

Investing in students, in equity, in the future

As educators and policymakers chart a path toward educational and economic recovery from the pandemic, investments in keeping young people connected to their sense of purpose and college and career goals are more important than ever—and new federal funds make those investments possible.

A recent study of three well-established Linked Learning school districts in California shows how communities are providing their students with high-quality college and career preparation experiences. Linked Learning is a proven approach to education that combines world-of-work learning with rigorous academics to prepare all students for college and career. Students learn through supportive pathways of study aligned with local industries.

KEY FINDINGS

Findings from the three school districts studied reference California conventions, including Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) and the related Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Still, many of the insights they convey have relevance to Linked Learning pathways in other locations. Districts that steadily supported student success through fluctuating economic conditions shared these key characteristics:

- School boards establish policies that provide public affirmation of pathway goals
- District LCAP goals call for college and career readiness explicitly
- LCFF dollars are used for staffing and other core instructional services; grants, funding from industry partners, and other sources are used for additional programming needs
- District funding proposals highlight Linked Learning elements to ensure students benefit from a high-quality integrated program of study, work-based learning, and integrated supports
- District expenditures are aligned with Linked Learning
- Key senior leaders are tasked with managing pathway-related funds to maximize learning opportunities and ensure coherency
- District braided fund practice combines public and private funds to support students

Learn more

These findings are described in detail, along with implications for policy and practice, in a companion insight brief. Three case studies highlight the funding policies and practices specific to each Linked Learning district consulted in this study.

[INSIGHT BRIEF](#)

Case studies

[Antelope Valley Union High School District](#)

[Long Beach Unified School District](#)

[Oakland Unified School District](#)