



**GAME CHANGER:**  
Linked Learning Detroit



## WHAT IS LINKED LEARNING?

Linked Learning seeks to better prepare students to graduate from high school ready for college and career—both objectives and not just one or the other. Linked Learning offers students a sequence of courses and experiences called pathways. These multi-year pathways are organized around major industry themes to deliver

- 1) rigorous academics that meet college-ready standards,
- 2) sequenced, high-quality career and technical education,
- 3) work-based learning, and
- 4) personalized student supports.

Pathway themes include engineering, information technology, health and medicine, and manufacturing, just to name a few.

A multi-year evaluation conducted by SRI International's Center for Education Policy shows that students in certified Linked Learning pathways within the California Linked Learning District Initiative are more prepared to succeed in college, career, and life compared to peers in traditional high school programs. Specifically, compared with their peers, students in certified Linked Learning pathways earn more credits in the first three years of high school; report greater confidence in their life and career skills; and say they are experiencing more rigorous, integrated, and relevant instruction. Furthermore, students who had low achievement scores in earlier grades made significant progress when they participated in Linked Learning.



## OVERVIEW



**M**ichelle Parker, the principal of the Cody Medicine and Community Health Academy (Cody MCH) in Detroit, grew up in the school's tough neighborhood. Until a few years ago, the high school had a reputation for "gangs, drugs, and fear" and was monitored by armed guards. Recently, both the building and the curriculum were renovated, and the school divided into smaller themed academies with classes that focus on real-world learning. Today, Parker stands in what used to be the school's junk-filled welding shop. The entrance now looks like a neat doctor's reception area, and the shop area is equipped with hospital beds and patient mannequins for medical training.

"My sister made a key holder to hang keys on when she was in school here," says Parker. "Now, instead of welding, my students are gaining clinical instruction." The students will graduate with white lab coats, along with experiences and certificates that will pave the way to careers such as pharmacists, medical technicians, nurses, and doctors. "School needs to look like a career pathway to keep students interested," says Parker.

**"Our education is hands-on, and students have a feeling of completion, relevance, and the promise of a career..."**

### Testing Linked Learning in Detroit

Cody MCH is one of ten Detroit high schools that have adopted the Linked Learning approach, which combines rigorous academics, project-based learning, and student support with career-based training on pathways that lead to both college and jobs. Each school specializes in a sought-after career area, such as engineering, medicine and health, or public service. "Our education is hands-on, and students have a feeling of completion, relevance, and the promise of a career," says Parker. When her students graduate, they'll be able to walk into well-paying jobs, and go on to college with a few credits already under their belts.

Students at Linked Learning schools work on projects that combine learning from across academic disciplines with real-world experiences and a community-oriented goal. The projects focus on topics the students can relate to and that can help support their families and community, such as healthy nutrition, Detroit's recent history, high-risk behaviors, or running a small business. The schools partner with city officials, industry leaders, businesspeople, and other experts in the students' career pathways to teach and support them along the way. The students get exposed to professionals, job possibilities, resources, skills, and training that they'd never experience in classrooms devoted to worksheets and quizzes.

Project-based learning has helped reinvigorate students and revitalize their communities. "When our students bring those education values and expectations

home, that changes the whole community," says Parker. Eventually, when students complete their paths to better career opportunities, that will change the economics of the neighborhoods, too.

The Detroit Public School system has been one of the most challenging and broken in the United States, where teachers and administrators have faced chronic underachievement, dropout rates hovering near 50%, violence, poverty, and urban blight. Since 1950, Detroit's population declined from 2.1 million to 700,000, leaving thousands of abandoned houses and factories, vacant land, and shuttered schools. The city went bankrupt in 2013, leaving uncertain school district leadership, which still remains in emergency mode. And while downtown Detroit is being revitalized, the investment and transformation haven't reached many of the surrounding neighborhoods—or the students who live in them.

"Our students were not being served," says Asadullah Muhammad, United Way's Director of Student Success and Community Engagement. "They were either not going to school, or going to school and not getting the support they needed."



Tanya Heidelberg-Yopp,  
CEO, Linked Learning Detroit

#### Caring Partners Join Forces

Yet Detroit's crisis has been an opportunity to restructure the schools and their curricula in ways that are more positive and relevant to the students and the community. Several community groups, foundations and corporate funders have stepped up in recent years to help rehabilitate Detroit neighborhoods and schools by investing in major turnaround efforts, infrastructure, and support services. Among the initial visionary investors were the Skillman Foundation, United Way, and General Motors.

"These supporters set the table for us," says Tanya Heidelberg-Yopp, Linked Learning Detroit's CEO, who has collaborated with a wide network of school authorities, city agencies, nonprofits, funders, and local industry partners to realize the program's vision. "We were able to try the Linked Learning concept because of the investments corporations, communities, and philanthropy had already made in our schools." The Ford Foundation offered Detroit teachers an opportunity to work with ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career to see whether the California Linked Learning approach could be adapted to Detroit. In turn, ConnectEd partnered with NAF, (formerly the National Academy Foundation), which supports more than 600 career academies nationwide, including the Linked Learning schools in Detroit.

Unlike in California, where Linked Learning is a district-level initiative, Detroit started experimenting with the approach at the school level, with principals and teachers. "We decided to work with a few schools to see if this is something that would work in Detroit. Now that we have proof of concept, we know we're ready to scale citywide," says Heidelberg-Yopp.

United Way's Muhammad says Linked Learning's ground-level support, working with teachers, principals, and community leaders, was more effective in improving the schools than some of the turnaround consultants who came to Detroit. "We've had

lots of emergency managers and people coming from out of town to say this is what's best for you, and that's hard when educators have been on the ground doing the work day in and day out," he says.

In the two years since Linked Learning has been implemented, Tammie Jones, program officer for the Skillman Foundation, says she has already seen big changes. "Teachers are excited about new ways to approach instruction, and kids are excited about the hands-on approach to learning," she says. The projects also make them feel responsible for their role in the community. At the Cody Academy, for instance, students do projects relating to Detroit's future, its land use and how it reinvents itself after bankruptcy. "These are kids who are viewing themselves not as leaders later, but leaders now," says Jones.

#### What's Next for Linked Learning Detroit

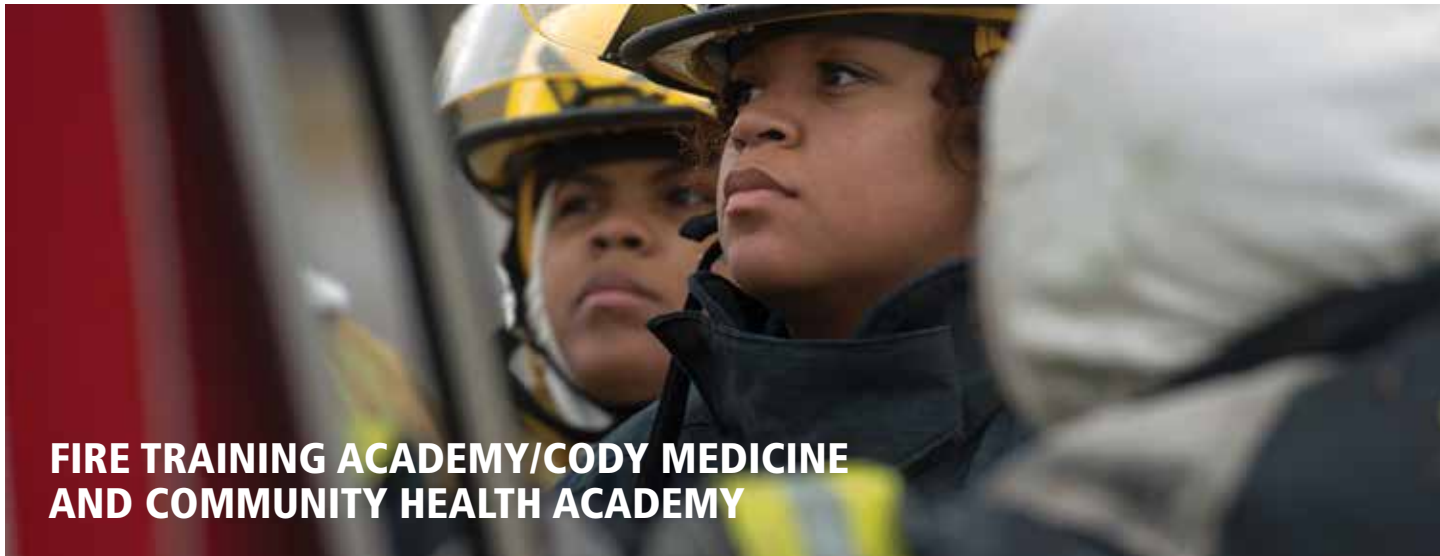
"What we've seen in two years are structural wins," says Heidelberg-Yopp. "We've put together the program of study, put the pieces in place, and connected the dots between academic programs and the acquisition of real-world skills that provide actual opportunities to students."

All of that has been possible, she says, because of the dedication of people at every level. "We've got committed employers, a committed community—almost everyone in this whole matrix cares and is willing to work to see the right thing happen to have excellent schools and a pathway for every student who wants one."

"It's important to remember that Linked Learning isn't only about schools," says Heidelberg-Yopp. "It's a powerful strategy for connecting community, schools, students, educators, families, and employers around a vision of how to make Detroit a strong, vibrant, successful city."



**"We were able to try the Linked Learning concept because of the investments corporations, communities, and philanthropy had already made in our schools."**



**FIRE TRAINING ACADEMY/CODY MEDICINE AND COMMUNITY HEALTH ACADEMY**

**D**etroit’s Fire Training Academy is housed in a former tech high school, which, like most of the houses in the neighborhood, had been shuttered and abandoned. Today, in the huge warehouse, surrounded by fire trucks, hoses and gear, a special group of recruits is standing in formation, answering roll call: high school seniors from the Cody Medicine and Community Health Academy (Cody MCH).

Using the Linked Learning approach, Cody MCH has partnered with the Detroit Fire Department to offer its juniors and seniors training and a pathway to a job upon graduation—either as a firefighter, an emergency medical technician (EMT) or both—along with 40 units of college credits. “Students in today’s economy have to integrate academics with real-world learning,” says Michelle Parker, principal of the school. Two afternoons a week, about 20 students are transported to the Fire Training Academy for hands-on classes. For the students, the Fire Department and the community, Parker says, it’s a win-win-win situation. “The students warmed to it, the City needs firefighters, and the students will be able to walk into a job.”

**“For me to come straight out of high school to a job like that is crazy. My mama smiles every day.”**

**Hands-On Learning**

When the students break for a party before the holiday break, Detroit Fire Chief Stephen Johnson congratulates four of them for making As, and the rest for showing up and putting in a strong effort. “To be successful you have to work at it,” he tells them. “All this is geared for you to have jobs—and there are jobs waiting for you when you’re done.”

Cortez Wilform, a senior, says the fire training has been fun—if unexpectedly hard work. He likes the hands-on approach—climbing ladders, squirting water and rescuing mock “victims” in the dark. “Hands-on is a better way of learning,” he says. “If it’s hands-on, I think about it more and remember doing it.” He says he never considered becoming a firefighter before, but now that’s his goal—one that will make a big difference to his family. “For me to come straight out of high school to a job like that is crazy,” he says. “My mama smiles every day.”

Alexius Burg, a senior, also loves the hands-on experiences. “I like extreme stuff, and I don’t like to be bored,” she says. She’s going to finish her firefighter training to help her pay for college; she’s already been accepted to Michigan State. “I’m the first in my family to go to college,” she says; she has 14 brothers and sisters.



Chief Johnson proudly surveys his first class of high school students. “This is a labor of love for the Fire Department,” he says. But it will also solve a lot of his problems, as the high school becomes a feeder system to replenish his ranks, avoiding long, arduous hiring processes. “If we can recruit from the schools, we have a talent pool sitting here, ready, that we can put through a shortened fire academy.” Instead of having to put out a hiring call to people in several states, he’ll have recruits who are pretrained, and familiar with the neighborhood. Johnson estimates that out of this class, he’ll end up with between 8 and 12 firefighters, including 4 or 5 women (currently there are 12 women in the entire Detroit Fire Department of 850).

The Chief pauses. “I get emotional about my kids,” he says. He has visited several of the students’ homes. “This program will allow them to be the biggest successes in the families in the neighborhoods, the biggest earners, despite their fractured backgrounds. This is a huge opportunity for them.” The program, he says, isn’t easy on the students—or the teachers from the Fire Department. “For us it’s a constant battle to keep their spirits lifted and know someone cares about them,” he says. “But when they get on this job, we’re going to have the best employees ever, because they’re invested, they believe in the program, they believe in the system and they believe in the city. I don’t see how we can fail.”

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**CODY ACADEMY  
OF PUBLIC LEADERSHIP**

Jonathan Matthews, Principal

**W**hen Principal Jonathan Matthews first came to Cody High School eight years ago, it was one of the most dangerous high schools in Detroit, a drop-out factory that was more of a feeder to the jails than to the community.

Now, much of that has changed. During Matthews’s second year, the school was split up into three academies—Matthews founded the Cody Academy of Public Leadership—with 350 students divided into cohorts. A core group of teachers stays with these small groups for their entire four years.

**“We try to give them all the experiences a middle-class family would have. They wouldn’t know anyone who worked as an attorney, and they see a police officer as someone who arrests someone on the block. Now they have a different perspective.”**

“The first goal with the small schools was to create nurturing environments—a family,” Matthews says.

For many of the students, that’s a level of support they don’t get at home. Trejah Shines, a sophomore, says, “My favorite teacher is like a mom to me. If you feel low and down, your teachers are going to talk to you.”

For the past two years, the schools have embraced the Linked Learning approach to education, where students participate in a school-wide project as well as a career pathway. At the Academy of Public Leadership, the project is aimed at understanding the politics, history, and economics of Detroit as it recovers from bankruptcy, with students presenting their findings to the community at the end of the year. During freshman year, student surveys determine which pathway they’re most suited for: public safety, business, or law. Outside professionals from each of these pathways teach project-based classes that expose the students to potential careers.

**Shifting Perspectives**

“These kids don’t have a lot of resources,” says Matthews. “We try to give them all the experiences a middle-class family would have. They wouldn’t know anyone who worked as an attorney, and they see a police officer as someone who arrests someone on the block. Now they have a different perspective.” The pathways are partnered with city agencies and companies that can lead to potential jobs. “Now that Detroit is being developed economically, we’re looking at whether the students from the city are employable,” says Matthews.

Trejah is in the public safety program. Like all the other students, she spends two-hour blocks of time in her pathway subject, which she says helps her concentrate. A retired police officer teaches the class, using the same curriculum taught in the

police academy, including constitutional rights, police work, and mock cases. “I love the police academy,” says Trejah. “It makes me want to be a police officer when I grow up.” That’s a big change in attitude for her and her friends. “A lot of people tend to not like the police,” she says. “But when you meet them and talk to them, it’s different.” When she leaves high school, Trejah will be licensed in CPR, and have a preferential head start in the police academy.

**“It’s not us versus them, but a sense that we all need a safe, organized society.”**

Matthews says one of the benefits of starting the leadership pathways sophomore year is that the students are juveniles, so that even if they’ve had police run-ins, they have no records, and can change their behaviors. Their view of law enforcement changes, he says, from criminals or victims of police, to fellow citizens. “It’s not us versus them, but a sense that we all need a safe, organized society.”

When Paul Matthews (no relation to Jonathan), a senior, first came to Cody, he was selling drugs and had a violent record. “I’ll be brutally honest, I was terrible,” he says. Now he’s finishing the business pathway, and heading to college. “I simmered down, opened up, and started thinking about what life would bring to me if I put my mind to it.”

In the business program, Paul and his fellow students have learned about profit and loss statements, spreadsheets, and the mechanics of running small T-shirt and food concessions, branching out to other schools. Their teacher is a former businessman and investor. “He’s a smart dude,” Paul says. “He’s taught me a lot about business, how to be in the real world, and it’s no joke. If I mess up, he’ll make me throw something away and start over.”

Principal Matthews says the business classes have changed the students’ attitudes about money. “They didn’t know stealing from a store hurts the store, because they didn’t see it from a store’s point of view. Now when they drop a cupcake, they know that’s money. These kids are not going to shoplift. That’s a by-product of Linked Learning.”

The students in the law pathway also get a new perspective on justice in the community. Darryl Moore, a tenth grader in the law pathway, enjoys preparing for mock trials. “It’s a way to put my smart mouth to work,” he says. “With the mock trial,





we go into cases and scoop out the things we can use against people.” He says the trials have helped him listen better, and hear all perspectives of a story. “It teaches you to pay attention and listen, and to seek things out rather than just having things handed to you.”

Competing in mock trials—in front of attorneys, jurors and judges from the community—has improved the students’ concentration, Matthews says. “I handed them a packet of 30-40 pages for the trial, and I see them get in there, highlighting, and reading with deep understanding. It’s amazing.”

The Academy of Public Leadership’s projects expose students to experiences and places they’d never otherwise see. Darryl has visited museums downtown, Ford Motors, and met lawyers who have mentored him. “All of those experiences give you a nudge to want to know more about what these people do,” he says. He says he’ll be the first person in his family to graduate from high school. “It’s not only that I’m getting exposed to this stuff, but I’m taking the opportunities I have back home and letting my

family know it’s not over for you, there’s still things out there for you. The hope I get at school I try to give to my family and peers.”

Through school, Darryl has found a job as a dietician at a hospital. “It changed my house mentally because I have four brothers and one sister, and none of them were employed. With me getting a job, now everybody in my house older than 15 is working. So it’s not just education you can take home, you can take home gumption, and determination to go out and do more for yourself.”

Darryl hopes to become a rapper. But if not, he says, “I’ll always have being a lawyer to fall back on.”

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**M**ost of the students who attend West Side Academy, an alternative high school, have nowhere else to go. They’re over-aged students who have repeatedly failed in other schools. “My babies are broken up, beaten down, poor achievers with low self-esteem when they start school,” says Principal Andrea Ayler. “Some are gang members, and many suffer from attention deficit disorders, oppositional defiant disorders, anxiety, or depression, or are bipolar. They’re the toughest students to reach,” Ayler says. “And yet, **“They’re the toughest students to reach...And yet, Linked Learning has helped these children blossom.”**

West Side Academy is currently in its second year of a Linked Learning approach, where students work together on projects using information technology, and will ultimately graduate with a NAF Academy certificate along with their diploma, demonstrating their readiness to enter into a post-secondary school, as well as a career in information technology.

#### **Building Self-Esteem**

All the teachers at West Side Academy plan a project that cuts across the curriculum, guided by Linked Learning Detroit’s coaches, Dr. Karen Lee and Bob Galardi. In addition to the academic curriculum, they integrate technical training into the school



**“Projects help our students engage in higher-order thinking, because they have to plan, predict, and analyze.”**

day, and students eventually create presentations that involve a website, social media, and other information technology. Last year the project was focused on Detroit—what caused the city to deteriorate, and what its future holds. The project was so successful that the students were asked to present their project at the district-wide technology fair. This year, the project topic is self-esteem, where students do an

inventory of their own self-esteem, learn how to improve it, and then write a policy statement that they will develop into a web-based presentation that they will present to students at other schools.

The project-based learning has encouraged these students to come out of their shells. “These kids come in heads down, to themselves, and we watch them blossom during the course of the year—collaborating, defending a position, and team-building,” says Principal Aylor. “Projects help our students engage in higher-order thinking, because they have to plan, predict, and analyze.”

Ashlee Diamond is a 17-year-old tenth grader who says she loved her first year of project-based learning. “It was hard at first because I’m not one to work with other people. But I learned a lot working together—it’s faster, quicker and amazing, wonderful ideas happen when you come together,” she says. The project approach has changed her and her fellow students. “Before the project we were all separate, doing our own thing, and this project brought people together. You have to have patience and listen. I’m more quick to hop into a group now. This year, I’m ready to get started. I want to sit down and brainstorm with some people.” In some ways, says Aylor, West Side Academy has become a victim of its own success. Many of the students have improved their academics and confidence so much that they’ve applied to and been accepted at mainstream schools. Last year, of 146 ninth graders, 48 stayed at West Side, and 98 were accepted to other schools. “Previously, no other schools would have touched kids from West Side Academy,” says Lee.

“Linked Learning is going to kill me, because I keep losing my kids,” says Aylor, with a sigh. “But that’s a big win.”



**BENJAMIN CARSON HIGH SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MEDICINE**

Brenda Belcher,  
Founding Principal

The Benjamin Carson High School of Science and Medicine was founded in 2011 on the campus of the Detroit Medical Center with the mission of helping college-bound students enter into the science and health professions. “We wanted them to be able to touch and feel science and medicine differently than if they were enrolled in a school down the street,” says founding Principal Brenda Belcher, who is now the high school network lead for the Detroit Public School District.

What was missing at Benjamin Carson, though, was a curriculum and a program that would help students connect their learning to the real world and a professional pathway—which Linked Learning helped the school develop. Each year, the teachers produce a compendium of teaching materials that integrates a community-based project into every academic class. This year, the ninth graders are working with the Detroit Food Equity Council, and tenth graders are working on high-risk teen behaviors with a local teen center.

**“I felt I was doing something for others instead of myself for once.”**

### Project-Based Learning

One class period each term is dedicated to the health and science career pathway—health careers, anatomy and physiology, and microbiology. Eventually, students will graduate with a skills certificate in pharmacy, phlebotomy, nursing, or another medical area. The school’s location on the medical campus makes it easy for students to do internships and experience what medicine is like day-to-day, watching open-heart surgery, shadowing doctors, or spending time in the emergency room.



A group of tenth-grade students, who wear green scrubs to class, are enthusiastic about the projects. Asia Mixon and Tayebah Chowdhury both want to become pediatricians. Christophe Brown is interested in genetic research, and Hafizur Rahman hopes to become a psychiatrist. Last year, their challenge was to create a marketing campaign for a healthy beverage for the youth



*Patient Care Associate (PCA) Health Care Medical Career Program*



of Detroit, eventually presenting a marketing plan to Dr. Reginald Eadie, head of Detroit's school board and three hospitals, who chose the best presentation. "I was scared," says Tayebah, "but since we were presenting to other people we had to do it really well." Christophe nods, agreeing. "I had to do a better job at the work because there were people counting on our knowledge."

Hafizur says he liked doing the project because it had a real effect on other people. "I felt I was doing something for others instead of myself for once." His group, which advocated drinking green tea instead of soda, created Instagram pages, social media, and a video comparing the side effects of drinking soda and artificial juices with green tea. In Tayebah's group, they did a science experiment demonstrating how much sugar is in soda if you boil away the water. Christophe liked the way he learned things in every class that would contribute to the project. "In history we learned histories of health and what to eat and drink, in math we looked at data and results and took surveys, and in science we did sampling sizes that helped us with the surveys."

All the students brought the project's messages home. "No one in my family drinks Mountain Dew anymore," says Tayebah. "People in my family are feeling better and more energized drinking water and tea," says Christophe.

Math teacher Michelle Schwendemann says the students are much more involved in their work with project-based learning than quizzes and worksheets. "When we apply learning to real-life situations, the students see the significance and why they need to know it, so their engagement increases tremendously and so do their test scores." Typically, schools look for a one- to two-point growth in state college readiness scores; last year, Benjamin Carson High School had a four-point increase. More students were motivated to apply to college; while the school is open enrollment with no academic standards to apply, 92% went on to two- and four-year colleges, and 8% to the military.

**"Typically, schools look for a one- to two-point growth in state college readiness scores; last year, Benjamin Carson High School had a four-point increase."**

One of the ways Linked Learning Detroit has supported the school is helping to create more paid internships and learning opportunities for the students in medical settings. "The students have made great connections to people in hospitals and businesses, and had remarkable experiences," says Brenda Belcher. "It's exciting for them to be able to watch open-heart surgery behind a glass wall. They feel they can be a pediatrician or psychologist because they've talked to the people who do it." "Connecting the classroom to the real world has made all the difference in the students' interest levels and energy." "We see the light bulbs go off for kids as they realize the relevance of learning to their real lives," says Principal Charles Todd.





**DETROIT EDISON PUBLIC ACADEMY'S  
EARLY COLLEGE OF EXCELLENCE**

Ralph Bland  
CEO, New Paradigm for Education

**T**his year, in his 11th-grade engineering and robotics class, Hijiri Woodberry made a musical horn circuit with a 555IC integrated computer chip, graphite, and an 8-ohm tweeter. After researching and designing his project, it played horns like a synthesizer. Gabrielle Williams, who wants to become an engineer, created a laser prism. Everyone in their robotics class built their own new invention.

These students at the Detroit Edison Public Academy's Early College of Excellence (known as DEPSA) are bound for college on a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) trajectory. They wear suits and ties, and walk halls lined with their predecessors' acceptance letters to college, from Michigan State to Brown University. Their education is focused on preparing them for careers in science and technology, and giving them real-world projects and work opportunities along the way.

DEPSA is a charter school managed by New Paradigm for Education. Detroit students at any learning level apply to DEPSA and are accepted by lottery. One hundred percent of the students go on to college after a rigorous academics-, science-, and engineering-focused education.

When Kimberly Bland, chief academic officer, first heard about Linked Learning, she wasn't interested. "We're a high-performing school and didn't want to be associated with the other schools in the network," she said. "But once we heard about the philosophy behind it, and the experiences our students could participate in, we changed our vision."

**Connecting Learning to the Real World**

The school was already working with several other learning programs and approaches, each with its own requirements—the International Baccalaureate (IB), NAF (formerly the National Academy Foundation), and Advanced Placement classes. When they met with Linked Learning Detroit's CEO, Tanya Heidelberg-Yopp, she asked how she could help them link together all the different approaches. "She helped us evolve and mesh the programs so they're best for the students," says Bland. "Once that happened, the kids could do projects—the engineering courses led to robotics and solar projects, and then to job shadows and summer work opportunities."

**"...the kids could do projects—the engineering courses led to robotics and solar projects, and then to job shadows and summer work opportunities."**

Now the teachers meet for a month before the school year to create a project for ninth graders, and an interdisciplinary curriculum for the second half of the year. "We connect with a real-world client to solve a problem," says Angela Mallory, the school's IB coordinator.

In tenth grade, they create a personal project that they present at an exhibition at the end of the year, working with their advisers and outside partners. They use design thinking, keep a process report, and create an outcome or product for a presentation. Last year, one student who wears an afro hairstyle created his own Soul MaSheen hair product after researching ingredients and their properties. Another wrote and produced his own song; another built a computer. Several students this year are working with community organizations to provide them with new products or services—such as a "makeover bag" of cosmetic products for women in homeless shelters. Hijiri, who is related to Ella Fitzgerald, did a charcoal portrait of her, and a presentation on the history of her music.

This year's ninth graders are working to upgrade the new football field that has been built a block away from the school, at a site where one of Detroit's old high schools was torn down. The engineering students will have a chance to work with engineers

**"We're coming up with ideas to improve the football field, like car chargers since we're trying to go green, and murals to improve the feel of the place."**

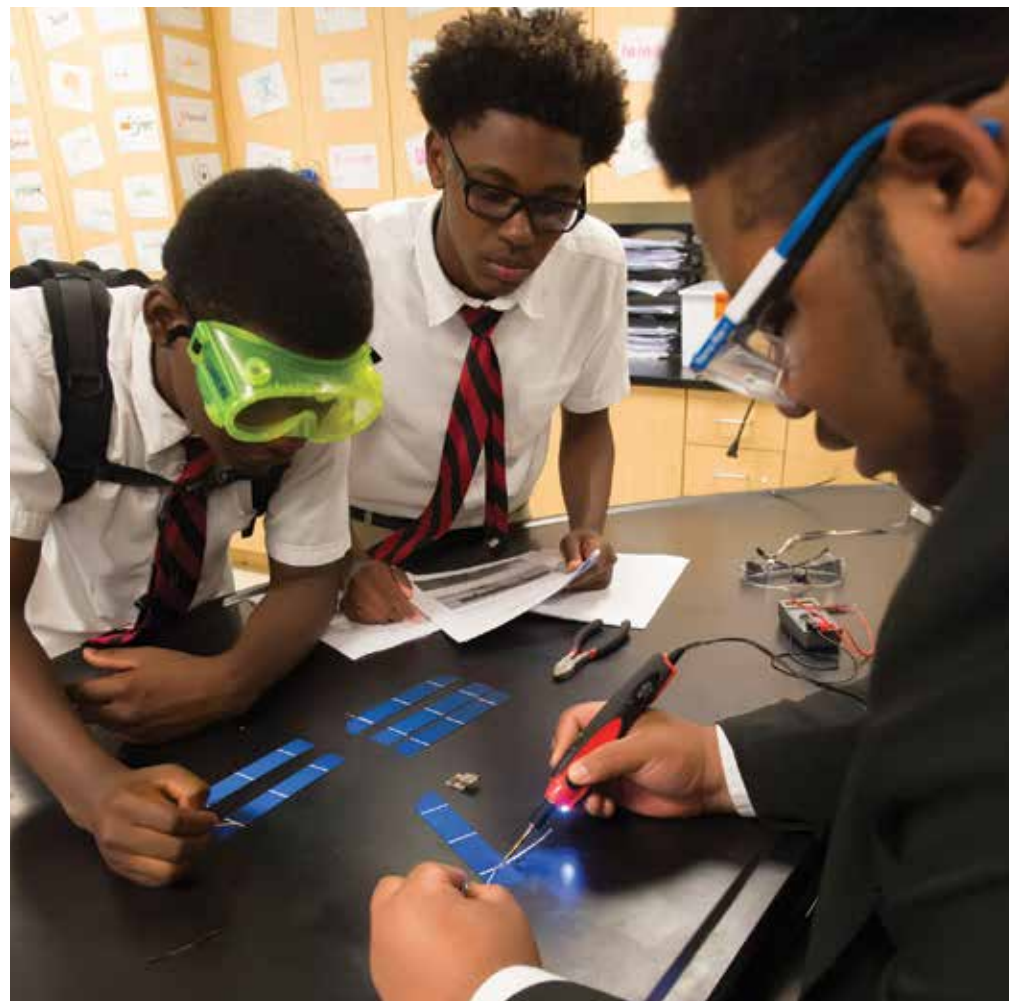


from the University of Michigan to help create green energy sources for the football field. In art and music classes, students will write ads and a fight song. At the end of the year, the students will present their project ideas in a “shark tank” atmosphere to see which will be implemented.

Ninth grader Nathan Keese says he’s excited about all of their plans. “We’re coming up with ideas to improve the football field, like car chargers since we’re trying to go green, and murals to improve the feel of the place.” Part of creating the project means reaching out to partners, and knowing how to do that. “We need things from different companies, so we have to learn to write business letters,” says Nathan. “We want to get GM to donate the car chargers.”

It won’t be enough for the students to see the car chargers installed at the football field. “In Mr. Lincoln’s engineering class, we’re going to learn how they work,” says ninth grader Arthur Flowers.

Arthur has a cousin who goes to a “regular school,” with traditional classes. “She sits in class and doesn’t get to come up with her own ideas for projects or work on electronics,” he says, shaking his head. “I know I’d be bored.”



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The remarkable progress shown by Linked Learning Detroit could not have been accomplished by any single entity. Rather, it required the combined efforts of a wide array of stakeholders, including school authorities, city agencies, nonprofits, funders, and local industry partners. It is by working together that we can ensure equitable educational outcomes for Detroit’s young people for generations to come.

Therefore, we want to acknowledge Detroit Public Schools, the Education Achievement Authority of Michigan, and the charter school community for partnering with Linked Learning Detroit and developing college and career pathways that are equitable and available to all Detroit young people.

In addition, the following organizations have provided critical investments in the form of their human, financial, and social capital:

- City of Detroit
- Envision Learning Partners
- Excellent Schools Detroit
- Ford Foundation
- Ford Next Generation Learning
- General Motors
- Michigan Future
- NAF
- The Skillman Foundation
- United Way for Southeastern Michigan
- Wayne State University

ConnectEd partnered with Excellent Schools Detroit to launch Linked Learning Detroit in 2012. In 2016, the United Way for Southeastern Michigan incorporated Linked Learning Detroit into its ongoing operations.

## ConnectEd

The California Center for College and Career

**ConnectEd** partners with school, district, and community leaders to transform education through Linked Learning pathways so that all students, regardless of background, are prepared to succeed in college, career, community, and life.

[connectedcalifornia.org](http://connectedcalifornia.org)

For more information: [info@connectedcalifornia.org](mailto:info@connectedcalifornia.org)



**Excellent Schools Detroit** formed in 2010 as a coalition with an important mission: an excellent education for every Detroit child, from cradle to career, by 2020 such that 90% of students are well-prepared for kindergarten, 90% graduate from high school on time, 90% go on to post-secondary programs and 90% of those do so without needing remediation.

[excellentschoolsdetroit.org](http://excellentschoolsdetroit.org)



The **United Way for Southeastern Michigan** strives to mobilize the caring power of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan to improve communities and individual lives in measurable and lasting ways.

[liveunitedsem.org](http://liveunitedsem.org)