



To: Linked Learning Alliance  
Fr: Anne Stanton – The James Irvine Foundation; Kristen Grimm – Spitfire Strategies  
Re: Transitioning to the Linked Learning Name  
Da: April 8, 2010

As many of you know, the organizations working on multiple pathways in California have decided to begin using the phrase “Linked Learning” rather than “multiple pathways” to describe this approach. To select the new name, public opinion research was conducted and scores of possible names were developed and presented to field leaders and to the Coalition of Multiple Pathways. In the end, the group approved Linked Learning with the tagline “Pathways to College and Career Success” because it best conveys the values of the connection between academics and real-world experience, and between students and their interests.

After approving the name, the field then voted to select a logo (see above) and coalition name that aligned with Linked Learning. Based on your feedback, the Coalition for Multiple Pathways will now be known as the Linked Learning Alliance. The Linked Learning Alliance has begun updating materials and developing a Linked Learning Web site which will go live this summer.

We hope that your organization will also begin using the name Linked Learning when talking about the approach. Using consistent language across the field is one important way we can all support the expansion of Linked Learning.

To help your organization with the transition, Spitfire Strategies has created a variety of materials to make the change as seamless as possible. We recognize that the Linked Learning Alliance includes some members who work on Linked Learning every day, and others whose work on Linked Learning is only a small part of their overall missions. Given that range, not all of the transition materials will be relevant to your organization. Spitfire will be available to you as a resource throughout the transition process and can provide support for your organization’s unique name-change needs.

With this letter, you will receive:

- A checklist that will help you decide which materials are most important to update with the Linked Learning name;
- A FAQ document to answer questions about the name change;
- A form that you can use to request support from Spitfire;
- A working definition and key messages for the Linked Learning approach; and
- Logos for the Linked Learning Alliance and the field.

In the coming weeks, you will also receive a template PowerPoint presentation and other Linked Learning communications materials to help your organization make the transition to Linked Learning.

We understand that your resources are limited; if you are only able to update a few materials with the Linked Learning name, we suggest starting with your organization’s Web site and any multiple pathways fact sheets you use when talking about this approach.

If you have any questions about the transition process or the support available, please do not hesitate to contact Jaymie Gustafson ([Jaymie@SpitfireStrategies.com](mailto:Jaymie@SpitfireStrategies.com) or 202.293.6200 ext. 211).

This change to Linked Learning provides a great opportunity to continue spreading the word about this promising education approach and will strengthen our communications efforts in the future. Thank you in advance for your support through the Linked Learning name transition.

# Linked Learning Alliance Name Change Checklist

As we transition to Linked Learning, we hope you will begin to use the new name in your communications materials. We understand that the process may take time, so we created this checklist to help you prioritize the materials that are most important to update.

As you know, the Linked Learning Alliance has a broad range of member organizations. Some of you might work on Linked Learning daily and produce numerous materials; others might not have many materials at all that mention Linked Learning. Given that range, some of this checklist won't be relevant for some of you, but hopefully all of you can find some appropriate guidance here as you figure out how best to make the transition to the new name.

## Internal Communications

- Consider drafting a memo to internal staff, volunteers and other stakeholders sharing news of the name and tagline change and revised definition (a letter template is attached).
- Encourage your colleagues to adopt and use the Linked Learning name in their correspondence, outreach materials and conversations.
- Ask at staff meetings how the transition is going and please pass along concerns or difficulties to Spitfire Strategies.

## Existing Materials

- Review materials that mention “multiple pathways” to assess which need to be updated first. Priority materials may include those that you use frequently and those that are easy and/or inexpensive to update. Categories of materials to review may include:
  - Web sites
  - Brochures
  - Handouts
  - Teaching tools
  - Presentations
  - Speeches
  - Templates that are used to create new materials
  - Internal communications tools, including letterhead, email signatures and voicemail
  - Signage around the office/school
- Begin to update priority materials. Refer to the following tools and resources for assistance:
  - One-page document with definition and key messages (attached)
  - The FAQs about the name change (attached)
  - The Irvine Foundation Web site, starting here:  
<http://www.irvine.org/grantmaking/our-programs/youth>
  - Spitfire Strategies – If you need any assistance, contact Jaymie Gustafson at [Jaymie@SpitfireStrategies.com](mailto:Jaymie@SpitfireStrategies.com) or 202.293.6200 x 211

## **New Materials**

- If appropriate, draft an email and/or letter to your key stakeholders to share the Linked Learning name and inform them about the change.
- Draft and include a footnote for those materials where the name change may cause confusion (suggested language included in FAQs).

## **Linked Learning Messages and Definition**

### **Linked Learning Message Platform**

- Growing evidence suggests that the Linked Learning approach successfully prepares California students for postsecondary education and career by linking strong academics with demanding technical learning and real-world experience in a wide range of fields.
- This approach is gaining in popularity because it can make schools more competitive and attractive to students, generate higher academic achievement by having students study topics of interest to them and lead to increased college attendance rates, higher earning potential after graduation and greater civic engagement.
- Make Linked Learning available to any interested student to give them an advantage for college *and* careers.
- The integrated Linked Learning approach can lead to higher achieving students who are engaged, confident, and focused for success, showing that making learning relevant leads to the kind of real results we expect from a California education.

### **Linked Learning Definition**

Linked Learning transforms students' high school experience by bringing together strong academics, demanding technical education and real-world experience to help students gain an advantage in high school, postsecondary education and careers. In the Linked Learning approach, students follow industry-themed pathways in a wide range of fields, such as engineering, arts and media, biomedicine and health. These pathways connect learning with students' interests and career aspirations, leading to higher graduation rates, increased postsecondary enrollments, higher earning potential and greater civic engagement. Used in schools throughout California, this integrated approach helps students build a strong foundation for success in college and career—and life.

*Please note: Depending on the audience, it may be important to emphasize certain aspects of Linked Learning and use slightly different language in the definition. For example, when speaking to colleges, “secondary education” can be replaced with the word “college”; or the phrase “real world experience” can be omitted for audiences with a strong emphasis on technical education.*

## **Linked Learning Alliance Name Change Frequently Asked Questions**

### **When does the “official” transition to the Linked Learning name take place?**

The transition to Linked Learning is underway. The Irvine Foundation and ConnectEd have updated their Web sites with the Linked Learning name and tagline. Irvine is using the following explanation for the name change:

*Linked Learning is the new name for the educational approach formerly known in California as "multiple pathways." After extensive public opinion research, the schools and organizations implementing this approach selected the Linked Learning name to more clearly convey its unique benefits to students, educators, parents and policymakers.*

While the transition will take time, we hope that you will begin using the Linked Learning name when you talk about the approach and in your relevant communications materials.

### **Why was the multiple pathways name changed?**

Extensive public opinion research, including interviews with multiple pathways leaders, students and parents, found strong support for changing the name “multiple pathways” to a name that more clearly communicates the values and strengths of this educational approach. In response, the Coalition for Multiple Pathways approved the name “Linked Learning” with the tagline “Pathways to College and Career Success.” As the field continues to grow and expand, the Linked Learning name will better convey the approach’s unique benefits to students, educators, parents and policymakers.

### **How can we define the Linked Learning approach?**

Linked Learning transforms students' high school experience by bringing together strong academics, demanding technical education and real world experience to help students gain an advantage in high school, postsecondary education and careers. In the Linked Learning approach, students follow industry-themed pathways in a wide range of fields, such as engineering, arts and media, biomedicine and health. These pathways connect learning with students' interests and career aspirations, leading to higher graduation rates, increased postsecondary enrollments, higher earning potential and greater civic engagement. Used in schools throughout California, this integrated approach helps students build a strong foundation for success in college and career—and life.

### **How is the name change being communicated to stakeholders and other outside parties?**

The Irvine Foundation and ConnectEd have updated their Web sites to reflect the Linked Learning name and the Linked Learning Alliance has begun outreach to policymakers and other key stakeholders to share news of the name change. We also know that many members have already begun sharing the name change with their stakeholders and partners. Talking points have been created to help Linked Learning Alliance members answer any questions they receive about the name change. Following an initial discussion of the name change, we hope field members will then use the Linked Learning name in future communications.

### **Should I change multiple pathways to Linked Learning in my organization’s materials?**

Promoting a coordinated front is critical to building the Linked Learning brand among stakeholders, so we hope you will begin to change relevant materials to reflect the Linked Learning name.

Spitfire Strategies is available to help make the transition to Linked Learning. Templates will be created for many types of collateral materials, such as information packets, newsletter articles announcing the name change, PowerPoint decks, etc., and will be posted on a password-protected page of the Linked Learning Web site once the site goes live this summer. We understand that these materials may not be relevant to every member of the Linked Learning Alliance; if your organization needs other materials, please contact Spitfire for support.

### **How should Linked Learning be referenced in materials?**

“Linked Learning” should be capitalized in all written materials. Whenever possible, please use the tagline “Pathways to College and Career Success”.

For most materials, it should be sufficient to acknowledge the name change the first time Linked Learning is mentioned, for example: “Linked Learning (formerly known as multiple pathways).” In subsequent uses, the Linked Learning name can be used without multiple pathways.

### **Suggested footnote language:**

For documents and materials that require additional background about the name change, a brief footnote can be used to explain the change. Here is suggested footnote language:

*Linked Learning is the new name for the educational approach formerly known in California as "multiple pathways." After extensive public opinion research, the schools and organizations implementing this approach selected the Linked Learning name to more clearly convey its unique benefits to students, educators, parents and policymakers.*

### **What resources will be available on the Linked Learning Web site?**

Once the Linked Learning Web site goes live this summer, a password-protected portion of the site will house:

- Linked Learning fact sheets
- Linked Learning press releases
- Templates for PowerPoint presentations
- Case studies
- Template newsletter articles
- Linked Learning definitions, key messages and usage guidelines
- High-resolution versions of the Linked Learning logo
- Brand identity guidelines for the Linked Learning logo

### **Who should I contact with questions about the Linked Learning name change?**

Please contact Jaymie Gustafson ([Jaymie@SpitfireStrategies.com](mailto:Jaymie@SpitfireStrategies.com) or 202.293.6200 ext. 211) with any questions.

## Email to Stakeholders

Dear XX,

[Insert organization] is pleased to share some exciting news about our field. As you may have heard, the organizations working on multiple pathways in California have decided to begin using the phrase “Linked Learning” with the tagline “Pathways to College and Career Success” to describe this approach. The Linked Learning name was selected because it better conveys the values of the connection between academics and real-world experience; and between students and their interests. In addition, the Coalition for Multiple Pathways will now be known as the Linked Learning Alliance, to more closely align with Linked Learning.

The new name does not change the fundamental principles of our promising educational approach. As Linked Learning, we will continue transforming students' high school experience by bringing together strong academics, demanding technical education and real-world experience to help students gain an advantage in high school, postsecondary education and careers.

We have begun updating our Web site and outreach materials to reflect the Linked Learning name. [Insert other information about other news for organization]. We will continue to keep you updated about exciting developments in the Linked Learning field.

Thank you for your continued support of the Linked Learning approach. Please let me know if you have any questions.



## Linked Learning Name Transition

We appreciate your efforts to transition to the Linked Learning name. Since your organization may have unique needs during the transition process, Spitfire Strategies is available to provide support and assistance. In order for us to best help you, please use this document to tell us a little bit about the support you need and your transition timeline.

If you would like assistance transitioning your outreach materials to Linked Learning, please share any relevant communications materials with Spitfire.

If you prefer to talk through your organization's needs, please call Jaymie Gustafson at 202.293.6200 ext. 211.

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please briefly describe the support requested and your desired timing:

Please return this information to Jaymie Gustafson at [Jaymie@SpitfireStrategies.com](mailto:Jaymie@SpitfireStrategies.com).