

WHY CERTIFICATION MATTERS

IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES ON THE PATHWAY TO GOLD



Pursuing Linked Learning Certification is the best way to **understand, achieve, and maintain** the levels of pathway quality research links with positive student outcomes: more credits earned, increased graduation rates and college enrollment, work-ready skills and mindsets, equity across demographics.

By upholding research-backed standards tested by experienced educators who are leaders in their fields, certified Linked Learning pathways bring to all students what only some have today: access to high-quality, rigorous opportunities to prepare for college and career in a nurturing environment of peers, educators, and mentors.

Power of the Process

By working toward Silver and then Gold Linked Learning Certification, pathway teams bring significant benefits to their school communities. Like them, you can use this experience to:

- **Discover ways to elevate** quality, impact, and return on pathways investments
- **Engage the professionals** and partners eager to bring relevant, rigorous pathways to life
- **Track your progress** toward goals for educational excellence, positive student outcomes, and equity—and adjust as needed to ensure results
- **Show your commitment** to what works as you advocate for support of your pathway site, school, district, and region

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The biggest benefit was the opportunity to critically assess our program. There were several elements we had and knew we did, but they were not formalized. This process allowed us to look at ways to formalize these processes and keep the program growing for our students.”

**LINKED LEARNING GOLD
PATHWAY PRACTITIONER**

LINKED LEARNING CERTIFICATION

The process. Certification typically takes place over the course of about 12 weeks. Interested participants prepare by determining their readiness, forming a certification team, and engaging in self-study. Then they formally express their intent to the Linked Learning Alliance, collaborate with a review leader from the Linked Learning field, and collect artifacts that evidence their work. Confirmation involves a preliminary review and site visit and results in a final report.

The standards. Certification standards emphasize cross-subject, student-centered learning with strong career and postsecondary integration, combined with supports that ensure equitable opportunities for all students. Research shows that implementing Linked Learning with fidelity to these components results in tangible benefits.



GOLD CERTIFICATION STANDARDS SUMMARY

The highest standard for college and career preparation based on evidence of excellence in integrating the core components of Linked Learning:

INTEGRATED PROGRAM OF STUDY	CONTINUUM OF WORK-BASED LEARNING	PERSONALIZED STUDENT SUPPORTS
<i>Student-centered learning connected to postsecondary and industry expectations.</i>	<i>A progression of meaningful experiences with work and real-world applications of learning.</i>	<i>Meeting the developmental needs of each young person to equip all for a successful transition to college and career.</i>
Instructional design connects rigorous academics and career-themed coursework. Instructional delivery features equitable access to interdisciplinary learning opportunities. Students are encouraged to demonstrate their learning in many ways, including an annual public presentation. Early college credit opportunities such as dual enrollment are accessible to all students. Postsecondary and industry partners inform the design and assess the effectiveness of the program of study. Students have the opportunity for shared learning through a cohort structure focused on cross-subject projects and work-based learning experiences related to the pathway theme.	Students follow a work-based learning plan that is informed by input from industry partners and tied to the program of study and outcomes defined for their pathway. Students successfully complete multiple experiences ranging from career exploration to training and career preparation. Students have access to formal work-based learning through internships and apprenticeships, including opportunities to gain industry certificates. Students self-assess their work-based learning experiences, connecting these experiences to their academic studies, while also reflecting on their career skills development as well as understanding of their industry of interest. Industry partners evaluate the workplace readiness of each student, including the quality of their preparation, performance, and soft skills.	Students experience learning that emphasizes social awareness, self-management, and a mindset of growth and self-efficacy. Teachers and counselors monitor student academic, personal, and social-emotional needs and provide culturally responsive, timely supports, engaging families in student development plans as warranted. Students learn in a culture of high expectations, are introduced to a variety of postsecondary options, and identify individual college and career readiness goals. Students receive guidance to complete college entry tests, financial aid applications, and other requirements for accessing postsecondary education. Students gain job application skills and resources they need to be prepared to enter the workplace, apprenticeships, and certification programs.



READY TO GET STARTED?

Access the complete standards at linkedlearning.org/certification.

Reach out for support and answers to your questions:
pathways@linkedlearning.org