
Policymaker Fact Sheet

Linked Learning

- Offers students a personally relevant, wholly engaging, rigorous academic and career-based curriculum with real-world learning opportunities.
- Ensures students graduate from high school well prepared to enter a two- or four-year college or university, an apprenticeship and formal job training.
- Exposes students in school to previously unimagined college and career opportunities.

Four Core Components of Linked Learning

- **Rigorous academics.** An academic component that includes college preparatory English, mathematics, science, history, and foreign language courses.
- **Real-world technical skills.** A challenging career-based component of three or more courses that help students gain the knowledge and skills that can give them a head start on a successful career.
- **Work-based learning.** A series of work-based learning opportunities that begin with mentoring and job shadowing and evolve into intensive internships, school-based enterprises, or virtual apprenticeships.
- **Personalized support.** Support services including counseling and supplemental instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics that help students master the academic and technical learning.

Proven Success

- Research shows that Linked Learning students of all demographic profiles have higher persistence and graduation rates than their peers at traditional high schools.

Support from Policymakers

- Currently, four state agencies and—the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and the California Community Colleges—are members of the Linked Learning Alliance.
- In 2012, the state's graduation rate was 78.5 percent. The graduation rate for Latino students was 73.2 percent and for African American students 65.7 percent. ⁱ
- California will soon be using new, more challenging assessments as part of the implementation of Common Core State Standards. Linked Learning is an ideal way to foster student mastery of these new Common Core State Standards.

- Linked Learning helps students succeed. In 2010, 95 percent of students who attended the 500 CPAs (California Partnership Academies), which practice a form of Linked Learning, graduated. CPAs also posted higher graduation rates for Latino and African American students compared to the state average with 94 percent and 92 percent rates respectively. ⁱⁱ

An Affordable, Sustainable Approach

- Despite a 15.3 percent drop in state funding for K-12 education from 2007-2008 to 2009-2010, California's Linked Learning districts are sustaining their commitment to Linked Learning because of the positive results they are seeing. ⁱⁱⁱ
- By reallocating resources and securing funds through both private and philanthropic partnerships, Linked Learning programs are able to operate in this challenging fiscal climate.
- Studies have found that upfront investment in Linked Learning results in benefits to the district and to taxpayers that far exceed the cost. Once the infrastructure for Linked Learning is established, costs significantly decrease due to sharing of resources and economies of scale. ^{iv}

Investing in Public Education to Cut the State Deficit and Improve the Economy

- High school dropouts in California earn a median income of \$10,000 less than high school graduates, and barely half of what those with some college or an associate's degree earn. ^v
- California sustains \$46.4 billion in lost wages, increased crime, and lost productivity for dropouts from each and every cohort. ^{vi}
- For each high school graduate, the economic benefit to California's state and local government, taxpayers, citizens, and businesses is estimated to be \$392,000. ^{vii}
- If the high school dropout rate in California were reduced by half for just a single year, the government savings and social gains would amount to 1.4 percent of the California annual gross state product—more than \$26 billion. ^{viii}
- Making sure all students are prepared for their chosen postsecondary program is an economic issue. College and postsecondary incompleteness rates in California have resulted in \$386 million in income lost \$57 million in federal taxes lost. ^{ix}

ⁱ California Department of Education. (2013). State Schools Chief Tom Torlakson Announces Continued Improvement in State's High School Graduation Rate. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr13/yr13rel42.asp>

ⁱⁱ Profile of the California Partnership Academies 2009-2010, UC Berkeley. (2011). http://casn.berkeley.edu/downloads/CPA-report-execSum_2010-11.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ California Budget Project. (2011). A Decade of Disinvestment: California Education Spending Nears the Bottom. http://www.cbp.org/pdfs/2011/111012_Decade_of_Disinvestment_%20SFF.pdf

^{iv} Parsi, Ace, David Plank, and David Stern. Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). Costs of California Multiple Pathway Programs p.4. http://www.edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/2010_PR_PLANK_STERN.pdf

^v C. Belfield and H. Levin, The Economic Losses from High School Dropouts in California (Santa Barbara, CA: California Dropout Research Project at UC Santa Barbara, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, 2007).

^{vi} C. Belfield and H. Levin, The Economic Losses from High School Dropouts in California (Santa Barbara, CA: California Dropout Research Project at UC Santa Barbara, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, 2007).

^{vii} C. Belfield and H. Levin, The Return on Investment for Improving California's High School Graduation Rate (Santa Barbara, CA: California Dropout Research Project at UC Santa Barbara, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, 2007).

^{viii} Belfield and Levin, The Economic Losses from High School Dropouts in California.

^{ix} American Institute for Research, http://www.air.org/files/AIR_High_Cost_of_Low_Graduation_Aug2011.pdf