

FactSheet March 2014

Using Linked Learning to Implement CCSS

Linked Learning is a reform approach currently transforming many districts in California,¹ and is based on the principle of equity. The fundamental goal is to increase post-secondary 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 to high school students by connecting learning to real-world situations 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 a strong commitment to the approach and thoughtful and intensive collaboration among school, district and community stakeholders.

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is an equity-focused framework that will likely guide California education decisions going forward. The formula includes a strong accountability emphasis, including a requirement that districts develop Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP) with goals on a range of outcomes for diverse student populations. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are new academic standards in California, and across the U.S., that are designed to be relevant to the real world and to incorporate the knowledge and skills that students will need to succeed in college and careers in the 21st century. Linked Learning is an approach that can foster the goals of both of these large scale reforms.

The Linked Learning Advantage: Using Linked Learning to Implement the CCSS, a brief authored by the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE), explores the alignment of Common Core and Linked Learning objectives. Both CCSS and Linked Learning seek to prepare

The Common Core is the “what”; Linked Learning [is] the “how.” Both share the same end in mind—which is students who are college and career ready.

—Pamela Seki, Long Beach Unified School District

students for both college and career success through rigorous academics with a real-world perspective. Success for Linked Learning and CCSS depends on the level to which the curriculum is engaging, rigorous and relevant.

Findings

Linked Learning and CCSS are mutually supportive and share four similarities:

- » Student learning outcomes based on real-world application and experience
- » Compatible approaches to curriculum, instruction and assessment through the college and career lens
- » Real-world application of academic and technical skills through work-based learning
- » Student assessment through authentic demonstrations of learning
 - › The SBAC and PARCC assessments of CCSS support the shift to a performance-based assessment system that Linked Learning pathways already incorporate.

¹ The Linked Learning Pilot program was enacted in Assembly Bill 790 in 2011, to support the delivery of Linked Learning in a growing number of districts. A total of 63 educational agencies joined the original districts and participate in the pilot program, serving a total of approximately 600,000 students in California. When fully enacted, the pilot program will serve more than one-third of the state’s high school students. For more information go to: <http://linkedlearning.org>

District strategies for integrating Linked Learning and CCSS include:

- » Develop a common vision of college and career readiness by creating a graduate profile, and align it with CCSS
- » Ramp up communications to increase awareness of the synergy between CCSS and Linked Learning
- » Form cross-disciplinary teams for CCSS planning and implementation by building and recruiting teacher leadership from within Linked Learning pathways
- » Nurture Career Technical Education (CTE) and academic teacher collaboration through ensuring effective structures
- » Create curricular and instructional resources by conducting crosswalks between student learning outcomes, the district graduate profile and CCSS
- » Enhance literacy and math strategies through instructional resource guides to develop curriculum that integrates CTE and academic content instruction
- » Involve business partners in CCSS implementation by familiarizing them with the standards, increasing their understanding of desired student outcomes

The role of governance teams

Governance decisions that support the building of teacher and leadership capacity are critical to the success of Linked Learning as an effective means of fostering CCSS implementation. Building teacher and leadership capacity is critical to making the instructional shift to CCSS.

- » Teachers need support to:
 - › Understand the meaning of the new standards,
 - › Understand how curriculum will allow students to effectively demonstrate those standards, and
 - › Understand the technical supports in performance task design and “backward mapping” of curriculum to demonstrate a high level of execution of CCSS.
- » District and school leaders need to:
 - › Focus on teachers’ instructional capacity to design curriculum that differentiates instruction for diverse learners, and
 - › Support teachers to ensure school based conditions, organizational structures and resources are in place that will allow the guidance needed to implement Linked Learning and CCSS simultaneously.

Alignment between CCSS and Linked Learning: A school example

The Common Core State Standards (2010)

Under the CCSS ELA standards, “speaking and listening” is broken into two areas:

1. comprehension and collaboration
2. presentation of knowledge and ideas

Presentation of knowledge and ideas

- » SL.9-10.4. Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance and style are appropriate to purpose, audience and task
 - » SL.9-10.5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning and evidence and to add interest
 - » SL.9-10.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate
- Restructure district offices to incorporate Linked Learning across all departments
- » Provide ongoing training, coaching and leadership development opportunities

Linked Learning's college and career readiness framework (2012)

Communication is a key 21st century skill identified in the framework

Communication: Listening, speaking, writing and non-verbal communication

- » Using active listening skills to obtain and clarify information
- » Articulating thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively
- » Public speaking skills
- » Written communication, including memos, letters and complex technical reports that are clear and effective

Linked Learning pathway student learning outcome example (2012)

Example from John Muir High School's Arts, Entertainment, and Media (AEM) Pathway

Communication: The AEM graduate interprets, organizes, composes and articulates ideas that artfully communicate content knowledge and global perspectives

Translation to grade-level benchmarks:

- » 9th/10th: Upon completing 10th grade, the AEM student composes and presents organized presentations as well as improvised oral responses that clearly articulate their ideas
- » 11th/12th: Upon graduation, the AEM student exhibits confidence in both written and improvised oral presentations to articulate idea with impactful results

For further information

CSBA Governance Brief: Local Control Funding Formula 2013 <http://bit.ly/1cpcp9Q>

CSBA Fact Sheet: State Priorities for Funding <http://bit.ly/1fLi05m>

Sample board policy and administrative regulation BP/AP 6178 – Career Technical Education

“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>

[CCSS] and [LCFF] Dominate State Board Agenda, CSBA blog post, July 11, 2013 <http://bit.ly/1azbzBX>

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, CSBA website <http://bit.ly/1ai3zYu>