

# College and Career Readiness: What Do We Mean?

## *A Proposed Framework – Executive Summary*

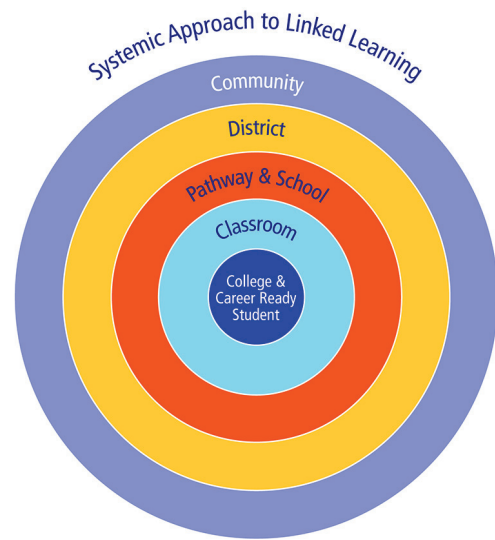
### Introduction

A nationwide consensus is developing that all U.S. students should graduate from high school “ready for college and career,” and yet there is little clarity on the meaning of that phrase. ConnectEd has developed an operational definition of college and career readiness to support states, districts, and schools in specifying what students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from high school.

With the assistance of WestEd, we examined research spanning twenty years and explored a wide variety of views informing the debate, looked for patterns, and synthesized our findings into a tool that will inform the work of teachers, principals, and district and state leaders.

The **College and Career Readiness Framework** (Framework) aims to establish a comprehensive definition of readiness that can guide the alignment and shape of assessment, accountability, and instruction, and to catalyze dialogue about the solutions required at multiple levels—and across multiple sectors—to ensure student success.

We see this as an **equity strategy**; by being clear about what all students should know and be able to do to succeed after high school, we empower students, families, educators, communities, and policy-makers to make more informed decisions and engage effectively in aligning practice, structures, systems, and resources to ensure success and close the equity gap. In addition to academic, technical, and 21st century skills and knowledge, our Framework specifies the college, career, and civic engagement strategies all students must possess to transition successfully to future education, work, and civic life.



### Implications for Practice – Linked Learning

Attaining the goal of ensuring that all students are college and career ready requires aligning practice and policies across all levels of learning support, from the classroom to the community. We believe, and emerging evidence supports, that **Linked Learning’s engaging and systemic approach to learning and teaching holds the most promise for transforming education practice and policy to achieve college and career readiness for students.** Linked Learning requires shifts in instruction, assessment, student support, organizational practices, teacher preparation, and systemic reforms that include state and federal policy changes.

In Linked Learning pathways, 250–500 students learn a thematic, integrated college preparatory academic and rigorous technical program of study through interdisciplinary project-based learning and work-based learning. Students in Linked Learning pathways attend, advance, achieve, and graduate at higher rates than their peers, and are more successful in college and in the workplace.

# College and Career Readiness Standards Alignment

## Key:

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) only
- ◇ Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) only
- Belong to both CCSS and CCTC sets
- ✓ Other Key Capabilities



Ready for College, Career, and Life

## Knowledge

- Core subject area content

### 21st century knowledge:

- ◇ global,
- ◇ civic,
- ◇ environmental,
- ◇ financial,
- ◇ health, and
- media literacy

- ◇ Career-related and technical knowledge: knowledge about a broad industry sector and associated technical content and college majors

## Skills

- Academic skills in core disciplines

### 21st century skills

- ✓ Metacognition and knowing how to learn
- ◇ Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- ◇ Systems thinking
- Communication:
  - listening,
  - speaking,
  - writing, and
  - ✓ nonverbal communication
- ◇ Collaboration and working with diversity
- Information management and digital media applications
- ◇ Technical skills in at least one career area of interest

## Productive Dispositions and Behaviors

### Productive self-concept:

- ✓ self-knowledge,
- ✓ self-esteem, and
- ✓ self-efficacy

### Self-management:

- ◇ goal setting,
- ◇ time management,
- ✓ study skills,
- precision and accuracy,
- persistence,
- ✓ initiative/self-direction,
- ✓ resourcefulness, and
- ◇ task completion

### Effective organizational and social behavior:

- ◇ leadership,
- ◇ flexibility/adaptability,
- ◇ responsibility, and
- ◇ ethics

## Engagement Strategies

- ◇ Engaging in and navigating the world of higher education
- ◇ Engaging in and navigating the world of work
- ◇ Engaging in and navigating civic life