



LINKED LEARNING®

Essential Elements for Pathway Quality

Student Outcomes-Driven Practice

The progress of every student toward achieving measurable and consequential learning outcomes is the driving purpose for the pathway community of practice. The pathway team regularly reviews several kinds of evidence including (1) performance-based measures of pathway-specific student learning outcomes; (2) information on students' level of performance, available from student information systems; (3) individual student growth in performance, both on pathway-specific learning outcomes and on transcript-based measures; (4) students' success after high school in postsecondary education and employment, if available; and (5) trends over time in all these measures for the pathway students as a group. The team uses data on a monthly basis to inform and improve professional practice, and on an annual basis to revise the pathway improvement plan.

Equity, Access and Achievement

A Linked Learning pathway pursues both excellence and equity as mutual goals. A pathway establishes high achievement expectations for all students and practices non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogy. The pathway is equitably accessible to and serves well any interested student, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, special needs, or prior academic achievement. An equity-focused pathway intentionally reflects the diversity and strengths of its school, community, and district, and the grouping of its students is heterogeneous, flexible, and equitable.

Program of Study

An industry-themed pathway program of study brings coherence to the four core components of Linked Learning: rigorous academics, real-world technical skills, work-based learning, and personalized supports. It intentionally coordinates and sequences student learning experiences in a way that integrates rigorous academic and technical core curricula. The pathway theme is broad enough to appeal to and engage all students. The program of study maximizes cohort scheduling to ensure that all pathway students are offered the opportunity to earn postsecondary credit and are prepared for success in the full range of postsecondary options.

Learning and Teaching

Pathway students engage in inquiry- and project-based learning that is outcome-focused, rigorous, relevant, and collaborative. Members of the pathway community of practice plan such learning experiences for students: they regularly collaborate to develop and articulate standards-aligned grade-level, course, and project outcomes to organize the pathway's program of study and guide assessment, curricular, and instructional planning. They also use performance assessment tasks with common rubrics to assess, monitor, and support every student's progress toward mastery of college and career ready pathway learning outcomes. The community of practice regularly engages in professional learning, evidence-based inquiry, and reflection to continuously improve their practice.

Work-Based Learning

All students participate in a personalized and coordinated continuum of work-based-learning (WBL) experiences designed to help them master and demonstrate academic, technical, and 21st Century skills, as identified in the pathway student learning outcomes. WBL builds on and extends every pathway's program of study. WBL occurs in-person and online: in the work place, the community, and at school. Students acquire academic, technical, and 21st Century knowledge and skills through WBL, all of which enhance their preparedness for the demands of college and careers.

Personalized Student Support

Every pathway student is supported by pathway staff, partners, and families. The pathway community of practice tailors learning experiences to students' individual developmental needs, skills, strengths, interests, and aspirations. Pathway staff, in consultation with families and service providers, identify and address the academic, personal, and social-emotional needs of every student so that she or he makes progress toward achieving personalized college and career goals and pathway student learning outcomes.

Pathway Leadership and Partnerships

The pathway staff, school and district leaders, and partners share responsibility for program effectiveness and accountability for student outcomes. These stakeholders assure that conditions are in place to establish and sustain pathway quality. The pathway engages a formal advisory board that serves as an organizing structure to effectively engage a core of stakeholders, including business, postsecondary, and community partners.