February 20, 2026

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER), which provides key information on the 2024-25 educational progress for Link Learning. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about accountability, student assessment, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Ryan Thelen, Executive Director, for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following website, https://bit.ly/4qr9Bjj, or you may review a copy in the main office at your child's school.

For the 2025-26 school year, schools were identified based on previous years' performance using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that had at least one underperforming student group in 2024-25. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that had at least one student group performing at the same level as the lowest 5% of all schools in the state in 2021-22. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance was in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state, had a graduation rate at or below 67%, failed to exit CSI status in 2024-25, or failed to exit ATS status in 2021-22. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no status label is given. Our school was identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement.

Our key challenges are the following; we have an entire population of at-risk and underserved youth. The work to support these students has its challenges, including the following:

1. Achievement is not where we would like it to be in math and EBR. We continue to work at it every day. We continue to have a math intervention teacher, our course offering include essential, standard and honor courses in math and some in EBR to allow for meeting students where they are. We have included Exceptional Student Suite as a course offering for remediation. We continue to offer office hours, evening hours, Securly, zoom, and google hangout sessions to improve face to face support for classes as well.

2. We have added a College and Career Readiness staff member to promote our dual enrollment opportunities, as well as connect students with appropriate resources to take the next steps towards a career or college.
3. We initiated Attendance +, essentially raising the bar for student engagement in their class, and have seen great results in terms of student attendance and engagement.
4. We initiated Link Path, a strategic schedule structure schoolwide to increase our student progress in their class, as well as total percent of students on track to meet their graduation goal.
5. Barriers to graduation for underserved youth are present daily. Personal Curriculums are actively being looked into for students and utilized to assist students in meeting their post secondary goals. New curriculum to expand personal curriculums have been adopted for the current year.
6. Barriers to graduation for underserved youth are present daily. Personal Curriculums are actively being looked into for students and utilized to assist students in meeting their post secondary goals. New curriculum to expand personal curriculums have been adopted for the current year.
7. In January 2022 we hired 8 Behavior Coaches to help and support qualified students who are facing certain barriers and who are not engaged with their schooling. Based on the success of these positions we expanded to now have 16 Behavior Coaches. Our Behavior Coaches have proven to be a tremendous support for our most at risk students. As an update to our MTSS structure Behavior Coaches are assigned at the quarter, as well as the start of the year, and semester. This allows for a more proactive approach to support the students who are struggling to meet requirements of our program.
8. Relationship building is a primary focus for us as a common challenge we face is unmotivated and unengaged youth based on so many failed attempts in the past. The communication rubric and training has also helped staff with their own goal setting on how to be a better communicator.
9. We also have expanded PBIS structures across all centers in an effort to increase student engagement, and relationship building opportunities, including field trips.
10. Training staff 500 miles apart from each other can be a challenge. We have improved our PD for staff to include more of a coaching model for all staff and a very intentional model for new staff which included how to motivate and engage students that otherwise are not. Our new staff training program is now an 8 week program, and new this year contains asynchronous learning as well.
11. Our demographics are similar to other schools but our population is extremely transient with many life circumstances they are facing. We also service students up to the age of 22 and in some cases after 22. Many of these older students work, so it can be difficult to reach them during school hours. We work around this by offering support after an hour. We have increased these hours to 20 per week.

State law requires that we also report additional information.

PROCESS FOR ASSIGNING PUPILS TO THE SCHOOL

Our school is an alternative education program that is delivered virtually. We do have drop in centers for students to come into at any time for additional support by certified staff. Any Michigan resident in grade 9-12 may attend our program. Each student who enrolls is provided a comprehensive EDP so their educational goals can be achieved.

Status of the 3–5 Year School Improvement Plan: Year 2 (2025–2026)

We are currently in the second year of our updated 3–5 year school improvement plan. While our journey began with a foundational comprehensive needs assessment in 2019–2020, the transition from ASSIST to MiCIP allowed us to restart our formal timeline. We are now leveraging that historical data to drive our current second-year goals, ensuring that the strategies set forth years ago are refined for today's challenges.

The Foundation of Our Plan

Our current progress is fueled by the most comprehensive needs assessment in our organization's history, which involved over 150 staff members. Our "Year 2" focus remains centered on three pillars:

- Math & ELA Proficiency
- Organizational Communication
- Leadership Capacity

We continue to actively monitor student growth, maintaining intervention positions and professional development specifically designed for our student populations.

Building Capacity and Engagement

A major focus of this second year is the continued expansion of leadership capacity. We are empowering our leaders to use data, our PULSE system, and digital dashboards to improve student engagement. By providing staff with opportunities to present best practices at our annual professional development, we are moving from a top-down approach to a collaborative growth model. Our summer school offerings also remain a vital component in keeping students motivated and on track for graduation.

Targeted Support and Behavioral Wellness

Since the start of this current cycle (Fall 2024), we have successfully implemented a behavior coach structure. Now in its second year of operation, this program

provides qualified students with a coach at the end of the 1st quarter, semester, and 3rd quarter. The goal is simple: help students overcome personal barriers and re-engage them in their education before they fall behind. For 2025-2026 all staff became Mental Health First Aid Certified

Inclusion and Specialized Services

- ELL Support: Our English Language Learner (ELL) population is serviced by a certified teacher, supported by a diverse staff of paraprofessionals and teachers fluent in Spanish—the primary language of our ELL students.
- MTSS and Special Education: The Link Learning of Berrien Springs Public Schools is consistently refining its Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) model. This provides general education options for struggling students while closely monitoring progress.
- Individualized Success: For students qualifying for special education, our team develops tailored IEPs to ensure success within the general education setting. Our secondary resource room support utilizes a co-teaching model, ensuring students access a general education curriculum based on State Standards while receiving the specific support they need via our online platforms and ancillary services (Speech, OT, and PT).

As we move through Year 2, we are seeing a definitive shift from "compliance" to "learning." Our mindset is no longer about checking boxes; it is about getting better. Our primary points of pride for this 3–5 year cycle include:

1. A Streamlined SIP Process: A plan that is living, breathing, and actively used.
2. Communication Rubric: Full implementation of our training and rubrics to ensure organizational clarity.
3. Data-Driven Alignment: Using our dashboards to ensure staff expectations directly result in better student outcomes.

Looking Ahead

As we close out the 2025–2026 school year, we will continue to build upon these systems, adding further support structures to ensure our staff excels in their roles as teachers and mentors.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH SPECIALIZED SCHOOL

Special Education AER - Link Learning
2025-2026 School Year

Link Learning students may qualify and have a need for special education programs and/or services. The program is continuing to develop its Multi-Tier Systems of

Supports (MTSS) model, providing general education options for struggling students and monitoring their progress over time. For those students who are unable to demonstrate progress with significant interventions, students being referred for special education programming/services may begin this process through a request for an evaluation or Child Study Team (CST) meeting. Should a student qualify for special education programs and/or services, or already have established services upon enrollment, a team of individuals will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to help assist the child progress within the general education setting.

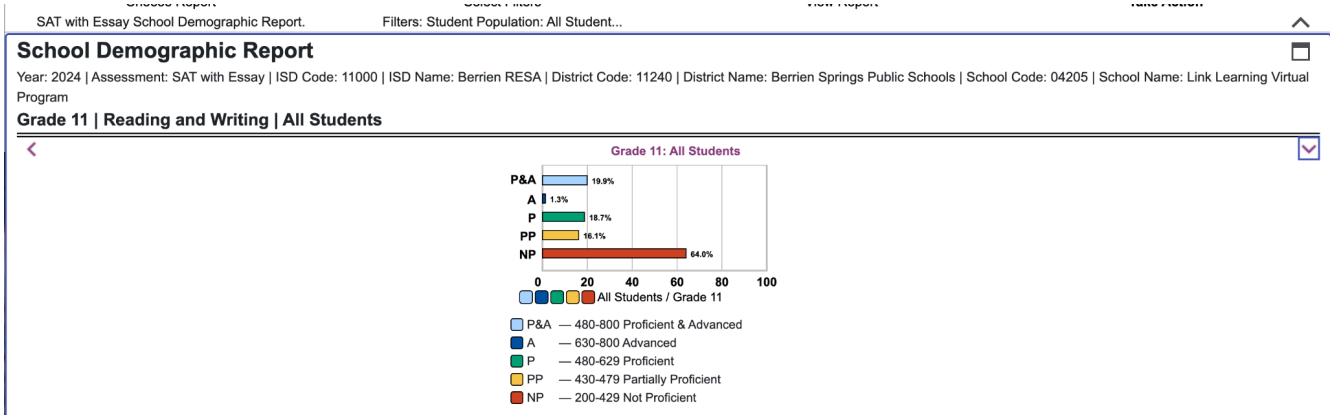
Resource Room Services
Current special education programs within Link Learning include Secondary Resource Room. Students follow a general education curriculum with the Common Core State Standards. Specialized instruction at Link Learning is done virtually and/or in-person. Part of the IEP process includes the determination of appropriate aids, supplementary services, accommodations, and modifications for success in general education. Link Learning currently has 284 students receiving special education resource room services.

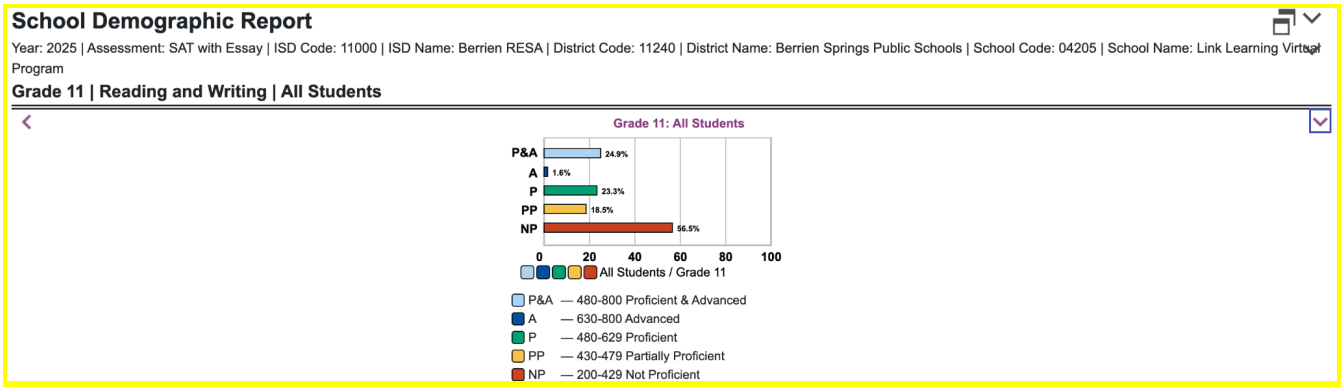
Ancillary Services
Ancillary services are available for students who qualify, these services may include speech-language therapy, school social work, and/or consultant services. Currently Link Learning has one-hundred fifty (150) students receiving direct or consult school social work services and thirty-four (34) students receiving speech and language services.

Core Curriculum

1. Berrien Springs has meticulously aligned its curriculum with the state's model curriculum, ensuring no discernible variances. The adoption of Common Core State Standards, founded on National Standards and endorsed by the Michigan Department of Education, serves as the foundation for our educational framework. These standards are accessible on the MDE website at https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/academic-standards. At all levels, our curriculum is structured in accordance with these standards. For those seeking detailed insights into our courses, Curriculum Guides for all disciplines can be obtained upon request from the center director or district curriculum director.

Aggregate Student Achievement Results for Nationally Normed Assessment





Parent-Teacher Conference Participation

Parents are continuously engaged throughout the enrollment cycle of the student. Parents are a key component in the support network of virtual learners, so they are an integral part of helping educate our students. For the 2024-25 school year we had 884 conferences with parents.

Post-Secondary Enrollment

Link Learning offers several dual-enrollment options with local colleges throughout the State. We continue to see an increase in the number of dual enrolled students. We have hired a College and Career Readiness position to continue to connect our

students with dual enrollment, and post-secondary opportunities. 5 students participated in dual enrollment courses for the 2024-25 school year, and 6 students participated in 0 dual enrollment courses for the 2023-24 school year.

College Equivalent Courses Offered

Link Learning students have access to a full course catalog aligned with their Educational Development Plans at local community colleges.

College Equivalent Course Enrollment

Link Learning had 0 students participate in college equivalent coursework during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years. This represents 0% of the students enrolled at Link Learning in 2023-24 and 2024-25 .

Score Leading to College Credit

Link Learning had 0 students participate in college equivalent coursework during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 school years. This represents 0% of the students enrolled at Link Learning in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Link Learning is a great option for students who want flexibility with schedules, want to re-engage with their education, or simply want a different option. We offer a complete array of services for all students that are with us. Our goal is to see all of our students succeed, not only to graduation, but into adulthood knowing that they can set goals and hold themselves accountable to them.

Sincerely,

Ryan Thelen

Executive Director