

FactSheet

December 2013

Linked Learning

SCOPE Case Study: Pasadena

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is the current context in which all California education decisions will be made. The LCFF is equity focused and includes a strong accountability emphasis, expressed in its requirement that districts develop Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs) with goals on a range of outcomes. Linked Learning is a particularly well-suited approach to help districts meet these goals for their diverse student populations.

The Linked Learning approach to high school reform is also based on the principle of equity. It has the fundamental goal of increasing postsecondary opportunities for all students by integrating rigorous A-G academics with career-themed instruction and work-based learning. The approach provides relevant and motivating education experiences for high school students by connecting learning to real-world situations and problems through a range of career-oriented pathways. Although the approach is relatively new, initial student outcomes are promising. The successful design, implementation, and support of Linked Learning, requires strong commitment to the approach and thoughtful and intensive collaboration among school, district, and community stakeholders.

Linked Learning in Pasadena: Creating a Collaborative Culture for Sustaining District Reform, a case study conducted by the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE), illustrated how district leadership set the direction of Linked Learning as the primary reform approach for secondary education, and shared steps the district took to implement the program.

This fact sheet summarizes the findings of the Pasadena SCOPE article that pertain to the role district leadership should take in implementing Linked Learning. Researchers at SCOPE, with funding from The James Irvine Foundation, evaluated the Pasadena approach to Linked Learning by conducting descriptive case study interviews with district, site, and community leaders between September 2009 and September 2011. Observations of ac-

tivities, a review of essential documents, and informal connections made during the initiative's professional development series for Linked Learning participants were also used to create the case study.

It's all about ownership, implementation, and sustainability. Unless you have buy-in and commitment from folks in the classroom, at the school sites, and in the community, it's not going to be sustained.

-Edwin Diaz, former Superintendent, Pasadena USD

Role of the governance team

- » Superintendent Edwin Diaz was hired, conducted a 'listening and learning' campaign in the spring of 2007, and reported his findings to the board that summer.
- » The school board recognized Linked Learning as the reform approach needed for John Muir High School in October 2007, and the site served as a district pilot before bringing the approach to scale.
- » A community engagement process took place in the 2007-08 school year with focus on Linked Learning as the core reform model.
- » Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) received a \$125,000 planning grant to focus on expanding Linked Learning to the entire district in the spring of 2008, and later received \$1.2 million implementation grant in the fall of 2009.
- » "College-going Culture/Career and Technical Education" became one of the four pillars in the district's 2008 strategic plan in the fall of 2008. Linked Learning was set as the sole school reform approach (pg 9).

- » In the fall of 2008, a number of positions were created, including an Executive Director of High Schools to oversee pathway development. A Director of Business and School Connections, an ROP and Academies Director, and a Coordinator of Pathways Professional Development positions were also developed. The district also engaged a secondary-to-college consulting service.
- » The district sponsored a number of ongoing professional development sessions on topics ranging from pathway curriculum development and instruction, site management, business partnerships, and more.
- » The district revised its 'last in, first out' policy for pathway teachers in 2009 after losing vested pathway teachers to layoffs. The decision was challenged, and the new policy was upheld.
- » A community marketing and branding campaign took place in the form of social events, site visits, and media outreach.

API scores for Pasadena Unified High Schools with pathways

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Blair High	686	753	716	707
John Muir High	610	631	646	635
Marshal Fundamental	732	749	763	766
Pasadena High	728	757	757	748

Conclusion

- » Linked Learning pathways have been established in four high school sites across the district resulting in the creation of seven pathways between 2008 and 2012.
- » Linked Learning was set as the primary high school reform approach for the district.
- » Linked Learning was infused into the district's strategic plan as well as considered for future facility and curriculum development plans.

For further information

- » Sample board policy and administrative regulation BP/AP 6178 – Career Technical Education
- » Local Control Funding Formula 2013, CSBA Governance Brief, August 2013 <http://bit.ly/1cpcp9Q>
- » State Priorities for Funding: The Need for Local Control and Accountability Plans, CSBA Fact Sheet, August 2013 <http://bit.ly/15MUxTp>
- » "Linked Learning" supports college and career readiness, August 2012 Policy News <http://bit.ly/18KalwU>
- » CSBA joins work to link students with college and career opportunities, CSBA blog post, June 20, 2013 <http://bit.ly/15RtDDd>
- » Executive Committee sees successful Linked Learning programs in action, CSBA blog post, June 25, 2013 <http://bit.ly/1fSlGmL>
- » Urban districts look to Linked Learning partnerships as a way to promote equity, CSBA blog post, December 16, 2013 <http://bit.ly/19q8yrT>
- » Golden Bell Award winners for the 2013 Career Technical Education category <http://bit.ly/1ai3zYu>