



## **Linked Learning in Porterville: Creating Capacity for Innovation and Change through Collaborative Leadership and Community Engagement**

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**Cover Photo: Students from Harmony Magnet Academy at a work-based learning internship, Porterville Air Fair. (June 2011)**

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## Executive Summary

**T**his case study describes how Porterville Unified School District (PUSD), a rural school district in California’s Central Valley, began to fulfill its vision to transform high school and career education through the implementation of Linked Learning. Linked Learning is a state-wide initiative for redesigning large comprehensive high schools into smaller learning communities in the form of career-based pathways. The case explains how Porterville’s district leadership team made Linked Learning the centerpiece of its district-wide reform effort and describes the key strategies the leadership team developed in collaboration with stakeholders to implement a system of pathways across five high schools. These strategies included:

### **1) Creating policy coherence by integrating multiple reforms**

In developing its implementation strategy for Linked Learning, Porterville’s leadership team made a key and early decision to integrate two reform initiatives that were aimed at high school reform—a National Academies Foundation initiative and a Small High Schools Grant—and bundle them under the umbrella of Linked Learning. This decision not only lessened confusion at the school level about which reform to focus upon, but also communicated to schools that Linked Learning was the district’s policy priority for improving high schools. The district’s positioning of these multiple reforms guided schools to focus on the design and implementation of career-based pathways as the vehicle for school improvement. Porterville’s district leadership team also made a strategic decision to start small with Harmony Magnet, a new high school designed into smaller learning communities, which would serve as a model for the implementation of Linked Learning expansion to other high schools throughout the district. The district also sought to ensure staff buy-in at Harmony by hiring teacher leaders who were fully committed to the concept of Linked Learning.

### **2) Communicating a compelling vision for redesigning high school**

Porterville’s leadership recognized the importance of clearly articulating the district’s vision and goals for Linked Learning: Every high school would be wall-to-wall career pathways and every student would have both choice and access to a career pathway. As part of the district’s implementation strategy, the team set out to communicate a set of clear, consistent, and compelling messages to explain how career-based pathways would enable all of Porterville’s students to be college-ready as well as prepared for the world of work. In a rural community like Porterville, where

graduates were traditionally faced with choosing either postsecondary education or work, the concept that every student could be prepared for both career and college represented a profound shift and rise in expectations.

### **3) Building a broad base of ownership and coalition of support**

Porterville's leadership team deliberately set out, in the early stages of implementation, to build a broad base of support for and ownership of Linked Learning. Members of the district leadership targeted parents and teachers; they went out to schools, together with school board members, to signal unified support for Linked Learning, presenting at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and teacher union meetings. The Porterville district office also sought to develop a strong sense of collaboration and pathway ownership for Linked Learning among school-site personnel and community partners by creating structured opportunities for involvement through the formation of advisory boards for every pathway. Additional outreach efforts aimed at the local business community helped to build a broad coalition of support for Linked Learning. These efforts galvanized individual community and business leaders, who saw the value of work-based learning and a potential workforce with strong skills, to actively strengthen the implementation of pathways by serving on site-level advisory boards.

### **4) Targeted capacity-building at the district and school site**

During the critical early stages of designing and implementing pathways across high schools, Porterville's district leadership learned that while leadership and guidance from the central office was necessary, on-the-ground, technical assistance to build school- and pathway- site capacity was equally important. To facilitate this, the district made structural changes to the central office. A dedicated team, staffed by experienced practitioners, was created for the sole purpose of implementing Linked Learning and providing guidance and differentiated support to pathway leaders at every school site. Porterville's district leaders did not shy away from bold decisions aimed at building leadership and organizational capacity at the school site; these included the mid-year reassignment of principals, and a successful campaign to move from a six- to a seven-period day to create the structured time needed by pathway teams and teachers to increase focus on instruction and to collaborate within the school day.

# Porterville USD: Creating Capacity for Innovation and Change through Collaborative Leadership and Community Engagement



At the Imagine Community Art Center: Harmony Magnet Academy students who participated in internships at the center stand with Harmony Academy of Performing Arts Advisory Board Chairman Monte Reyes and center Co-director Rebecca Ybarra.

## Linked Learning Case Studies

### About Linked Learning

Launched in 2008 through the support of the James Irvine Foundation, Linked Learning is a statewide high school reform initiative aimed at supporting districts across California to develop, implement, and sustain a system of career-based pathways accessible to all students, enabling them to graduate both prepared for college and ready for the workplace. Formerly known as “multiple pathways,” Linked Learning stresses continuous integration of academic instruction with demanding technical curricula, field-based learning, and student supports, all embedded in career academies or smaller themed schools known as pathways. The reform also requires collaboration among district, school, industry, civic, higher education, and other community stakeholders in support of student success.

Porterville Unified School District is one of nine districts in the California Linked Learning District Initiative that provides technical assistance, professional development, coaching support, and financial assistance to these districts throughout the state to work on systems, culture, and conditions in order to build, improve, and sustain high-quality pathways. These districts—Antioch, Los Angeles Unified School District 4, Long Beach, Montebello, Oakland, Pasadena, Porterville, Sacramento, and West Contra Costa—like many school districts throughout the country, are pursuing reform efforts to increase graduation rates and prepare students so that they leave the K-12 system both college- and career-ready. With an ever-increasing demand for a highly educated workforce, particularly in high-growth job sectors such as business, arts and design, healthcare, and transportation, there is increased pressure on school districts to prepare students to successfully pursue post-secondary college and career opportunities.<sup>i</sup>

The California Linked Learning District Initiative, which in this case is referred to as Linked Learning, is directed by ConnectEd: The California Center for College and Career, and aims to demonstrate that when school districts use Linked Learning as a primary strategy for high school transformation, student outcomes improve. With funding from the James Irvine Foundation, ConnectEd has been able to directly provide financial support, technical assistance, and coaching to help the nine medium-sized and large school districts to plan and implement systems of high-quality pathways. As of March 2010, almost \$12 million has been awarded to districts in planning and implementation grants. ConnectEd has also worked in close partnership with a diverse range of nonprofit community organizations, professional development experts, and university-based research and policy centers, such as the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE), which is ConnectEd's partner in providing leadership and professional development for district leaders and pathway leadership teams.

### **California Linked Learning District Initiative participating districts**

Antioch Unified School District  
Local District 4 of the Los Angeles Unified School District  
Long Beach Unified School District  
Montebello Unified School District  
Oakland Unified School District  
Pasadena Unified School District  
Porterville Unified School District  
Sacramento City Unified School District  
West Contra Costa Unified School District

In the history of high school reform in the United States, many well-intentioned attempts have been made to provide and bolster career preparation for high school students. Such efforts include vocational education, school-to-career, and classes in career technical education. While these efforts sought to provide relevance to the lives and aspirations of students, these attempts “often lack[ed] the academic and technical rigor required for success in postsecondary education and high-skilled careers.”<sup>ii</sup> Moreover, none of these reforms were directed at making fundamental change, in the form of whole school redesign, instructional innovation, raising expectations for *all* students, and/or creating coherence within the system itself. Herein lies Linked Learning’s profound difference from previous reforms, and why this effort to transform high schools holds the most promise for schools, teachers, and communities: The integrated model of Linked Learning calls for system coherence and alignment, a focus on student outcomes, and the engagement of community stakeholders. Linked Learning ensures that students do not have to choose between academics and technical skills, when both are necessary for a complete education and a successful future.<sup>iii</sup>

## About the Case Study Series

This case study of Porterville Unified School District is one of several district-level case studies prepared by SCOPE. These cases offer insight into the critical role of district leadership—in this case, the California Linked Learning District Initiative—in the implementation of educational reform. Our goal in producing these case studies is to contribute to the growing body of research and practical knowledge around district leadership, systemic reform, and secondary school redesign. Through these cases, we hope to illuminate districts’ different approaches to leading and managing change—their successful practices, emerging lessons, and unexpected challenges. The case studies are not meant to be evaluative; rather, they describe and analyze district leadership practices. Each case study was framed around this overarching research question:

How did the district’s leadership guide and support the development and implementation of the Linked Learning Initiative?

## Methodology

The districts examined in the case studies were selected to represent both urban and rural areas across the state of California. These sites also were selected for their widely varying contexts in terms of their history with career and technical education, vision for Linked Learning, leadership turnover, and community context.

Data for this case study were collected between September 2009 and November 2011. Data collection activities included formal interviews with district, site, and community leaders; observations of activities related to district planning and implementation; and a review of essential documents. Additional access to district and school leadership, industry partners, and board members was made possible during the Initiative’s District Leadership Series, as SCOPE played a regular role as facilitator and observer of the

PUSD District Leadership Team. A more specific description of data collection activities is provided in Appendix A. In addition to these formal data collection activities, the ongoing relationship between SCOPE and PUSD has also contributed to increased clarity through informal dialogue with district and site leaders, community members, and coaches.

Following formal data collection activities, the data were organized and coded by central themes to inform the writing of case studies. Follow-up interviews were conducted with key informants to fill in gaps in the data. The case studies were completed and checked with key members within the district for accuracy of factual information.



**Students from Multimedia and Digital Technology at Monache High School, Digital Design and Communication at Granite Hills High School, and Academy of Performing Arts at Harmony Magnet Academy, filming the documentary “A Day in the Life of a Cowboy” for their work-based learning internships. (July 2011) (To see the video, select the “Equestrian” link [at this page.](http://www.connectedstudios.org/url-zuJthKr1KlokTG_9jddcDL75bk0A1d2bSb1AZEQ))**  
Link URL: [http://www.connectedstudios.org/url-zuJthKr1KlokTG\\_9jddcDL75bk0A1d2bSb1AZEQ.](http://www.connectedstudios.org/url-zuJthKr1KlokTG_9jddcDL75bk0A1d2bSb1AZEQ))

## Porterville Unified School District

**P**orterville Unified School District (PUSD) is located in the San Joaquin Valley in Tulare County, in the eastern part of California’s Central Valley. Porterville Unified serves the towns of Porterville, Strathmore, Terra Bella, Ducor, Springville, and Hot Springs, as well as unincorporated rural areas of Tulare County. PUSD covers a large geographical region—approximately 3,000 square miles.

The town of Porterville, which lies at the base of the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains on the Tule River, is the largest municipality in the county and school district, and has a population of approximately 54,000. Porterville is a rural, blue-collar community with a predominantly Hispanic and White population. In Porterville, the median income for a household or family is between \$32,046, and \$35,136, with about 20.3% of families living below the poverty line, including 33.7% of individuals under age 18. Porterville’s economy depends mainly on agriculture. The city of Porterville’s website describes the economy as a “thriving mixture of agri-business, light industry, and commercial enterprise..”<sup>iv</sup> Among the products locally produced by Porterville businesses are electronic medical instruments, printed forms and specialty documents, and food products. Porterville Public Schools is the second major employer in the community.

PUSD serves 13,656 students in grades K-12. The student population includes 74% Latino students and 17% White students, with the remaining 9% of students from other groups. (See Table 1, page 6.) According to the California Department of Education (CDE), 26% of PUSD’s student population was designated English Language Learners and another 26% had been re-classified as English proficient during the 2010-2011 school year. Additionally, over 73% of PUSD students qualify for free and reduced lunch.<sup>v</sup> While the Linked Learning model is designed to support all students for college and career readiness, it is especially focused on helping close the opportunity gap for high-need populations such as Porterville’s.

PUSD has five high schools, three middle schools,<sup>vi</sup> eleven elementary schools,<sup>vii</sup> and six specialist schools<sup>viii</sup> (e.g. charter, day, continuance). Porterville Unified’s high school population (5,395 students) is significantly larger than its middle school population (1,514), because it draws from seven small feeder school districts that only serve grades K-8.

### Linked Learning in PUSD

Linked Learning started to emerge as the centerpiece of Porterville’s educational reform strategy for high schools in 2008, when the district began to integrate multiple reforms and grants aimed at high school improvement. While a few career-based academies had existed in the district for several years prior to 2008, these academies were not specifically affiliated with Linked Learning models. PUSD’s affiliation with Linked Learning thus began with the planning and opening of Harmony Magnet High School. Today, PUSD has a total of nine Linked Learning pathways, as indicated in Table 2 (page 7).

**Table 1: PUSD and Community Demographics**

	PUSD Student Population	Largest PUSD Feeder Towns				
		Porterville	Terra Bella	Strathmore	Springville	Ducor
<b>Population</b>						
Total Population	13,656	54,165	3,310	2,819	934	612
Under 18		33%	38%	37%	19%	33%
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>						
Hispanic or Latino <sup>1</sup>	74%	61%	87%	79%	12%	82%
White	17%	30%	9%	18%	83%	14%
Asian	3%	4%	2%	<1%	<1%	3%
American Indian	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%	0%
African-American	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%
Two or More Races <sup>2</sup>	<1%	4%	<1%	3%	2%	1%
<b>English Learner Designation</b>						
Language other than English spoken at home	38%	46%	83%	74%	12%	70%
English Learners	28%					
Re-designated English proficient	26%					
<b>Education Level for 25 and Older</b>						
Not High School Graduate	40%	21%	66%	57%	19%	42%
High school diploma or higher	44%	68%	32%	40%	76%	51%
Bachelors degree or higher	11%	11%	2%	3%	5%	7%

Sources: City data from the 2010 Census or 2006-10 American Community 5-Year Estimates at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. PUSD data from the California Department of Education report at <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest> and PUSD.

<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Census reports whether someone is Hispanic or Latino separately from race. In this table we counted people who declared themselves Hispanic or Latino in only the Hispanic category and not in their other racial category (i.e., White, African-American, etc.)

<sup>2</sup> Nearly 2% of the Porterville student population did not report their race or ethnicity.

Harmony Magnet High School, which was the first PUSD school to be officially involved in Linked Learning, has two pathways: the Academy of Engineering and the Academy of Performing Arts. Three other schools also support two pathways each: Granite Hills High School offers the Digital, Design, and Communication pathway and the Law, Justice, and Education pathway; Monache High School operates the Multiple Technology Academy and the Environmental Science Academy; and Porterville High School offers the Academy of Business and Finance and the Academy of Health Sciences. Finally, Strathmore High School supports one relatively new pathway, Agricultural Technology.

While all five high schools have at least one pathway, currently only 25% of PUSD students are involved in the Linked Learning initiative. The level of student involvement varies significantly from school to school, with only 10% of Strathmore High School students participating to 100% of Harmony students participating in one of its two pathways. The district's overall vision for Linked Learning is for all five high schools to have wall-to-wall pathways, for every student to be enrolled in a pathway of his or her choice.

**Table 2: PUSD and Linked Learning Pathway Participation**

Name	Linked Learning Pathways	LL Students (2011-2012)	Total Students (2011-2012)	% in L.L. Pathways (2011-2012)
<b>Monache HS</b>	1. Multimedia Technology Academy	191	1845	12%
	2. Environmental Science Academy	32		
<b>Porterville HS</b>	3. Academy of Business and Finance	199	1729	26%
	4. Academy of Health Sciences	242		
<b>Granite Hills HS</b>	5. Digital, Design and Communication	103	1045	16%
	6. Law, Justice and Education	60		
<b>Strathmore HS</b>	7. Emerging Agricultural Technology	29	285	10%
<b>Harmony Magnet HS</b>	8. Academy of Engineering	276	491	100%
	9. Academy of Performing Arts	215		
<b>Porterville USD</b>		<b>1347</b>	<b>5395</b>	<b>25%</b>

Source: Porterville Unified School District

# Porterville's Leadership History and Organizational Culture

In any school district, the leadership and organizational culture play a defining role in how reform is implemented, supported, and sustained. Such factors not only shape how those on the ground—schools, teachers, principals, students, parents, and the community—perceive and experience the reform, but also influence the extent to which these diverse groups of stakeholders will buy into and engage with goals of the reform. In the case of Porterville, the experience and stability of the district's leadership team and the structures created to facilitate collaborative decision-making, combined with central office's longstanding culture of trust and support, appear to have greatly helped Porterville's district leaders in implementing Linked Learning.

## The Home Crowd Advantage: Stable and Experienced Leadership

In contrast to districts where turnover among leadership and central office is frequent and district personnel often live outside the district, Porterville's district leadership team and personnel are homegrown and stable. According to district estimates, more than 50% of PUSD employees have attended and graduated from Porterville's schools. Moreover, three members of the Executive Cabinet are highly experienced and know the Porterville schools very well, having served for many years. Superintendent Snavelly has worked for PUSD since 1987, having served as Assistant Superintendent for Business Services before going on to become the current Superintendent, a post that he has held since 2001. Ken Gibbs, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, has served for nearly 10 years. Val Staley, the Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services who has worked for the district for over 20 years.

According to Val Staley, the long history and close personal ties that PUSD district employees have with Porterville's schools has not only provided a strong and stable internal base of ongoing support within the district, but has also translated to high levels of trust and support from parents and the wider Porterville community. For example, Cindy Brown, the current Director of Pathways, was born and raised in Porterville, graduated from Monache High School, taught at Granite Hills High School for seven years after college, and then served as an assistant principal at Harmony Magnet Academy before moving into her current position.

In other words, the district leadership team is in touch with the community, because they are, in fact, part of the community. Superintendent Snavelly had the following to say about Dr. Val Staley, the Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services:

Dr. Staley, [for example], has years of experience at all levels of teaching and administration. Her ability to relate to others and communicate is just unparalleled, and that commitment is infectious. She is able to get buy-in from the principals and from the directors.

Several members of the executive cabinet have served on multiple posts, which means that within the team, there are overlapping skill sets and an internal, institutional knowledge base that has afforded individual members a strong understanding of the district's inner workings and operations. John Snavely said, "I have an incredible leadership team. I'd put them up against almost any in the nation.... [They are] very knowledgeable, very supportive, very committed."

### **Professionally Empowered: We Trust You**

At PUSD central's office, the working environment and office culture reflect a close-knit, yet open community. The district's offices are not large; employees call each other on a first name basis and know the various departments in which colleagues work. Walking through the various offices, the atmosphere feels relaxed, and the conversations are work-related with informal chatter. Snavely described the atmosphere this way:

It's a real positive culture and I like to think we're very nurturing; we're very supportive.... Are we perfect? Absolutely not! We have lots of room to grow, but I think everybody knows that we care about each other and we get through the tough times together.

Director of Pathways Cindy Brown, who came into her post straight from leading Harmony Magnet, described a culture of professional trust and autonomy, which she felt from the district's senior leadership:

I feel, in our department, we've been given the latitude to take control and be creative and to solve... whatever problems and issues that come up... not only alone in our department, but with this group, with the stakeholders in the community, and at the pathway sites.... I'm feeling a lot of collaboration and support.

For the director of pathways, the trust of the district leadership and resulting autonomy has been empowering for her team and led to their increased capacity as professionals. This spirit has allowed the team to solve problems and identify needs at the site level, to strategize on the support provided to pathway leaders and teachers, and to also do outreach across the district. Indeed, a significant number of the district's employees are Porterville alumni whose children also attend Porterville schools. As Assistant Superintendent Val Staley, said, "The parents of Porterville... they trust us with their kids. They turn them over to the schools, they say, 'Here's my kid. We trust you to do what's best for them.'"

### **Culture of Collaboration and Distributed Leadership**

Porterville's district leadership for Linked Learning is made up of several team-based structures that advise and guide decisions regarding Linked Learning. These structures collectively strengthen the district's capacity to collaborate and communicate across departments. As shown in Table 3 (page 11), the core teams include: 1) the executive cabinet led by John Snavely; 2) the Linked Learning team, led by Director of Pathways

Cindy Brown; 3) school board members, led by President Hayley Buettner; 4) The P8 Council, led by business leaders Randy Wallace and John Corkins; 5) advisory boards for each of the nine pathways, which are each led by their own elected chair; and 6) the ConnectEd coaching team, composed of Rob Atterbury and Rob Curtis. See Appendix B for a comprehensive and graphic overview of these leadership structures, their relationship to each other, and school- and pathway- level leadership meetings.

This series of structures, described in Table 3, illustrates how PUSD built from within the central office, multiple layers of district support, which, by design, have facilitated collaboration, cross-role communication, and joint decision-making. These structures not only encourage collaboration among individuals, but also build collective leadership capacity. The ingenuity of these structures is that they have not added to the layers of bureaucracy; rather, they have brought the community in, thereby redistributing leadership and expanding ownership.

For example, the Porterville Pathways P8 Coalition is the executive-level, broad-based coalition. The P8 Coalition functions in an advisory capacity to the PUSD superintendent and the board of education, working to rally support from the community to promote the Linked Learning pathways approach. According to a September 9, 2011 draft of their bylaws:

This P8 Coalition shall act as mentors to the individual pathway advisory boards and may make recommendations regarding the development and expansion of each individual pathway advisory board. Additionally, the P8 Coalition will provide input into current and potential future pathway programs, curriculum, activities, teacher training, and budget. The P8 Coalition will assist in providing a coordinated effort between advisory committees to insure the success of all open choice pathway programs without sacrificing the integrity of any existing programs within the Porterville Unified School District. Specifically the P8 Coalition may assist with raising funds, recruiting students, securing internships and scholarships, and providing in-kind contributions to the local pathway/academy program.

The advisory boards also provide another layer of support to the schools. Each of the nine PUSD pathways works with an advisory board composed of a group of business/community partners. The advisory boards advise, assist, and provide advocacy for pathway sites in regard to career themes. They help students and teachers make real-world connections and promote community-focused learning and rigorous learning experiences. This shared commitment offers an opportunity for business and community members to fully invest in

**Table 3: Porterville’s Team Structures for Collaboration**

Structure	Composition	Role and Responsibilities Linked Learning
<b>1) Executive Cabinet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Snavely, Superintendent*</li> <li>• Ken Gibbs, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services</li> <li>• Valene Staley, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services</li> <li>• Tony Monreal, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources</li> </ul>	Oversees overall implementation from the central office, makes final decisions about allocation of resources and staffing, and meets regularly with Director of Pathways for Linked Learning.
<b>2) Linked Learning Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cindy Brown, Director of Pathways*</li> <li>• Ruben Alvarez, Work-based Learning Coordinator</li> <li>• Mimi Schuler, Work-Based Learning Coordinator</li> <li>• Larry Gray, Pathway Coach</li> <li>• Patrick Paul, Pathway Coach</li> </ul>	Works directly with schools — pathway leaders, teachers, and principals; provides support and technical assistance on pathway design and certification; manages student recruitment and work-based learning placements.
<b>3) School Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lillian Durbin, Board Member</li> <li>• Hayley Buettner, Board Member, (current President)</li> <li>• Richard Morris, Board Member (previous President)</li> </ul>	Provides representation on P8 Council.
<b>4) P8 Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of industry, colleges and universities, community leaders, and educators (See Appendix B)</li> <li>• Led by John Corkins, former Advisory Board Chair for the Academy of Engineering at Harmony Magnet and CEO of an Ag Chemical Research firm, Research for Hire; and Randy Wallace, co-chair</li> </ul>	Executive Advisory Board for Linked Learning — functions in an advisory capacity to the superintendent and the board of education and works to rally support from the community for the pathways approach (see Appendix B).
<b>5) Advisory Boards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of industry, colleges and universities, community leaders, and educators.</li> </ul>	Provide support and advise on design and implementation of pathways; provide support in work-based placements.
<b>6) ConnectEd Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rob Atterbury, ConnectEd District Liaison</li> <li>• Rob Curtis, ConnectEd District Coach</li> </ul>	The pair serves as external coaches to district leaders, provided by ConnectEd, to provide support, encourage collaboration, facilitate communication across decision-making bodies, and help support delivery of technical assistance at the pathway level.

public education and promote high-quality, relevant preparation for their future workforce. Pathway advisory boards meet on a monthly basis. Advisory board activities include:

- Guest speaking
- Career mentoring
- Curriculum advice
- Teacher externships
- Industry field trips
- Job shadowing
- Student internships

As external coaches, the ConnectEd district liaisons and coaches have been able to play strategic roles in encouraging collaboration and focused conversations within the district. One of the important roles they have played has been facilitating conversations across the different decision-making bodies and multiple stakeholder groups involved in Linked Learning. ConnectEd coach and district liaison, Rob Atterbury, for example, has been able to position himself strategically amid the Linked Learning team, the superintendent, the principals, and the pathway leaders at each of the school sites. He, along with Rob Curtis, have been instrumental in helping the district leadership team and the pathway teams with planning professional development, framing agendas and conversations, convening working groups, as well as by providing follow-up from ConnectEd institutes and trainings. Atterbury and Curtis serve as a neutral voice in bridging and facilitating communication between the district and schools.



**Dr. Stoneburner, Advisory Board member with students from the Academy of Engineering, Harmony Magnet Academy (August 2011)**

## Porterville’s Vision for Linked Learning

*In five years, the concept of career education will have changed from college preparatory track vs. career technical education to the realization that all students benefit from courses of study that integrate challenging academics with demanding technical quality.*

—Summary of Leadership Component for Porterville Unified School District

### Something Unique and Different

PUSD’s involvement with the Linked Learning initiative began when the district received a Small High School Construction Grant from a state pilot program, which provided the district with the opportunity and resources to design and open a brand-new high school, Harmony Academy. The district envisioned that Harmony would be distinctly different from the large comprehensive model and would be designed into smaller learning communities, which offered an ideal structure for implementing career-based pathways.

As Superintendent Snavely explained, “We were really trying to determine what would be a good niche... how could we develop this? We knew that it most likely needed to be something unique and different from our other comprehensive high schools.” When the district first got involved with this type of reform, former School Board President Richard Morris recalled, it was “just a preliminary exploration of schools within schools and small learning communities.”

Mike Henson, who had been serving as principal of Harmony Magnet, was instrumental in the district’s exploration of different models for career-based education, which ultimately led to Porterville’s application to become a National Academy Foundation (NAF) pilot district with Linked Learning. Morris explained:

We had a particularly strong administrator up there who... had during his career looked for opportunities [to seek funding for] small learning communities.... That’s what started the process. We first got connected with Pathways, as it was called then, through that venue, and then created the charter school out of [a smaller learning community grant] so that gave us more flexibility [with resources] and it went on from there.

### Exploring New Models of Career Education

According to Morris, Henson began looking at the different models of schools and smaller learning communities. With Superintendent Snavely, Henson and Morris attended a National Academy Foundation (NAF) conference in New Orleans. They liked what they learned about the NAF model and approach. Former Board President Morris recalled:

Through a conference we attended in New Orleans Intermediaries ... we met some individuals from NAF and that kind of was our first exposure as to what the Pathway concept that CTE integration with Core Standards was all about.... Right away we were quite fascinated with it.... We saw some real possibilities.

As Superintendent Snavely explained, the more he learned, the clearer his vision for high school reform became:

So as we continued to explore with NAF we then got connected with ConnectEd.... Being one of the pilot districts for the engineering pathway, ConnectEd, of course, was involved with writing the curriculum. Through that just we kept developing a stronger and stronger linkage with the whole concept. The more we discovered about it, the more we were convinced that this really was the new direction for high school reform.

Richard Morris, Porterville's board president at the time, explained how he, along with other members of the district, saw the concept of the pathway as the reform that would profoundly change the actual experience of school: "I believe it is a different way of doing school," he explained, adding,

We have been doing school, particularly high school, as though we were transitioning from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy, and that happened a century ago, and so we're still doing school that way and we're in the post-industrial age now.

Porterville's district leaders recognized that Linked Learning would be a commitment to a long-term reform involving slow and steady change. As Assistant Superintendent Ken Gibbs said:

[We're] not looking for that for one or two years and then you abandon it and go on to something else. With the magnitude of this change I don't think we can do that very fast change.... My experience in education is it's so very simple to have the newest thing that's good.

Pathways are not a "quick fix," explained Superintendent Snavely, but rather about "changing the way teachers teach and students learn."

## Communicating the Vision

**K**ey to the successful implementation of education reform is the articulation of a clear purpose and vision, which are not only understood by the team that is implementing the reform, but, more critically, by those who are experiencing it. PUSD's vision was not only directed at changing career education but also at expanding the opportunities for Porterville's high school graduates. In a rural community, the notion that every high school graduate would be prepared both for the world of work and for college broke through to a new level of expectations. Every student would have a choice of pathway based on their own interests and be provided with academic options. Each pathway would strive for equitable distributions of students across gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Across the district, the community would be engaged; parents and teachers would see the relevance of these pathways for the future—for the world of work as well as for postsecondary education.

### **PRESSing Forward**

At the Linked Learning District Leadership Development Series' Summer Institute on June 26-29, 2009, during a weeklong institute sponsored by SCOPE at Stanford University to launch the initiative, Porterville brought a top-level district leadership team, with the purpose of mapping out their strategy for rolling out Linked Learning. The team comprised:

- Superintendent John Snavelly,
- Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Ken Gibbs,
- Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services Valene Staley,
- Principal of Harmony Magnet and (former) Director of Pathways Mike Henson,
- Board President (former) Richard Morris, and
- Porterville's Teachers Union President Stan Ennis.

Porterville's leadership team was introduced to an innovative approach for leading and managing change, called PRESS ("Persuade, Recruit, Energize, Staff, and Sequence"), an organizational management framework taught by Stanford Graduate School of Business Professor Hargeavea ("Huggy") Rao. Porterville's team agreed that "P," persuading the community about Linked Learning, was the first and foremost priority. According to the team's informal notes from the institute, the following was their "change task":

- Define message—simple, symbolic
- Communicate the mission statement, goals, and outcomes to all stakeholders—Linked Learning was for EVERY student
- Identify audience, key stakeholder groups and prioritize targets
- Develop talking points for each stakeholder group

In working through the PRESS process, the team identified the specific messages they wanted to communicate in terms of content and audience, narrowing down the key points of the message:

- Integrating career and technical education in a way that would prepare students for the world of work and postsecondary education.
- Making learning more meaningful and relevant for students through interdisciplinary projects, work-based learning, and partnerships with the community.
- Raising the community's expectations for Porterville's graduates, and expanding opportunities beyond high school.

### **Defining the Message: Linked learning is relevant to every student, every school, every teacher**

In the months following the team's experience at the Linked Learning District Leadership Summer Institute, the team began to break down, prioritize, and strategize how best to communicate three messages aimed at two main audiences: students and parents, and teachers and schools. The three messages were as follows:

- First, *multiple pathways were for every student*. Snavely described this message as “the relevance factor”:

I think the main point is the relevance factor... so that the parents and the adults of the community can appreciate [that] if a student finds interest [in the career theme], they are more likely to be successful. I think most people can relate to that and can understand.

- Second, *multiple pathways would enable every student to be prepared for college as well as for the world of work*. The team also agreed that it would be important to identify the ways in which Linked Learning was going to be “different from the other programs.” As Mike Henson explained to Superintendent Snavely and his district colleagues during the Summer Institute at Stanford University:

We have to show them ... how [Linked Learning] is going to raise expectations ... how [Linked Learning] is going to get our kids prepared.... We have to show parents how pathways are going to help their kids get a job and also into college.”

- Third, *Linked Learning was a district priority with “staying power.”* The team identified a perennial challenge with reform—the common perception among teachers of initiatives always “coming and going.” For teachers to be invested and engaged in Linked Learning, the district needed to communicate how and why Linked Learning offered the most potential in transforming schools, teaching, and learning. Snavely contends:

I think we have [succeeded] because we've been able to expose and communicate the vision [of multiple pathways] to students and parents.... [They] have bought into it 100 percent ... [and] our business community is thrilled about it. When they hear [about Linked Learning] at our community clubs, our Rotary and service organizations ... immediately the reaction is very positive ... [especially] when we describe what it is we're doing and what our approach is.

For Snavely and his team, helping Porterville's stakeholders understand the significance of pathways and their importance for every child was vital in rolling out Linked Learning across the high schools. Since the Linked Learning model offered students the choice of a pathway, the district recognized the importance of communicating the three key points about this choice described above. All of these messages were key to Porterville's implementation strategy because they sent a clear signal to all teachers and schools in the system that Linked Learning was not only a district priority, but a long-term, systemic solution in which the district was willing to invest.



**Students from Multimedia and Technology at Monache High School with the pamphlets they designed for the annual Porterville Air Faire. (June 2011)**

## Engaging Key Stakeholders & Building Ownership

**F**or stakeholder groups that were brand new to pathways, the district's first goal was simply getting the word out—communicating the concept of multiple pathways and showing how they would be rigorous, challenging, and relevant for students. The district's initial strategy was through traveling presentations, often referred to as “road shows or “dog-and-pony shows.” While all similar in essential content, each “show” was tailored to be relevant for a particular stakeholder audience. Presentations at school sites, for example, included information for potential business partners. As Snavely recalled:

I think a lot of it was just the classic communication, going out ... you know, the road shows, the dog-and-pony shows. Going out and meeting with staff, the whole focus on graduation requirements, on the pathway concept, what our strengths and weaknesses as a district in our performance, which ultimately led to the seven-period day development, was a huge piece ... it forced us and allowed us, at the same time, to effectively communicate with the entire staff that these are the issues that we need to address, here's the solution for it.

The district's first step toward developing a broader base of pathway support was to identify key stakeholder groups to target. Without these groups' support, the pathway initiative would have a difficult time succeeding.

The key stakeholders identified by the Porterville district Linked Learning team included the following:

- School-site personnel (including pathway leads and teachers, school-site administrators, and non-pathway teachers)
- School board members
- Students
- Parents (both parents of enrolled pathway students and parents without enrolled pathway students)
- Community members/voters
- Community leaders (e.g., chamber of commerce members, mayor)
- Civic clubs (e.g., Rotary Club)
- Higher education institutions (e.g., Porterville Community College)
- Businesses and industry leaders

### Getting the Board on Board

Some of these stakeholder groups, such as the school board, had been involved with Porterville's Linked Learning initiative from its early days of applying to become a Linked Learning district in 2008. When asked about the school board's role in the initiative, Superintendent Snavely replied, “The board has been supportive all along. I

think having board members on the district leadership team is critical.” Moreover, the board’s support for the pathways has been communicated clearly and visibly. As superintendent Snavelly described, “The board has been exceptionally clear in the message at meetings. If anything comes up about pathways, the statement is, that’s our direction, and there hasn’t been a division about the fact that pathways are good for kids.” The board also has been consistent in its support of the initiative. As one of the board members explained:

[W]e’re all sending the same message.... [W]e’ve had a transition over a three-term cycle and it’s still moving forward with the same, if anything, more intensity. I appreciate the point too because the board isn’t always united on every issue, but this one they clearly are. There is no mistaking that the board is focused on this.

Other groups, such as students, parents, and the majority of school-site personnel, were not involved with initial pathway development. However, as these groups undoubtedly were going to be affected by the pathway initiative, in many ways they were built-in stakeholders. Thus the district’s primary goal with regard to these groups was to ensure that they actually were true, visible partners in the initiative, not just silent participants.

The various stakeholders, such as civic groups, business leaders, and community members, were specifically identified and targeted by district and pathway personnel as potential partners. Additionally, members of the district leadership team reached out to community and civic groups such as the Porterville Chamber of Commerce. Capturing the chamber of commerce support, according to Director of Pathways Cindy Brown, was a turning point for pathway partnerships. The district’s relationship with the chamber, she explained, led to business support. Capturing business support then had an effect on parents and community members, as they were often more likely to pay attention when community employers talked up the pathways.

### **Opening Avenues for Community Participation**

Creating advisory boards for every pathway is an essential element of Linked Learning, and in Porterville, this has been a successful strategy for broadening and deepening the community’s ownership throughout the district. In Porterville, the creation of advisory boards for every pathway has been particularly strategic in that it has provided a transparent and open structure through which a diverse range of community members could become involved in pathways, interacting directly with teachers and students at the school site. The structure of the advisory boards also provided a forum through which information could be shared and discussed among the school, community members, and the district.

In Porterville, advisory boards for the different pathways are on a continuum of development. The advisory board for the Academy of Engineering at Harmony Magnet is among the best developed. Described by a school-site administrator as “the epitome of a powerful and engaged advisory board,” this board has been functioning for the longest time. Currently headed by a locally respected businessman, John Corkins, the

board provided an open forum for industry partners to deepen their relationships with pathways. For example, one of the board members, Dr. Rosa Carlson, is the president of Porterville Community College. Her role on the board is to facilitate discussion and alignment between the two educational entities. Other board members sponsor student internships or participate in work-based learning opportunities. Not all community and industry partners involved in Linked Learning serve on advisory boards, however. At other sites, advisory boards are in the process of being formed, or are just beginning to develop work-based learning experiences.

All three members of the pathway office have focused on increasing the depth and breadth of community and industry involvement beyond internship sponsorship and serving on advisory boards. A district office administrator recalled how multiple businesses and individuals were involved in one restructured pathway event, Career Day:

Cindy worked very closely with the Rotary in putting together a total change in the way they have done career day.... I think I counted 23 businesses and maybe 60 individuals out of the 243 businesses that came together for that morning and worked with students in one capacity or another, identifying career strands. So it's a shift.

What appears to make the advisory boards in Porterville particularly successful is that they have provided the district with an additional, self-generating vehicle for outreach. Moreover, because each of the advisory boards is dedicated to a single pathway, members can differentiate their activities and communication according to their pathway's needs. The presence of Cindy Brown and members of her team at the different advisory board meetings further enables the district to be aware of the ongoing needs and progress of the pathway.



**Students from the Academy of Engineering at Harmony Magnet Academy giving a presentation of their student-drawn sidewalk renderings and discussing construction plans the Porterville City Council. (August 2011)**

## Building Capacity to Support a System of Pathways

One of the hallmarks of Linked Learning as an educational reform is its call for districts to implement change systemically—across school sites, across key constituent groups, across departments within a high school, and across divisions within the central office. Another distinctive aspect of Linked Learning is the way it brings together decades of high school reforms, including high school redesign, assessment reform, and inquiry-based and experiential learning.

In Porterville, the district's efforts to build the capacity for all those involved to do this work is evident in the following ten strategies, some deliberate and purposeful, others unintended and fortuitous.

### Strategy 1: Creating Reform Coherence

As mentioned earlier, in developing its implementation strategy for Linked Learning, Porterville's leadership team made a key and early decision to integrate two reform initiatives aimed at high schools—a National Academies Foundation initiative and a Small High Schools Grant—and bundle them under the umbrella of Linked Learning. This not only lessened confusion at the school level about which reform to focus upon, but also communicated to schools that Linked Learning was the district's policy priority for improving high schools. The district's positioning of these multiple reforms guided schools to focus on the design and implementation of career-based pathways as the vehicle for school improvement. Porterville's district leadership team also made a strategic decision to start the process by fully building out Linked Learning in one new high school, Harmony Magnet, which would then serve as the model for structuring career-based pathways at other schools. This also allowed them to ensure teacher buy-in by hiring staff in the new school who would be committed to the concept of Linked Learning.

As the district began supporting the design and implementation of pathways across high schools, Porterville's district leadership realized that while clarity and guidance from the central office were essential, on-the-ground, technical assistance to build school- and pathway-site capacity was equally vital. To facilitate this, the district made structural changes to the central office, strategically assigned principals to specific sites to ensure strong leadership, and launched a successful campaign to change the master schedule for all high schools in the district.

### Strategy 2: Prioritizing Leadership at the Site

The creation of the Linked Learning team and its placement within the central office was an organizational restructuring aimed at increasing the district's capacity, thus enabling the district, in turn, build capacity at the school sites. First, a dedicated team, staffed by experienced practitioners, was created for the sole purpose of implement-

ing Linked Learning and providing guidance and support to pathway leaders at every school site. The creation of the Linked Learning Team increased the district's capacity to provide on-the-ground technical support and enabled the Director to hire two work-based learning coordinators to develop partner relationships. The team has played an active role in placing students into work-based learning opportunities, among other forms of assistance.

To further build capacity at the school site, Porterville's leadership team first focused their attention on providing strong leadership at struggling sites. For example, Superintendent Snaveley, together with the Board, made a strategic decision to move the principal of Harmony Magnet Academy to Granite Hills, which was having difficulties with the development of its pathways. According to the perception of one of the pathway leads, "I think that they moved him there primarily to save the pathways, 'cause the pathways over there were not developing the way they should have."

Another pathway lead continued:

It couldn't have been done without [Principal Jeff Bottoms's] leadership.... He's just an amazing mentor because we were just left there hanging, trying to climb out of a



**Harmony Magnet Academy student on a work-based learning internship, Porterville Air Faire. (June 2011)**

hole by ourselves, and then he came and he just gave you a vision. His understanding from Harmony just made it so much easier for us to grab and try. I'm not going to take anything away from us; we've worked really hard, but it's been with his leadership and guidance—kind of bring[ing] us back down to earth.

### **Strategy 3: Creating Time**

As stated earlier, Porterville's district leaders did not shy away from bold decisions aimed at building leadership and organizational capacity at the school site. Such moves included shifting all schools from a six- to a seven-period day, a campaign that was led by a cadre of teacher leaders, appointed by the superintendent and galvanized by the charge to raise graduation rates. Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, Ken Gibbs, observed:

We've had success building capacity with going to a seven-period day so that some of the issues associated with [career-related] electives and those things [such as work-based learning] could be addressed. And bringing the [administrative] staff and the teaching staff primarily around to that position, without having additional costs, I think speaks well to the [understanding and] cooperation of the whole staff [about Linked Learning].

### **Strategy 4: Starting Small to Spark Innovation**

The district leadership's decision to build on its existing Small School Grant to develop Linked Learning seems to have served several strategic purposes. First, this decision increased the likelihood for success at Harmony Magnet and for the Linked Learning initiative as a whole, by allowing the district to hire a strong leader to build the new model from the ground up, rather than retrofitting existing school structures and dismantling long-held traditions. Teachers and students who came to Harmony Magnet knew that the Linked Learning approach—the career-themed coursework, the teaming, the project-based instruction—would be different. Second, this high-profile strategy helped to create buy-in across other sites throughout the district, because other sites could visibly see and learn what was possible at Harmony. Jeff Bottoms, who became the second principal of Harmony Magnet, described the effectiveness of the district's strategy to start out with one site and build off its success to expand to other sites:

So what's happened is a model that we helped to start... and that could not have happened without that management. The district, I think, has a great vision, and they took this model, which... has now grown to be this incredible model... the gospel of Harmony is now being sold to other campuses as well.

According to Cindy Brown, Director of Pathways, the district's strategy of beginning with two "open choice" pathways at Harmony and expanding to nine pathways, which eventually became located in all five PUSD high schools, has worked well. "The success that started at Harmony helped pave the path for PUSD to expand its efforts into a

Linked Learning district-wide initiative,” she explained, adding, “In a matter of just a few years, we see the ‘gospel of pathways’ spreading across our K-12 educational system and our local community.”

### **Strategy 5: Recruiting a Critical Mass of Committed Teachers and Students**

District leadership also made it a priority to staff Harmony Magnet School with a critical mass of teachers who enthusiastically embraced career-based pathways. Mike Henson, Harmony Magnet Academy’s first principal, who also became the district’s Director of Pathways, recalled the first informational meeting for teachers interested in being part of the new school:

When we had our first initial meeting with staff to see who wanted to go there... 40 teachers were sitting there [who] wanted to find out about it, and we were only going to select, I think, 4 or 5 or 6! We’re still opening positions there, and we’re still getting a lot of interest for people wanting to transfer.

Henson teamed up with district leaders, including Dr. Snavely, to make presentations to groups of parents to encourage them to enroll their students in a pathway, as well as to teachers looking to work at a pathway. Other recruitment presentations were also directed at potential pathway students themselves. As one of the Harmony pathway leads explained, “The very first year we put out a grand and glorious [effort].... Harmony put on a beautiful road show; we took it to the 23 or 24 middle schools.” These presentations provided information about the purpose and specifics of the program while facilitating conversations among different stakeholder groups.

During its first couple of years of existence, Harmony’s recruitment presentations were largely the responsibility of school-site personnel. However, as the district began to implement Linked Learning pathways in the other Porterville high schools, recruitment responsibilities shifted to the district, specifically to the pathways office. The transfer of recruitment responsibilities to this office, one of the school-site pathway leads believes, was done in the name of “fairness.” “One school may be more able to do a full-on recruitment; another might not have the capacity,” he explained.

To ensure each of the nine pathways within the five high schools had the means to recruit new students, the district pathway office hired professional videographers to prepare informational recruitment videos. The videos introduce the concept of pathways and showcase the unique aspects of each pathway. The video format also allows different stakeholders to take ownership of the pathways; students, teachers, administrators, and parents are featured front and center. Since 2010 these videos have been used as recruitment tools by the district pathway team whenever they visit middle schools, and also for presentations to parents and community members. The videos are also featured on the district’s pathway website.

## **Strategy 6: Ensuring Teacher Buy-In**

Ensuring that teachers believe in and buy into the Linked Learning model has been an ongoing priority for the district and site leadership, as well as a continuing challenge. As Dr. Snavelly explained, “There has to be a total buy-in. If the teachers and the staff do not accept it, it’s not going to happen; it’s not going to be successful.”

In the implementation of reform, teacher buy-in often depends on the ability of a district to strike a balance between providing centralized guidance and promoting site-level autonomy. Porterville is no exception, as the district has faced some challenges in these areas. While the district certainly sees the value in ownership in the form of teacher engagement in pathway and curriculum design, it is still working on how to implement the initiative in a way that facilitates that engagement authentically.

Reflecting on the topic of teacher buy-in to the Linked Learning model, Dr. Snavelly commented, “I’d have to say our most difficult audience has been our own [teaching] staff.” Many teachers have been skeptical or apprehensive about the Linked Learning model, particularly when a pathway is in early stages of implementation or when the school is in transition to the Linked Learning model. It is during this time, after all, that dramatic changes to scheduling, curriculum, and teaching assignments occur. As one district official explained:

Of course everyone’s first reaction is how does this impact me and what I do and what am I going to have to do differently in order to fit in? If I view that as more than I want to do then there’s push-back. So trying to address and soften that push back has been some of our challenge.

Ken Gibbs, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, noted:

It takes a long time to work with bargaining units and teaching staff to move to the flexibility that we need to get the school within a school concept and have buy-in. That’s not something that I think you can do in one or two years and do successfully. We could legislate it from here, but that’s not the way it’s going to work.

One pathway lead described his initial reaction to the Linked Learning implementation:

Did you ever see that animated coverage, back in the mid-2000s, of George Bush’s plan to return to the moon...? That’s the kind of feeling I got two-and-a-half years ago when Harmony’s original administrator said, “The Academy will be doing this and students will go to this and here’s the plan.”

## **Strategy 7: Clarifying the Vision through Strategic Messaging**

Reflecting on what factors may have contributed to situations in which school-site staff bought into the initiative or demonstrated ownership, Dr. Snavelly remarked, “I believe

it's primarily when we've gone in and methodically communicated." In these cases, he believes, information was provided in "appropriate doses so that they [could] remain open to the idea and not be overwhelmed with what the change means to them or what it could mean to them." When teacher buy-in remains problematic, Snavely often attributes it to "not adequately communicating the vision," how pathway designs are relevant to the community, or how teachers will fit into the model. Any lack of buy-in, he believes, is "not necessarily push-back from a resistance standpoint, but push-back from just a lack of understanding."

One factor that may have contributed to early skepticism among teachers was apprehension about the extent to which teachers and schools would have ownership in the design of their pathways. Despite the district's well-intentioned efforts to disseminate information about the Linked Learning model itself—the design, the concept of multiple pathways, the curriculum, the program components—there was not enough attention directed at reassuring teachers, as professionals, about the need for and process of change. As one pathway lead described, "I wouldn't say we had a lot of support from the district [to transform teacher mindsets to those of an academy]."

However, as the district began to direct its attention to teachers, with the aim of building the capacity of pathway leaders and providing pathway teams more site-based professional development and training, a more shared understanding appears to have emerged. As one Pathway Lead observed, "I think they've done a very good job of getting us to see what is they're trying to do, and that's been very helpful.... The message is consistent; that's, at least, my impression."

The importance of clearly communicating the district's pathway message, proposed structure, and current/future developments was repeatedly stressed by both district and school-site personnel.

## **Strategy 8: Engaging School Staff in Constructing Curriculum and Program Models**

In addition to striving to communicate clearly and often, another strategy was to involve teachers and school-site personnel in the process of shaping the vision, design, and curricula for the pathways—a function of the district's "bottom-up" approach. Both of these strategies have been viewed by the district office as appropriate and effective ways to go about building a deeper sense of pathway ownership and advocacy among the teaching staff. In November 2009, Rob Atterbury, ConnectEd coach and district liaison, recalled a meeting with the Joint District Advisory Council (the original structure and first group of key stakeholders created to oversee Linked Learning). The council reviewed the district's student achievement data and found that only 16.8% of high school graduates had A-G completion compared with the state's average of 39%. Galvanized by this data and determined to make the case that Porterville needed to raise expectations, Snavely formed the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council, which comprised teacher leaders from each

of the high schools. Atterbury explained, “The superintendent called this ‘The Challenge’: challenging teachers not only to take the message back to their schools but to propose and recommend ways to raise the graduation rate.” The outcome was a groundswell of support for Linked Learning. Early support, however, was also tempered by anxieties and lack of clarity about the implementation of pathways—for example, how quickly they needed to be put in place, what support was available, and which teachers would be affected. There was a period of time, according to one pathway lead, when “not all the teachers were on board with the pathway concept, even on my team.” He went on to say, “Many teachers didn’t realize that they would have to change themselves.”

According to another pathway lead, support for Linked Learning began to grow, however, as the district showed an interest and willingness to listen directly to schools about their specific needs and began to actively support leaders in proposing solutions. He stated:

The district has learned a heck of a lot, and I think they have evolved, and I’m really excited now. I was a little dubious in 2008-09 [about] whether they really knew where they were going... I see [that] the leadership personnel have gone to all these ConnectEd workshops all over the place for the last two years, and each time they come back, there’s more information and, yes, I see a further continuing direction toward the path that I agree with.

Professional trust began to develop between the district and the pathway sites as pathway leads and teachers were granted more autonomy, particularly with regard to curriculum and instruction. As one pathway lead said:

The district... and the school site let us make that decision as teachers... We had to rethink our sequence of courses, and they left it up [to us].... We got together as the engineering teachers and we got some English teachers, math teachers, science teachers, and we all agreed to have two sequences for the engineering, and they didn’t dictate.... They’ve let us, as professionals, put that together.... That was a major change, but they’ve been supportive in our thinking, and ... they’ve taken me at my word that I’ve done my research and I know what I’m doing, which is very nice.

Dr. Snavely explains the district’s “bottom-up” approach to developing specific pathways and ensuring teacher buy-in as follows:

I’ve never wanted this to be a top down, this is what you’re going to do. We’ve really gone to great effort to try to involve everyone in the process to make them feel a part of it and to make them... well not make them believe... but for them to know that they really are creating the vision. It’s not us telling them, but it’s us together and that they have input and that we listen to that input and make adjustments, and that each campus is unique. Each pathway is unique and it’s not a cookie-cutter approach and that each one can tailor it to their subject matter and their student population.



**Students from the Academy of Performing Arts at Harmony Magnet Academy with Advisory Board Chairman Monte Reyes at a work-based learning opportunity and jug band performance at the Porter Putnam Celebration. (October 2011)**

As PUSD's leadership team became more open and willing to listen to teachers at the pathway sites, the district was able to shift strategically from its previously centralized way of providing support to an approach that was more professionally empowering to pathways. Superintendent Snavelly observes:

We are much more comfortable... it is easier to identify the issues that we know we need to address now, whereas before we didn't even know what those issues were.... We know that some of our pathways need some attention in specific areas.... Just the fact that we can identify those allows us to aggressively attack and to realize what needs to be done. That doesn't mean we necessarily have all the answers yet, but at least, again, we know the questions.

This deliberate shift in organizational behavior from a more top-down to a more bottom-up approach to change communicated an important message of support to pathway teams at a critical stage of development, paving the way for the Linked Learning team to respond and collaboratively problem-solve at the site level.

### **Strategy 9: Facilitate Learning through Partnerships**

Porterville's leadership has also been strategic and savvy in using the support, resources, and opportunities provided by partners such as ConnectEd and SCOPE in building district leadership capacity to manage and implement change, and in improving

pathway leaders' knowledge base and technical capacity around the components of Linked Learning. Not only has Porterville consistently attended ConnectEd's network convenings—meetings, institutes, residencies—but it often brings one of the largest teams, despite being a small district. Superintendent Snavelly in particular has been a dependable and regular presence during these gatherings. According to one member of SCOPE's staff who has facilitated team conversations with Porterville, "He is a big supporter of the common learning experience. Both he and members of his team have expressed appreciation for the learning that takes place during these events, and for the opportunity to reflect with guided facilitation. Snavelly is always open to learning and working with his team to move them forward."

Supporting teacher leaders and building their leadership capacity is one area of ongoing learning through ConnectEd. As one pathway lead noted, the district now sees the development of teacher leadership as a key strategy for long-term sustainability:

One thing we learned with ConnectEd we learned early on was that they want lead teachers because administrators come and go.... If it wasn't for us, I don't know where these pathways would be. I don't know if the administration totally buys into [that idea] yet, but I believe they're evolving in that direction.

### **Strategy 10: Planning for Sustainability**

From a financial and human resource perspective, Porterville has been able to support Linked Learning by taking a fiscally conservative, long-term approach. For example, they have been savvy about earmarking and allocating financial resources for school sites to support the expansion and improvement of pathways. Assistant Superintendent Ken Gibbs, explained:

We've always had a kind of a bias for the fiscal side of education, the business side. Our superintendent comes from that side. The superintendent before him came from that side. The one before him came from that side so we've always been very prudent in the way that we spend our money and I think as far as capacity goes you really can't have programs without having the funding to do them. The reason why we do have the funding is because of wise decisions by the administration and the board to keep the district financially solvent.

Another example of this long-term view is evident in the district's investment in human resources, particularly in its recruitment and hiring practices. "The issue, for me," explained former Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Dennis Martinez, "has been the hiring of the teachers and staff at schools, making sure we get the right people in there." Although the majority of teachers are recruited from within Porterville, the PUSD's human resources department is prepared to recruit from outside the district in order to attract highly qualified candidates and hire the kind of specialist teachers needed for pathways. Former Board President Richard Morris said:

I've been in the public sector for 50 years and I have never seen a stronger human relations or human services department. We keep out of trouble you know, legal trouble by having sound practices. We recruit some of the finest teachers and administrators around.

One way Porterville has gone about recruiting teachers has been to offer incentives to those outside the district. For example, Porterville recognizes the number of years a new employee worked in his or her previous district, which allows the new employee to maintain his or her place on the career ladder. This is an appealing and fairly uncommon practice among California school districts, particularly in the current economic climate.



**Granite Hills Freshman Orientation for the Law Justice and Education pathway, led by Rich Lamby, 2011 Teacher of the Year for Tulare County. (August 2011)**

## Summary & Implications

**T**his section highlights some of the areas of success and growth that PUSD has experienced, as well as the challenges the district recognizes that it will likely face with scalability and sustainability as it expands pathways throughout the district.

### Outcomes to Date

As PUSD goes into its fifth year of implementation, and looks forward to its first class of graduating seniors at Harmony Magnet Academy in May 2012, Porterville's district leadership team has much to celebrate as well as to reflect upon.

**School Redesign.** In two short years, Porterville has made Linked Learning concrete in the form of a new school. Within the district there are a total of nine pathways programs across five high schools. Over one-quarter of Porterville's high school students are now enrolled in a pathway. According to Cindy Brown, the percentage of eighth graders who chose to enroll in a pathway increased from 29% in 2010-11 to 49% in 2011-12, one possible indicator of the growing success of the Linked Learning team's efforts at raising awareness about the various pathway options available at the high schools and recruiting students to enroll. The initiative is also better understood and is becoming a dynamic engine for secondary education reform. Superintendent Snavely said he is proud of what the district has accomplished:

I'm very pleased with where it's going. I think two years ago we never thought we would at this stage [be] going into nine different pathways ... I'd probably have said "no way," but seeing the progress being made ... the fear factor has decreased significantly from what it was two years ago. I mean, just the unknown and the anticipation of what to do, how to do, why, and so on, most of that's faded away.

**Ownership and Buy-in.** A sense of ownership is an important outcome of the process the district used. A board member on the district's leadership team shared her observations and experience at the school-site level:

Over the two years [I] have really [seen] a dramatic change in staff members and their opinions [at the different school sites], and how they have viewed the pathway concept]... [now teachers] see the value in the pathway, and I think that [means] the district as a whole has got buy-in and everybody sees the value ... in how [Linked Learning] helps every student.

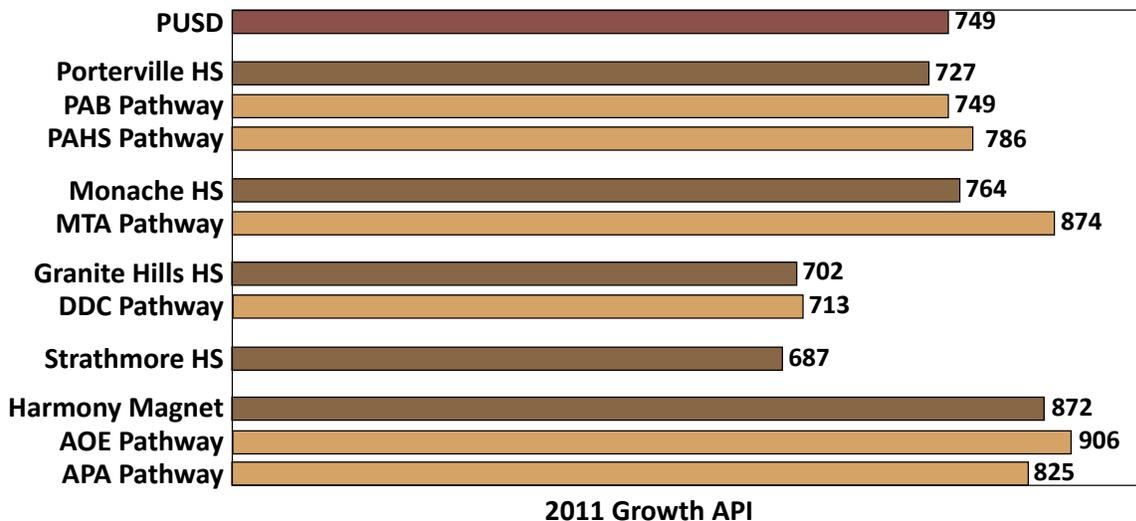
Essential to deepening and expanding the broad base of ownership has been the district's creation of an additional structure for ensuring the community's involvement and sustaining support for Linked Learning: The P8 Executive Council, through which Porterville's business and community leaders are now actively engaged in pathway design and development. What initially started out as a list of interested partners has become

a more formal, broad-based coalition, which now includes representatives from all the different pathway advisory councils. Other encouraging signs of a growing depth and breadth of ownership for Linked Learning include:

- *Shifting to teaching and learning.* P8 Council members are beginning to take a more active role in substantive issues, such as the graduation portfolio, project-based learning, and performance-based student assessment. According to district officials and pathway teachers, industry and community partners have been easy to work with because of their immediate and direct engagement with the pathways. “After they understand what the pathway experience is all about,” Dr. Snavelly explained, “most have an immediately positive response.”
- *Expanding conversations across stakeholder groups.* The frequency of advisory board meetings has increased across pathway sites, from an average of two meetings per school year to regular monthly meetings, an indication of the deepening engagement of parents, teachers, business representatives, and community leaders and their enthusiasm to participate in supporting the success of pathways.

**Student Expectations and Achievement.** With Linked Learning and career-themed pathways, the leadership team saw immense opportunities for raising parent and community expectations, for expanding the opportunities for all students to experience success, and for creating a groundswell of hope and excitement that would bring the

**Figure 1: Growth API Comparison of PUSD High Schools and Pathways (2010-11)**



\* Source: Porterville Unified School District, March 9, 2012

\*\* The Growth API summarizes a school's, an LEA's, or the state's performance on the Standardized Testing and Reporting Program and California High School Exit Examination tests. The API is on a scale of 200 to 1000.

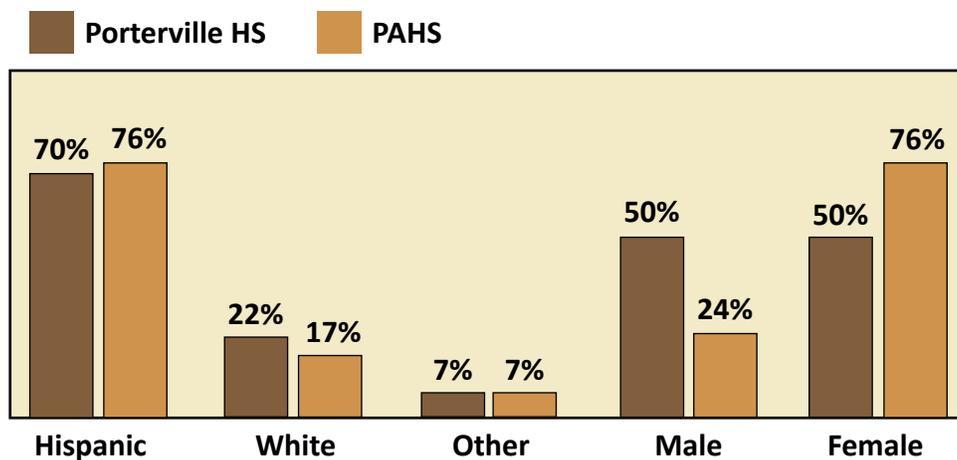
\*\*\* The pathways ESA at Monache, LJE at Granite Hills, and PAT at Strathmore are too new to have a 2011 Growth API.

world of work into schools. At Harmony Magnet Academy, the number of students with work-based learning opportunities and internships increased from 10% in the first year of pathway implementation (2008-09) to more than 90% this year.

- *API.* As Figure 1 (page 32) shows, in 2010-11 pathways had a higher API compared to the overall school API. Harmony Magnet, which has wall-to-wall pathways unlike the other high schools, has outperformed all schools and pathways in the district.
- *Expanded career opportunities for students.* At Harmony Magnet, the number of students with work-based learning opportunities and internships has increased from 10% in the first year of implementation (2008-09) to more than 90% this year. As shown in Figure 2 (below), the Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS) pathway at Porterville High School (PHS) has a greater percentage of female and Hispanic students enrolled in the pathway than the school as a whole—a promising indicator of the opportunities that career-themed pathways can offer to sub-groups who have been traditionally under-represented in the sciences.

Figures 3 and 4 (page 35) show that at nearly every high school across the district, students who were enrolled in a pathway passed the California Exit Exam (CAHSEE) for math and English language arts (ELA) at higher rates than their school overall.

**Figure 2: Comparison of Student Enrollment Demographics, Porterville High School and Porterville Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS) pathway, 2010-2011**



Source: Porterville Unified School District, February 21, 2012.

**Long-Term Vision for Change.** Porterville began with the goal of starting one high school with career-based pathways for every student; the district has now set out to have wall-to-wall pathways for all high schools as its vision for Linked Learning. According to Superintendent Snavelly:

I would love to see a completely no-boundaries high school attendance area ... that all of our schools would be wall-to-wall pathways ... that we have upwards of 10 to 12 different pathway concepts or career paths ... [that] every student would be able to get their first or second choice in what they feel would be of interest to them.

To ground that vision, the district leadership continues to be bold and clear in communication to schools and key stakeholders. Moreover, as a result of two years of strategic outreach and communication efforts, Superintendent Snavelly's vision for transforming high schools is not only shared by his leadership team, but equally important, strongly supported by Porterville's business leaders, community members, parents, and school leaders.

## Lessons Learned

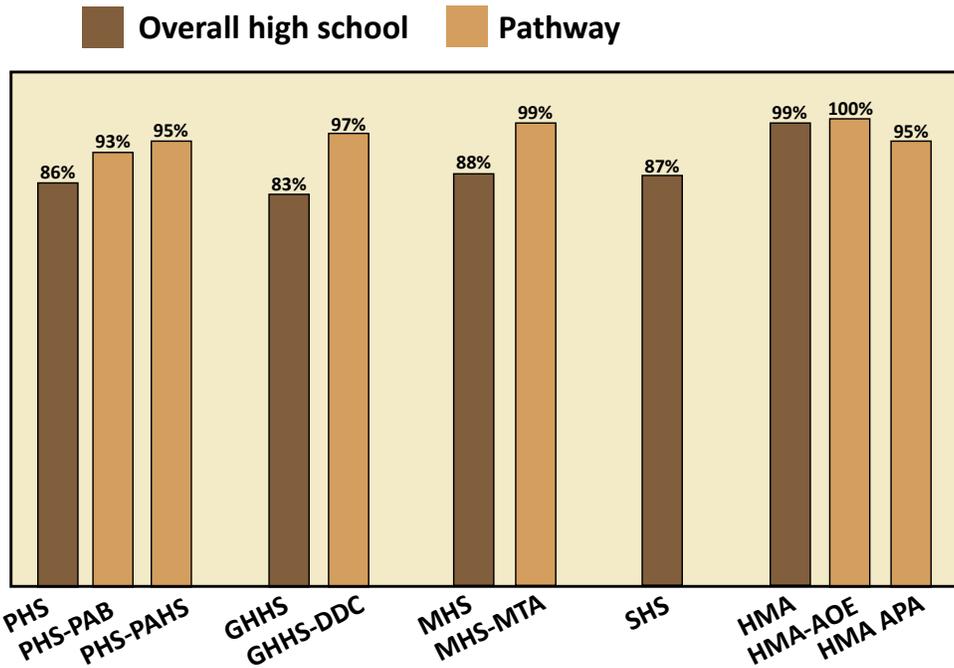
The composition, experience, and collaboration of Porterville's district leadership team have been the keys to the district's early success with Linked Learning. The district has made substantial progress toward the goal of transforming the high school experience for all students through the reform of career education, by taking an approach that is itself transformative, systemic, and innovative. Enabling this approach was the ability of Porterville's leadership to recognize the power and significance of successfully implementing a district-wide initiative across all five high schools. As Assistant Superintendent of Businesses Service Ken Gibbs, sees it:

We're really unique and feel a real responsibility ... we want to ensure that this model is successful in part because we want to show the other small rural areas that we can make this kind of model successful. We think that's very empowering for lots of folks who probably are kind of watching us.

**Lesson 1: Implementation Process.** To build the district's internal capacity, the leadership team carefully and thoughtfully developed a series of internal structures for discussion, information dissemination, and decision-making that has enabled key stakeholders to discuss areas such as those described above. Taking a long-term view enabled the district to project what specialized resources and staffing would be needed for the future expansion of pathways.

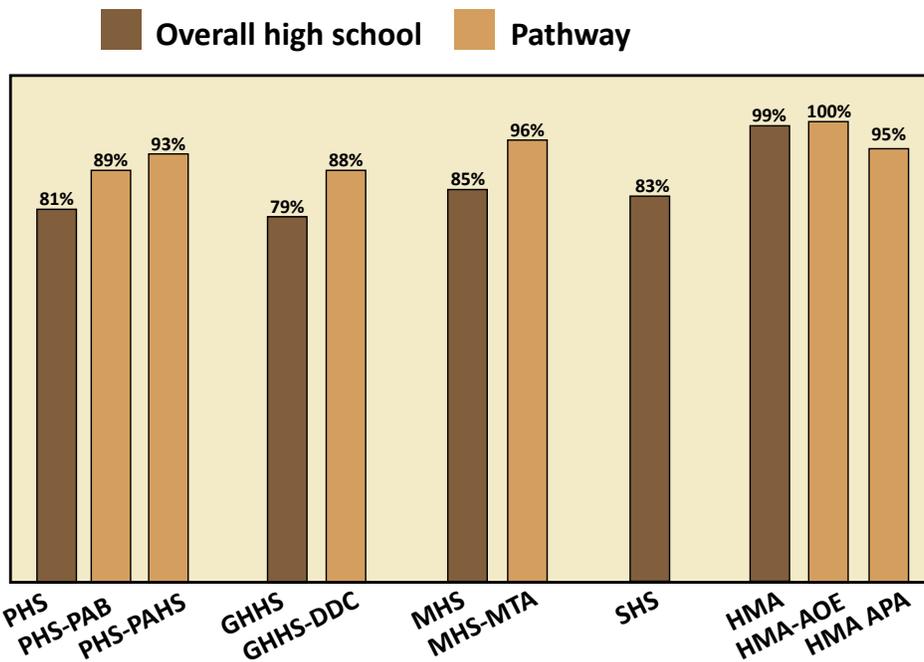
The district also made a series of decisions that enabled Linked Learning to be implemented in a way that was coherent and manageable. One of these decisions was to bring two high school reform initiatives with overlapping goals—the National Academies Foundation initiative and the Small Schools Construction Grant—under the umbrella of Linked Learning. Merging these initiatives not only provided coherence but also conveyed the message that Linked Learning was among the district's top priorities. Another

**Figure 3: Percentage of students passing 2010-11 CAHSEE in math by high school and pathway**



Source: Porterville Unified School District, February 21, 2012.

**Figure 4: Percentage of students passing 2010-11 CAHSEE in English language arts by high school and pathway**



Source: Porterville Unified School District, March 9, 2012.

key decision in Porterville’s implementation strategy was to start small and develop Harmony Magnet Academy into a strong model that could help guide the design and development of pathways at other schools.

**Lesson 2: Communication.** Much of the district’s success is due to its leaders’ realization, early on, of the need to be clear and purposeful in its communication across the district—to schools, teachers, parents, students, community members, and other stakeholder groups. The crafting and targeting of strategic messaging in the district’s communication efforts helped to generate interest, build awareness, recruit students, and build a strong base of support among multiple stakeholder groups. One pathway lead explained, “What we’ve had is a slowly awakening consciousness here, as people realize more and more that this [the pathway structure] is inevitable after all.”

The impact of the district’s ongoing communication has been vital in building strong working relationships defined by professional trust among schools and district leadership, the Linked Learning team, and external coaches. The next challenge is preparing teachers themselves to communicate strategically with key stakeholder groups regarding the expansion of pathways. Teachers expressed particular concerns about conducting advisory board meetings and communicating with industry partners. As the board president remarked:

I’ve spoken with teachers who say, “I’m great here in my classroom talking to 16-year-olds, but now you want me to go out and talk to community members? I don’t know if I’m polished enough ... to speak with the president of a company!”

**Lesson 3: Capacity-Building.** Porterville has engaged district and school leaders in extensive knowledge-building activities as part of the Linked Learning Network. Many teachers have begun to be involved in designing curriculum and program features, supporting both ownership and greater competence in this new form of education. While a great deal of capacity has been built, especially among district and site leaders, there is more work to be done to support teachers as the reform rolls out. There is a sense of urgency among pathway leaders to extend their professional learning from the district’s leadership development and training to their teaching staffs. As a pathway lead said:

We’re learning some wonderful things: The district, through the pathway office, is really learning, and it’s going really great, but then you have these isolated teachers at these sites and we’ve been saying, they need to go to these workshops, they need to hear the things.

In two school sites, the pathway leads expressed the need to extend support and training to the teaching staff. One said, “I think we’re learning ... [the teachers] are learning as we’re learning ... [but] the problem is ... it’s not trickling down. Another added, “It’s one thing for us to go and see an enlightening experience, but it’s another thing for us to come back and say, ‘This is the way things are going,’ because the teachers here haven’t seen those enlightening experiences.”

Leaders recognize that teachers will need support to adapt to new roles and responsibilities in learning how to work as an academy team and as pathway teachers. This captures much of the agenda for the next stage of work.

The district has identified as one of its upcoming challenges helping an increasing number of teachers to engage with and evolve the district's vision of wall-to-wall pathways. Superintendent Snively seems to understand that a priority will be helping the teaching staff see how what they do in their individual classroom fits into the larger pathway design. In particular, teachers in positions that were already in place prior to Linked Learning will need support to manage the shift from traditional structures of comprehensive high schools to those of smaller learning communities such as academies and pathways.

Such a process is often difficult because it requires teachers to “come up with a whole new philosophy,” explains one of the pathway leads. For most of the teachers, their individual classroom has been, appropriately, the most important focus. In the early stages of reform, many “tried to fit in academy activities” rather than looking at changing their curriculum and instructional practices in collaboration with others to achieve an entirely new design.

Building teachers' instructional and leadership capacity will need to take new forms as teachers learn to collaborate in designing curriculum with an interdisciplinary approach, to align student outcomes to instruction, and to design performance assessments. According to Director of Pathways Cindy Brown, this will require changes in the district curricular design process, which has historically featured a traditional curriculum council:

We have challenges as we build curriculum for the classes, because we've had a curriculum development process that was more departmental.... Now we really need to create a pathway lead curriculum group that looks at [the new] integrated curriculum and says, “What's the difference between Digital Design 101 that's going to be in this academy, versus the digital design that is going to be in another one?” It's a shift in areas that we were not thinking about.

**Lesson 4: Sustainability.** The management of change is key to sustainability. A crucial lesson from Porterville has been the strength and stability of its leadership in carrying Linked Learning through the past two years, with minimal turmoil at the central office. Moreover, the deep institutional knowledge and expertise shared within this stable leadership team has helped to sustain the reform. Leadership within Porterville's school board, P8 Council, and advisory boards will inevitably change in member composition. Looking ahead, among the issues the district leadership knows it must plan for and consider include succession management and recruiting leaders who understand the breadth and depth of Linked Learning.

A member of the Joint Leadership Advisory Council positioned this concern as a challenge for education reform in general:

I think a weakness to all of reforms everywhere, including this reform, is that ... boards change and you don't know about that kind of mixture.... We have had for years a lot of stability on the board and that helps over a period of time, but you don't know [when leadership changes]. Quite frankly some board members may like the program or they may like the initiative, but they think that this is a speedboat that you can just swoosh like that and you can change instantly and that we ought to go wall-to-wall all the way around without having all of those support items in place. So that's a weakness, and it's a weakness everywhere, not just here.

Leadership that can carry forward a reform and manage and adapt to changes is most critical to the sustainability of Linked Learning, and vital to the success of systemic reform. At the district level, such leadership should also recognize the importance of building the internal capacity of teachers and distributing leadership to pathway leaders.

For Porterville, Rob Atterbury believes, “instruction is going to be critical, embedding multi-disciplinary based projects across [the different school sites] will take significant attention to professional development and teacher capacity-building.” Another challenge, as the number of pathways expands, is that there will undoubtedly be pathways with stronger leadership and capacity than others. Here the district will need address the implications of diversity in the quality of the pathway's design, program of study, and site-level leadership for equity; to do so, the district must monitor progress carefully, target assistance where it is needed, and look at such indicators as student enrollment, course completion, and postsecondary patterns.

While many challenges lie ahead, Porterville is well positioned to tackle these emerging issues. Atterbury's take resonates with a practical optimism: “Porterville is looking forward, they're prepared, and they have a plan to do this.”



Students from the Partnership Academy of Health Sciences at Porterville High School at the work-based learning internship with the Imperial Ambulance on the movie set of *The Devout*. (February 2012)

## Appendix A: Data Collected for Porterville Case Study

Data Collection Method	Source of Data	Date of Data Collection
<b>Informal communication (email correspondence, phone conversations)</b>	Former Director of Pathways Mike Henson Director of Pathways Cindy Brown Linked Learning Coach Rob Atterbury	October 2010 - present
<b>Individual interview</b>	Superintendent John Snaveley	Oct 10, 2010, May 5, 2011
	Assistant Superintendent of Businesses Service Ken Gibbs	October 10, 2010
	Harmony Magnet Academy Principal Jeff Bottoms Granite Hills High School Principal Jeff Bottoms	October 10, 2010 May 5, 2011
	Pathway Leads – Harmony Magnet Academy Pathway Leads – Granite Hills High School	October 10, 2010 May 5, 2011
	Broad-based coalition partners	October 11, 2010
<b>Group interview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Cabinet</li> <li>• John Snaveley, Superintendent</li> <li>• Valene Staley, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services</li> <li>• Ken Gibbs, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services</li> <li>• Cindy Brown, Director of Pathways, Cindy Brown</li> <li>• Hayley Buettner, Board Member</li> </ul>	May 5, 2011

*Continued, next page*

Data Collection Method	Source of Data	Date of Data Collection
<b>Observations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Leadership Development Series:</li> <li>Summer Institute, Stanford University</li> </ul>	July 26-31, 2009
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Leadership Residency, Long Beach</li> </ul>	Nov10-11, 2009
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint District &amp; Pathway Leadership Forum, Sacramento</li> </ul>	Feb 24-26, 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Leadership Residency, Pasadena</li> </ul>	May 10-11, 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Leadership Series Summer Institute, Stanford University</li> </ul>	June 28-30, 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Leadership Series Fall Event, Pasadena</li> </ul>	October 27-28, 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Leadership Series Residency, Sacramento</li> </ul>	November 9-10, 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Leadership Series Summer Institute, Stanford University</li> </ul>	June 27-29, 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District Leadership Series Residency, Los Angeles</li> </ul>	January 12-13, 2011
	District Leadership Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory Board Meeting, Harmony Magnet</li> </ul>	May 4, 2011
<b>Documents &amp; Reports</b>	Notes from District Leadership Development Series (See above)	Various (see above)
	Porterville Unified School District, System of Multiple Pathways, Implementation Plan Narrative	No date.
	ConnectEd Self-Assessment Narrative	January 2011
	ConnectEd Grantee Interim Progress Reports	No date.

# Appendix B

## PORTERVILLE PATHWAYS P8 COALITION: BY-LAWS

### DRAFT 9-25-11

#### ARTICLE 1 – NAME

The name of this coalition shall be the **Porterville Pathways** P8 Coalition (P8 Coalition).

#### ARTICLE II—PURPOSE

**The Porterville Pathways Coalition** functions in an advisory capacity to the superintendent and the board of education and works to rally support from the community for the pathways approach. This P8 Coalition shall act as mentors to the individual pathway advisory boards and may make recommendations regarding the development and expansion of each individual Pathway Advisory Board. Additionally, the P8 Coalition will provide input into current and potential future pathway programs, curriculum, activities, teacher training, and budget. The P8 Coalition will assist in providing a coordinated effort between Advisory committees to insure the success of all open choice pathway programs without sacrificing the integrity of any existing programs within the Porterville Unified School District. Specifically the P8 Coalition may assist with raising funds, recruiting students, securing internships and scholarships, and providing in-kind contributions to the local Pathway/Academy program.

#### ARTICLE III—OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the P8 Coalition is to support the following goals and policies of the local Pathway/Academy program:

1. Establish strong functional Advisory Boards for each of the open choice pathways.
2. Provide templates for bylaws, meeting formats, agendas and guidance for leadership to help orient the advisory boards towards a successful outcome.
3. Assist with establishment of industry sector partners to secure a balance between private and public input for the success of each Pathway Advisory Board
4. Enlist the expertise of individuals in the industry to assist with development and evaluation of curriculum, student selection, scholarships and internships.
5. Provide training and professional development opportunities for Pathway Advisory members and pathway personnel annually.

6. Providing and soliciting assistance from the business community in funding the Pathway/Academy program.
7. Advocating on behalf of all of the Pathways.

## **ARTICLE IV—ORGANIZATION**

The Porterville P8 Coalition will meet on the Second Friday of each Month (except July.) Additional meetings may be held by Committees, formally adopted by member vote, in order to give counsel and solve specific problems dealing with fundraising, internships, curriculum, professional development for pathway advisory members, teachers and other matters related to the needs of the Pathway Advisory boards. The P8 Coalition members will complete/update an annual strategic plan during a designated annual meeting.

## **ARTICLE V—MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1. Membership:**

1. The members of the P8 Coalition shall be representatives of the industry, colleges and universities, community leaders, and educators. P8 Coalition will consist of no more than fifteen voting members with 60% of the P8 Coalition members representing business and industry.
2. Members of the P8 Coalition shall receive no compensation for their services as P8 Coalition members.
3. New members will be provided New Coalition-Member Orientation, to include at minimum, information concerning P8 Coalition roles and responsibilities.

### **Section 2. Term of Membership:**

1. P8 Coalition Members shall initially serve either a one, two, or three year rotating term and shall serve no more than four consecutive terms. After the initial term each member shall be elected to a four year term. This will allow for no more than a one third rotation of the board at each annual election event.
2. Any member may resign from the Advisory Board by giving written notice to the Chairperson. The resignation will be effective immediately upon receipt of such notice.
3. Any member of the P8 Coalition who shall fail to attend a minimum of three consecutive meetings, without prior notice, in any academic year shall be asked to resign from the P8 Coalition. A member will be deemed to have attended a meeting if a duly qualified substitute attends on behalf of the member.

4. Appointment may be renewed by a majority vote of the members of the P8 Coalition.
5. Any P8 Coalition member may be asked to resign at any time, for any reason, by a majority vote of the members of the Coalition.

### **Section 3. Membership Requirements:**

1. The selection of members shall be made without respect to race, color, creed, national origin, age, handicap, sexual orientation or gender. The P8 Coalition shall include, but not be limited to, representatives from the following broad categories: (1) Previous Academy Personnel, (30%) (2) The economic and educational community, (20%) and (3) Chair person from each of the existing Academy advisory boards (50%)
2. Candidates must be nominated by a member in good standing for the P8 Coalition or in the case of a newly forming board and approved by a majority vote of its members.
3. Candidates must commit to and/or assist with implementation and oversight of the new pathway Advisory Boards.
4. Candidates must demonstrate a willingness to promote the pathway concept to the general and business communities.
5. Candidates must commit to providing in-kind contributions that will directly benefit the students throughout the all Pathway Programs.

### **Section 4. Membership Year:**

1. Academic, beginning on or about August 1, and ending on or about July 31.

## **ARTICLE VI—RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Commit to and/ or assist with establishing new Pathway Advisory Boards.
2. Provide in-kind contributions.
3. Strengthen public relations and publicity relative to the program.
4. Assist in evaluating the rigor, relevance and effectiveness of the curriculum to meet the needs of the industry, readiness for college and preparation for life.
5. Provide professional development activities for Pathway/Academy teachers and the Academy Director.

## **ARTICLE VII—MEETINGS**

### **Section 1 Quorum**

A simple majority of the P8 Coalition members shall constitute a quorum for conducting Coalition business.

### **Section 2 Voting**

Each active member of the P8 Coalition shall be entitled to vote on any issue presented to the P8 Coalition. A duly qualified alternate in attendance at a meeting may vote on behalf of a member, but no proxy votes are allowed. The P8 Coalition will approve recommendations based on a simple majority but will work toward consensus whenever possible.

### **Section 3 Agenda and Minutes**

The superintendent or his or her delegate will assist the Chairperson in coordinating the meetings and developing the agenda. The Pathway Director will act as staff to the P8 Coalition and ensure that absent P8 Coalition members will receive material and minutes distributed at the P8 Coalition meetings. Minutes will be distributed at least one week prior to the next P8 Coalition meeting. The Secretary or designee will record and certify minutes.

## **ARTICLE VIII—OFFICERS**

### **Section 1 Chairperson**

The P8 Coalition shall consist of one Chairperson. The Chairperson shall be elected by the members of the Advisory Board for a term of two years.

### **Section 2 Vice-Chairperson**

The P8 Coalition shall consist of one Vice-Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by the members of the P8 Coalition for a term of two years.

### **Section 3 Secretary**

A Secretary shall be nominated by the Chairperson and elected by the members of the Advisory Board for a term of two years.

### **Section 4 Treasurer**

A Treasurer shall be nominated by the Chairperson and elected by the members of the Advisory Board for a term of two years.

### **Section 5 Ex Officio Members**

Ex officio members shall consist of selected industry leaders, state or municipal government officials and school district staff, and are non-voting members.

## **ARTICLE IX—DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

### **Section 1 Chairperson**

The Chairperson's duties shall be those usually pertaining to the office set forth in Robert's Rules of Order and such other duties as may be prescribed.

### **Section 2 Vice-Chairperson**

The Vice-Chairperson's duties shall be to direct all meetings in the absence of the Chairperson to ensure the development and maintenance of a strong and active P8 Coalition.

### **Section 3 Secretary**

The Secretary shall keep record and disseminate the minutes of the P8 Coalition meetings. The Secretary shall also keep a current list of P8 Coalition members' names, company names, email and mailing addresses and other contact information.

### **Section 4 Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping, and reporting on the financial condition of the P8 Coalition, typically in concert with the chairperson. The Treasurer shall report the current financial condition of the P8 Coalition at each meeting.

\*\*All officers shall participate on at least one P8 Coalition Committee.

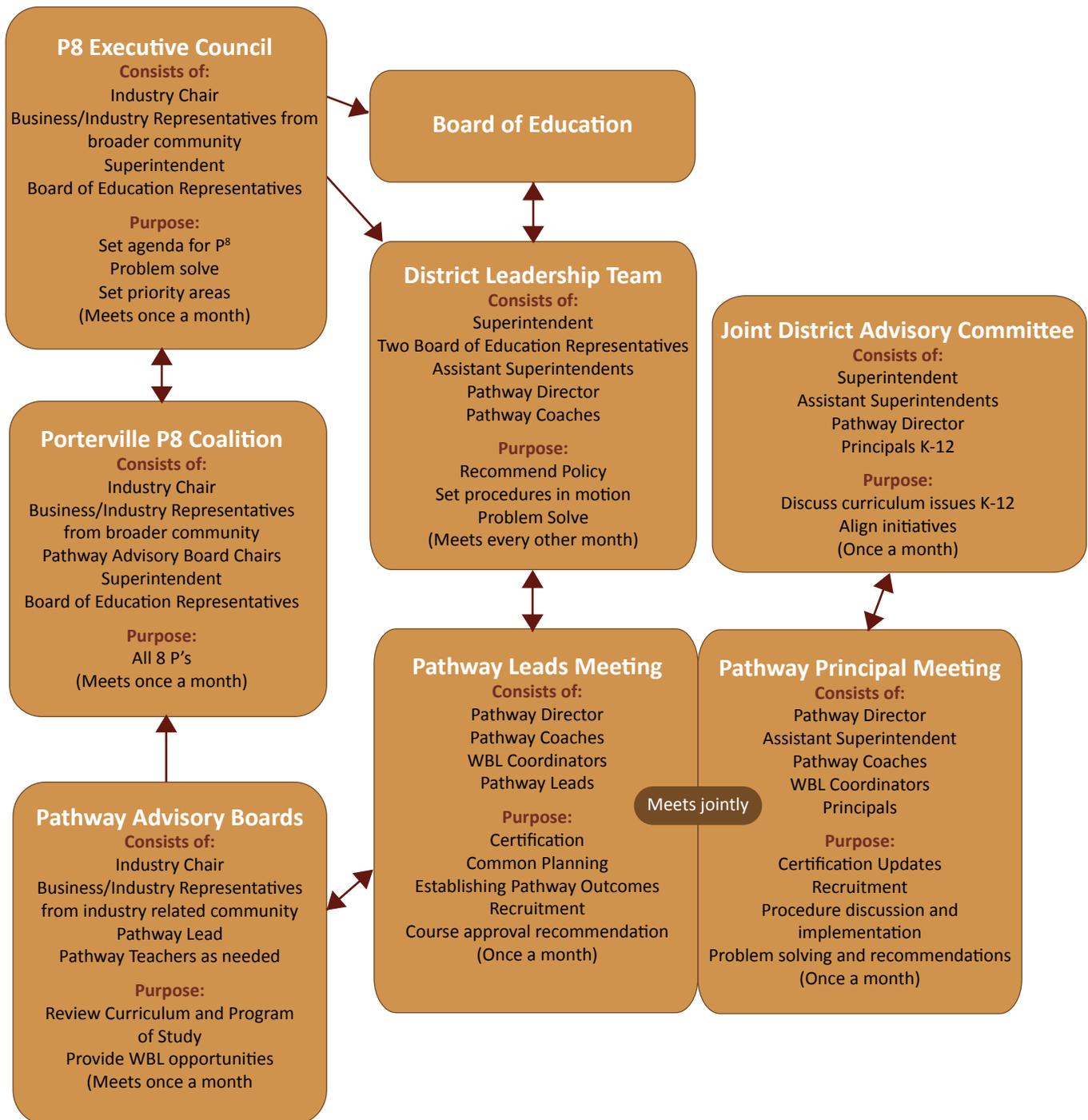
## **ARTICLE X—COMMITTEES**

1. Executive Committee—Executive committee shall include all officers and one member at large from the existing P8 Coalition as approved by the P8 Coalition
2. Standing/Adhoc Committees—Standing and Adhoc committees shall be established by a vote of the P8 Coalition.

## **ARTICLE XI—AMENDMENTS**

These by-laws may be altered, amended, or repealed. New by-laws may be adopted by a majority vote of the P8 Coalition at any regular or special meeting with thirty (30) day notification.

# Appendix C: Organizational Chart



## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> The Education Trust-West. (2011, July). Unlocking Doors and Expanding Opportunity: Moving Beyond the Limiting Reality of College and Career Readiness in California High Schools.

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.irvine.org/grantmaking/our-programs/youth/linked-learning>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.irvine.org/grantmaking/our-programs/youth/linked-learning>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.chooseporterville.com>

<sup>v</sup> Data from Federal Education Budget Project, available at <http://febp.newamerica.net/k12/CA/600064>

<sup>vi</sup> Middle Schools

1. Pioneer Middle School
2. Sequoia Middle School
3. Bartlett Middle School

<sup>vii</sup> Elementary

1. Santa Fe Elementary School
2. Los Robles Elementary School
3. Vandalia Elementary School
4. Roche Avenue Elementary School
5. Belleview Elementary School
6. John J. Doyle Elementary School
7. Monte Vista Elementary School
8. Olive Street Elementary School
9. Westfield Elementary School
10. West Putnam Elementary School
11. Hope Elementary

<sup>viii</sup> Specialist Schools

1. Butterfield Charter High School
2. Horizon Community Day School
3. Prospect Education Center
4. Porterville Adult School
5. Citrus High School
6. Vine Street Community Day School

<sup>ix</sup> Most of these middle schools are outside of the Porterville School District.





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