partners

Phase 2: Develop a Shared Vision and Map Assets

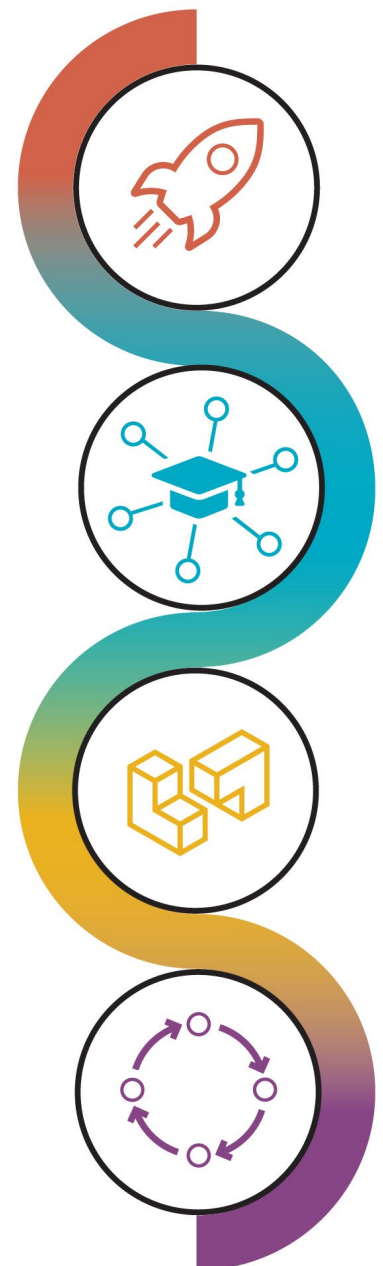
- Listen to the hopes and aspirations of the community and develop a **shared vision** for college and career readiness and integrated pathways
- Deepen **community understanding** of the need to transform education and develop equitable and integrated pathways
- **Map current assets** using the Linked Learning standards and Essential District Conditions and Capacities Framework

Phase 3: Plan, Build Capacity, and Align Systems

- Develop a 12- to 24-month **implementation plan** based on your asset mapping
- Begin to develop the necessary district **systems, conditions, and capacities** needed to implement the plan
- Cultivate **partnerships** with workforce, postsecondary, and community partners and ensure alignment of priorities and goals

Phase 4: Implement and Continuously Improve

- Use the Linked Learning standards and **certification process** to provide a structure for implementation and continuous improvement of pathways
- Deepen **local capacity** through ongoing coaching, professional learning, and partnership development
- Learn, be inspired, and connect with others in the Linked Learning field by participating in **Linked Learning Alliance networks** and events





Phase 1: Engage and Explore

In this initial phase, district, community, and school leaders learn about the Linked Learning approach and explore your local context to determine how Linked Learning supports your community's priorities and goals. To get started, we recommend that districts and communities assemble a diverse and inclusive group of key stakeholders to learn more about Linked Learning. Stakeholders should include K–12 educators, counselors, district leaders, students, parents, and postsecondary and workforce partners. We also recommend you begin by reviewing the Linked Learning Certification Standards described in the resources box that closes this section.

1. **Linked Learning Advantages:** Consider the impact of Linked Learning and the core elements of the Linked Learning approach.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What are your district's or community's current priorities and initiatives related to college and career readiness?
- What are the key equity challenges?
- Why are your district and community interested in Linked Learning? What stands out about the Linked Learning approach?
- What pathways or Linked Learning elements are already in place? How could the Linked Learning standards support your community's goals for college and career readiness and help address equity challenges?

2. **Stakeholders and Context:** Explore your current context related to college and career readiness and educational transformation.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- How will the district engage an inclusive and diverse group of stakeholders as you consider the Linked Learning approach? Whose voices need to be involved in determining if Linked Learning is the right approach for your community?
 1. Whose voices are habitually included or excluded in school improvement efforts?
 2. How will voices and experiences from the margins be centered?
 3. What leaders, staff, teacher union leaders, students, and community members need to be involved?

- How will your team learn together about high-quality pathways using the Linked Learning standards?
- How can the Linked Learning standards and other resources be used to build a shared understanding of Linked Learning and how it might support community and district goals?
- How will stakeholders build a shared understanding of the current context, including assets and challenges related to equity and college and career readiness?
- What is the readiness of the district leaders, school staff, and community to embrace a school transformation using Linked Learning?

RESOURCES TO USE:

- [*What It Takes to Create Linked Learning*](#), a report on lessons learned from evaluating the approach in practice. It highlights key implementation strategies identified by district and pathway leaders as crucial to establishing and sustaining Linked Learning.
- The [*Linked Learning Silver Standards*](#) and the [*Linked Learning Gold Standards*](#).
- [*Linked Learning Resource Library*](#), a compilation of Linked Learning resources including reports, webinars, and guides.
- Linked Learning experiential site visits, a great way to become more familiar with the Linked Learning approach and impact. Visit the [*Linked Learning Alliance events page*](#) for more information.





Phase 2: Develop a Shared Vision and Map Assets

Preparing students for college, career, and community success does more than transform high schools and the student experience; it is also a strategy for preparing the future workforce and strengthening communities. Linked Learning requires a new vision for collaboration across institutions and stakeholders, a new belief in shared responsibility for common goals, and a new willingness to strengthen the connections between school and community.

In many school districts, existing pathways and CTE courses have developed as programs, not as part of a strategic and comprehensive approach to transforming education. Most districts and communities also have many of the components of Linked Learning (e.g., work-based learning and early college credit) available for some students in some programs or classes. In order to plan and implement an equitable system of quality pathways, district and school leaders, workforce partners, local postsecondary institutions, labor unions, students, and community and parent groups commit to a shared vision and dedicate the necessary resources to put the vision into practice and sustain it. That work includes engaging in a comprehensive, inclusive, and thoughtful community-wide planning and engagement process.

In phase 2 of the process, the stakeholders engaged in phase 1 should identify a core group of people who are willing to be part of a Linked Learning steering committee. This steering committee will continue to learn about Linked Learning, develop a shared vision for college and career readiness and pathways, and support mapping of the current assets in the district and community. The district steering committee will focus on the following tasks in conjunction with district leaders and the Linked Learning Alliance.

1. **Establish a District Linked Learning Steering Committee:** Clarify the composition, purpose, and goals for your steering committee, as well as the roles and responsibilities of individual members. The district steering committee often includes district leaders; CTE and academic educators; administrators, students, and counselors; and community, postsecondary, and workforce partners. A Linked Learning coach can support the steering committee to manage the planning process and develop an implementation plan. The steering committee meets regularly to lead Linked Learning planning and implementation. Collectively, they address planning and implementation challenges by establishing supporting structures and processes, removing barriers, aligning resources, engaging partners, assuring effective communication, and gathering and analyzing data. The steering committee may start small and grow over time as you determine the right mix of stakeholders.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What is the specific role of your district's Linked Learning steering committee?
- How will you actively seek diverse identities and skill sets as you build your steering committee?
- What partners, administrators, staff, teachers, union leaders, students, and community members need to be involved?
- How will you create a culture for collective learning, risk-taking, and action?

2. **Develop or Refine a Shared Vision of College and Career Readiness and High-Quality Pathways:**

A lesson learned through the [Linked Learning District Initiative](#) and other school reform efforts over the years is the importance of having a shared vision and commitment from a diverse and inclusive set of stakeholders. It also requires building the knowledge and commitment of leaders and emerging leaders at all levels within the community, district, and school site. Being inclusive from the outset is key and so is actively listening and communicating with various stakeholders.

Once there is an established steering committee, that committee should work with a Linked Learning coach to discuss and begin to develop a shared vision that builds on the district and community's goals and priorities.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What matters most to our community?
- What knowledge, skills, and dispositions should all students have when they leave high school to ensure they are prepared for college and career?
- Who was/is part of developing the vision?
- How does this vision inform instructional design, learning, and teaching?
- Current state of college and career pathways: What stands out to our team when reviewing the Linked Learning standards? What elements of Linked Learning are already in place that can serve as a foundation or starting point?
- Current equity challenges: What obstacles are keeping students from achieving equitable outcomes? What are the current patterns of inequity? How have district leaders listened to the stories of those impacted by patterns of inequity?
- Desired future state: Where does our community want to be in a few years related to pathways and college and career readiness. If our community successfully develops equitable, high-quality pathways, what will students and adults be experiencing or doing three years from now?

3. **Map Community Assets:** Using the Linked Learning standards and working with a Linked Learning coach, your team collaboratively conducts a Linked Learning asset mapping exercise. The asset mapping process provides baseline information to build college and career pathways; expand partnerships between secondary, postsecondary, and industry; and support the community's redesign efforts. This asset mapping provides a preliminary look at district and community resources for pathway development and recommendations about starting points for the planning phase of this work.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What assets are already in place?
- What work has your community already done that can serve as the building blocks for this work?
- What stakeholders and partners are already interested and committed to the vision? What stakeholders or partners need to be better engaged?
- What assets do we need to develop in order to reach our vision for pathways and students?

RESOURCES TO USE:

- [*What It Takes to Create Linked Learning*](#), a report on lessons learned evaluating the Linked Learning approach in practice.
- [*The Linked Learning Silver Standards*](#) and the [*Linked Learning Gold Standards*](#).
- [*Asset Mapping Overview*](#), which overviews the process of identifying district and community resources related to pathway development and college and career readiness.
- [*Sample Programs of Study*](#)
- [*Sample Graduate Profile: Long Beach Unified School District*](#)
- [*Sample Graduate Profile: Los Angeles Unified School District*](#)



Phase 3: Plan, Build Capacity, and Align Systems

In Phase 3, your district steering committee uses the results of the asset mapping exercise to develop a three-year Linked Learning Implementation Plan. The implementation plan addresses necessary capacities, institutional barriers, gaps in policy, and program challenges. This plan should identify areas for cross-institutional collaboration to solve problems, remove obstacles, and more effectively align systems.

The development of a high-quality system of pathways considers multiple factors (e.g., labor market projections, student interest, business and industry partners, qualifications of existing teachers, and availability of postsecondary programs) to ensure alignment to the workforce and community-based needs. The district steering committee should identify one or more pathway leadership and pathway design teams to oversee the planning, design, and implementation of each pathway.

1. **Implementation and Capacity Building Plan:** The district steering committee uses findings gleaned from the asset mapping process to develop a three-year implementation plan to use the Linked Learning approach to achieve its vision and goals. The plan also considers what capacities will be needed to implement Linked Learning and strengthen the critical systems, structures, and capacities that ground the Linked Learning approach.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Who else needs to be part of the implementation plan process?
- What other initiatives or strategic plans does the implementation plan need to be aligned with or build on?
- How will the steering committee solicit feedback and input and continue to deepen the involvement of key stakeholders and partners?
- What skills and capacities will need to be developed to support launching and implementing Linked Learning? Important capacities might include master scheduling, instructional design, project-based learning, and integrating social-emotional learning.

2. **Pathway Leadership and Pathway Design Teams:** The steering committee identifies pathway leadership teams and pathway design teams to begin developing each pathway as part of the three-year implementation plan. Pathway leadership teams may include a pathway lead, an administrator, and a counselor. Pathway design teams may consist of pathway leadership team members but also include core academic teachers and CTE teachers who may be part of the pathway. If there is an existing pathway team in place

already, the design team would usually include the pathway team and other stakeholders such as students or partners who could inform the design or improvement of the pathway. The pathway design team is needed only during the design or redesign process.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What leadership roles will be necessary for the pathway design team? What should the composition of that team be?
- Are you redesigning existing pathways or developing new pathways?
- How will you ensure equity across the various pathway designs?
- What processes or structures are needed to support the pathway leadership and pathway design teams?

3. **Establish Industry Sector-Based Advisory Boards and Partnerships:** Plan and recruit sector-based advisory board(s) to actively support planning and implementation. Deeply engaged, industry-led advisory boards in each pathway sector regularly convene to guide the planning, implementation, and growth of pathways. Advisory boards are key partners in pathway design and provide a continuum of equitable work-based learning opportunities.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What is the role of the advisory boards, and how will they support pathway planning and development?
- How will the steering committee ensure equity and coherence across advisory boards and partnerships in the district?
- Who should be on the advisory board(s) and how will advisory board members be recruited?
- What are some of the expectations for advisory board members?

4. **Deepen Community Commitment and Understanding:** In addition to supporting student success, Linked Learning also prepares the future workforce and helps ensure communities prosper. The district steering committee, pathway design teams, pathway leadership teams, and industry advisory boards should continue cultivating and deepening the community's commitment and understanding of the school transformation vision and goals. Community and partners should be committed to Linked Learning as an upstream strategy to address social and economic wellbeing through improved opportunities and outcomes for youth.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- How will the District Steering Committee continue to center the voices and experiences of students and marginalized groups?
- How will the district Linked Learning steering committee communicate about the planning process to ensure it is transparent and open?
- How will the district Linked Learning steering committee engage in collective learning and sense-making with the community and various stakeholder groups?
- How will the district Linked Learning steering committee and key leaders stay engaged and connected to the community and partners in the planning phase of the project?

RESOURCES TO USE:

- [Implementation Plan Template](#), for use by your district teams as you create a 12- to 24-month implementation plan.
- [Professional Development Example](#) from the Los Angeles Unified School District.
- [Strategic Master Scheduling Webinar](#), offering strategies to develop master schedules that support Linked Learning implementation.





Phase 4: Implementation and Continuous Improvement

In Phase 4, your district steering committee continues to ensure coherence across stakeholders and strengthen the community's capacity for Linked Learning implementation and improvement. The committee monitors the implementation of Linked Learning systems, structures, and processes at the school, district, and community levels. The committee also ensures the ongoing capacity building and job-embedded professional development educators need, including participation in Linked Learning networks and professional learning opportunities.

Pathway design and leadership teams work with industry advisory board(s) to use the Linked Learning standards and certification process to provide a structure for pathway implementation improvement.

Resources available through the Linked Learning Alliance have been developed in close collaboration with longtime Linked Learning practitioners and draw on more than a decade of experience and research. Our goal is to help practitioners everywhere bring the Linked Learning approach to life for their students in a way that works for their local context. Each resource is grounded in Linked Learning principles as well as Linked Learning Certification, which sets standards for the high-quality implementation proven to help more students stay in school, graduate on time, and be ready for college and career.

1. **Linked Learning Standards and Certification:** Certification provides a structure for continuous improvement of pathways toward high-quality outcomes for all students. Two levels of certification, Silver and Gold, provide benchmarks for assessing pathway progress against research-based and practice-informed standards. Your steering committee can use certification to measure pathway growth and progress toward defined goals across all pathways and over time, while your pathway design and leadership teams use certification to collaboratively track progress using the Linked Learning standards for high-quality student outcomes. Teams use the Linked Learning standards and certification to support implementation and continuous improvement of pathways in these areas:
 - Integrated Program of Study
 - Work-Based Learning
 - Integrated Student Supports
 - Partnership Development
 - Data Collection and Data-Driven Improvement Processes

2. **Continued Capacity Building:** As you progress, it's important to provide ongoing support for leaders and pathway teams and build capacity, through professional development and coaching, for launching or deepening Linked Learning practice. Areas of focus may include:
 - Instructional practices that apply student-centered, collaborative, and project-based learning in the classroom, and build in opportunities for students to reflect and provide feedback on their learning experiences
 - Assessment design and practices that provide multiple opportunities throughout the pathway course of study for students to demonstrate their learning to a broader audience of peers, industry representatives, and/or other community members
 - Effective pathway teams and collaboration
 - Leadership development at the pathway, school, district, and community level
 - Equitable master scheduling that supports flexible use of time, cohort scheduling, and teacher collaboration
 - Integration of work-based learning into pathway courses and curriculum
 - Integration of social-emotional learning as part of the pathway courses and program of study
3. **Linked Learning Professional Learning and Networks:** Instructors, school, and district leaders, and their community partners are amazing problem solvers, especially when they can innovate together. The Linked Learning Alliance is actively cultivating that opportunity with our professional development portfolio. Building on 10+ years of experience, research, and relationships across systems and sectors, the Alliance offers training, tools, and connections to help K–12 educators take practice to the next level. Learn, be inspired, and connect with others in the Linked Learning field by participating in Linked Learning Alliance networks, workshops, and events including:
 - **Linked Learning Webinars:** Linked Learning webinars bring together educators, community leaders, industry partners, and researchers to explore specific timely topics related to Linked Learning policy, practice, and public will building. The Alliance offers Linked Learning webinars throughout the year. Webinars feature leaders with deep expertise in implementing the approach with fidelity and adapting integrated college and career preparation to online and hybrid learning settings.
 - **Linked Learning Networks:** Linked Learning Networks bring educators together several times each year over a period of one or two years to advance a shared agenda. Working as a community of practice, participants innovate, scale, and improve Linked Learning and its results. They motivate and inspire each other, share ideas and resources, and develop and spotlight tools and solutions to common challenges.
 - **Linked Learning 101 Workshops and Professional Learning:** Linked Learning 101 workshops help participants understand, integrate, and adapt Linked Learning approaches to design and deliver powerful and relevant learning experiences to their students.

- **Linked Learning Experiential Site Visits:** An experiential site visit helps participants to envision a new future for their students, school site, or district as you learn firsthand how the Linked Learning approach has positively transformed education in our partner districts. Hear from site and district administrators, teachers, counselors, students, and industry partners within a district-wide system of college and career pathway implementation, as they discuss essential pathway structures, student supports, work-based learning experiences, industry connections, rigorous curriculum, curriculum integration, real-world projects, and student-run enterprises.

RESOURCES TO USE:

- [Linked Learning Gold Standards User Guide](#), offers information about the Linked Learning Gold Certification process.
- [Linked Learning Certification](#) is a process that supports self-evaluation, goal setting, and continuous improvement for better and more equitable student outcomes. After registering and providing preliminary pathway data, candidate pathway teams can join the Linked Learning community and begin their certification journey using Silver Certification standards.
- [Pathway Improvement Toolkit User Guide](#) is for established pathways interested in using the Linked Learning standards to continuously improve their practice. The kit includes two essential tools:
 - [Pathway Self-Study Tool](#) is a helpful self-assessment for pathways using the Linked Learning standards.
 - [Pathway Improvement Action Planning Template](#) helps you develop a standards-aligned plan based on the self-assessment and pathway goals.
- [Elevating the Practice](#) overviews the range of professional development opportunities available to Linked Learning educators.



Let's Talk

The Linked Learning Alliance is available to assist with ongoing planning and implementation. Contact us to learn more and get started.

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Appendix

About Linked Learning

Students work harder and dream bigger when their learning connects with them and connects them to the world. School districts develop Linked Learning pathways to combine rigorous academics with relevant career experience—and chart a clear path for their students toward success in postsecondary education, the workforce, and civic life.

In contrast to a more traditional, less equitable approach to schooling that separates of students into vocational or academic tracks, Linked Learning pathways integrate four core components throughout the learning journey for all students:

- Rigorous academics that prepare students to succeed in college
- Sequenced career technical education courses that emphasize real-world applications of academic learning
- Work-based learning that provides exposure to real workplaces and teaches the professional skills needed to thrive in a career
- Comprehensive support services

When core academic subjects are linked to real-world professions, students are introduced to career possibilities they might never imagine on their own. They see the importance of a college degree as the way to turn their aspirations into a rewarding career. [Independent evaluation](#) speaks to the efficacy of the Linked Learning approach. Students grow motivation and confidence to succeed in high school. They gain social-emotional development along with knowledge and skills that prepare them to thrive after graduation.

Achieving equity and impact together

The Linked Learning Alliance helps create public will for equity and excellence in education, elevate the practice of Linked Learning, and advance policies that serve and support all youth. No matter their life circumstances, every young person should have genuine access to postsecondary education as well as the support they need to earn a credential and enter a high-skill job by age 25.

Together with a network of partners, the Alliance is bringing this impact to scale by:

- Spotlighting research and promising practices that promote discourse and public understanding of the value of the approach
- Advocating for increased public and private support for the development of integrated, engaging pathways that help young people persist through college to a rewarding career
- Providing students with high-quality experiences in college and career pathways through in-person and virtual networking opportunities and events, and a [rigorous certification program](#)



Learn more about this approach and the Linked Learning Alliance at [LinkedLearning.org](https://www.linkedlearning.org).



About the Linked Learning Alliance

The Linked Learning Alliance is the engine that drives a movement to help every young person determine their own future through a proven approach to education called Linked Learning. Linked Learning integrates rigorous academics with real-world learning and strong support services to prepare students for success in college, career, and life. The Alliance helps create public will for equity and excellence in education, elevate the practice of Linked Learning across America, and advance policies that serve and support all youth.

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