

What is a Linked Learning pathway?

A Linked Learning pathway is a four-year career-themed academy that integrates rigorous academics and with relevant career and technical education.

Students are selected based on their career interests rather than their academic backgrounds.

Students are “cohorting” with a committed team of CTE and academic teachers who meet regularly to plan interdisciplinary project-based learning and personalized supports.

Pathway students and teachers are exposed in many ways to industry professionals, through field trips, internships, externships, guest speakers, and mentors.

What makes a Linked Learning pathway special?

- a 4-year CTE course sequence
- a teacher team wrapped around a cohorting group of students
- 4-year work-based learning

Campuses may begin with just one pathway and expand in future years, or they may decide to go “wall-to-wall,” designing all their pathways at once.

NOTE: House Bill 5 “pathways” are not all Linked Learning pathways. House Bill 5 legislated pathways Campuses may provide students with HB5 pathways that are not represented in a Linked Learning pathway.

PATHWAY PERSONNEL

Pathway Leadership Team

The Pathway Leadership Team consists of the **principal, the pathway administrator, the Linked Learning counselor, and the Pathway Lead Teacher/s.**

This leadership team **meets together regularly** to ensure that the critical work of the pathway is **implemented with fidelity** and that **communication** is flowing among all members of the team.

The leadership team is responsible (in collaboration with other campus and District personnel as needed) for the success of the following:

- Developing a pathway mission, vision, and four-year outcomes aligned with the HISD Graduate Profile.
- Recruiting, selecting, and responding to the needs of a diverse cohorted group of students (125 students per 4 cohorted teachers).
- Scheduling students such that they are cohorted with the same CTE teacher and at least three core academic teachers, with provision for the inclusion of other staff necessary to support the cohort (e.g., support facilitators, ESL teachers, etc.)
- Creating a strong, positive pathway identity through pathway events, communications, recognitions, etc.
- Building the teacher capacity needed to make collegial planning productive.
- Planning and implementing two interdisciplinary pathway projects (CTE + 3) each year aligned with PBL best practices.
- Building and leveraging industry expertise throughout students' 4-year experience, driven by a 4-year work-based learning continuum.
- Arranging for college and career visits aligned with academic and career goals.

Pathway Teacher Team

In the pathway team, teachers work together collegially and productively to accomplish three major bodies of work:

1. **plan and execute interdisciplinary projects.** At least 4 hours each month, cohorted pathway teachers work together to plan and implement interdisciplinary projects driven by an industry problem of practice (at least one each semester), as well as smaller projects.
2. **engage in data-driven planning of personalized supports.** At least 3 hours each month, cohorted pathway teachers work together with the Linked Learning counselor and other school personnel to examine student data for shared students and design personalized supports for students who need additional scaffolding, support, or stretch. Protocols keep these conversations positive and solution-oriented.
3. **integrate work-based learning experiences and technical skills.** With the support of the **Pathway Advisory Board**, the Pathway Administrator, and the Linked Learning counselor, the pathway teachers ensure that students receive many opportunities to apply their classroom learning in career-specific contexts, both inside and outside of the classroom

PATHWAY IMPLEMENTATION

Pathway teachers should demonstrate:

- a strong sense of personal responsibility for student success
- the ability to make collegial, collaborative decisions in the best interest of their students
- strength in their own discipline
- a positive relationship with students
- an interest in creating relevant, engaging, rigorous learning experiences aligned with the career pathway
- a willingness to learn and experiment
- a willingness to work hard on behalf of a team project.

Pathway Lead Teacher (PLT)

The **Pathway Lead Teacher (PLT)** supports the daily work of the pathway as a member of the **pathway leadership team**. The PLT receives a bi-annual stipend for this work. It is recommended that s/he also be provided at least one protected release period to carry out these duties.

In addition to the skills and dispositions listed above, PLTs must also be able to serve as an effective **peer facilitator** and **project manager**. In addition, PLTs are more effective when they are optimistic, hold a growth mindset, demonstrate attentive listening, and generate win-win solutions.

With the Pathway Administrator, the Pathway Lead Teacher (PLT) is responsible for the following:

- Schedules, prepares agendas for, and notifies participants of pathway meetings.
- Facilitates pathway meetings.
- Documents and organizes the work of the pathway team:
 - meeting agendas
 - meeting notes
 - artifacts of project-based learning, work-based learning, and personalized supports.
- Informs campus and pathway administrators of progress as well as concerns.
- Engages in professional learning as expected by the Linked Learning Department and campus administrators.

The PLT is eligible for a bi-annual stipend for this work (\$750 2x/year). It is recommended that s/he also be provided at least one protected release period to carry out these duties.

Grade-Level Facilitator (GLF)

For pathways with multiple grade levels, the Pathway Lead Teacher (PLT) may be unable to facilitate all the grade-level planning meetings. Campuses may wish to select a Grade-Level Team Leader to facilitate grade-level meetings, as a support to the Pathway Lead Teacher.

Some campuses are providing Grade-Level Facilitator with a small stipend out of their own budgets. The campus also receives extra-duty pay funds from the RTTT-D grant that could be used to recompense the teacher for work beyond normal hours. This role may or may not receive release time.