

Linworth Experiential Program

History

In the early 1900's, the Village of LINWORTH, located between DubLIN & WORTHington, built a community elementary school. The Village of Linworth operated the school until the 1960's, when they gave the property to Worthington City Schools.

In 1972, a group of educators proposed using the facility as an alternative to the traditional, large high school. In Fall, 1973, Linworth Alternative Program, commonly known as the AP, started with John Miller as the Teacher/Director.

After two years of research and a unique opportunity, Linworth started Walkabout in 1983. This experiential ethos led to the growth of Interim, the Scheduling process, Camp Christian, and eventually, Linworth Forum.

The AP transitioned to Linworth Experiential Program in 2014 to emphasize the experience-based opportunities of the program and no longer remain associated with the negative perceptions of the term "alternative."

Celebrating its 50th year of education, Linworth Experiential Program continues to serve Worthington City Schools.

Philosophy

In the most simple terms, Linworth operates on the notion of being an alternative to the other two Worthington high schools, which both offer a rich and diverse educational experience. However, a school of over 1,000 students is not always the best for all individuals.

The size of Linworth affords us the opportunity to emphasize aspects that all educators value, including Student Ownership & Community, as well as Self-advocacy and Personal Growth. Linworth also has developed methods to practice educating through experience, or Experiential Learning.

Linworth operates on a more informal basis. As one Linworth educator stated years ago, "Meaningful learning does not happen between strangers." Teachers and students commonly engage on a first-name basis. There are no real designated spaces reserved solely for teachers; all members of the community share the most spaces of Linworth.

Linworth attempts to operate on a cadre of Ethos statements:

1. *Our convictions lead us in the right direction, doing what is best for our program, even when going against the grain.*
2. *We believe in equity of choices and alternatives.*
3. *Students should be contributing members of this unique learning community with its special features.*
4. *Students will be encouraged to make meaningful academic and social growth, and they will be expected to participate in the decision-making process of the program.*
5. *Everyone at Linworth is valuable.*
6. *Linworth's success depends on the whole community of students, staff, parents, and alumni working together to foster the goals of the program.*
7. *Students and staff are empowered with the ability to initiate change.*
8. *Responsibility at Linworth takes on many forms.*
9. *Honest communication must include all stakeholders as students are encouraged to develop a sense of self-reliance, self-advocacy, and accountability in and out of the classroom.*
10. *Students benefit from serving others and learn from service with reflection.*
11. *We believe in the unconventional combination of experiential education, self-reflection, and classroom learning. As a result, students are uniquely prepared to create a path of self-advocacy and personal growth.*

12. *We choose to be part of this community.*
13. *Successes and failures are valuable opportunities for growth throughout life.*
14. *The staff should be committed to innovation and authentic professional development through reflective practice.*
15. *The staff member should see himself as one who facilitates learning, a signpost who can respond to a variety of interests and needs.*
16. *The staff should be richly capable in the area of human relations and value the individuality of students.*
17. *Staff should encourage the student to seek her own path of learning to discover her strengths, weakness, passions, and sources of motivation.*

Admission

Admission consists of multiple parts. First the applicant will visit during the school day to receive a student-led tour and experience typical classes. The [application](#) consists of three parts: information from the student, information from the family, and information from a teacher or counselor. After reviewing the application, Linworth staff review for fit. Occasionally there is a need for clarifying discussion between the school and the applicant, family, or staff member, but this is uncommon. Once the application deadline passes in mid-Spring, the Linworth staff then determines how many places are available in a given grade year and starts a random draw. While Linworth does reserve the right to select an individual with extraordinary circumstances, this is extremely uncommon and avoided.

Block Schedule

Instead of eight, regular-length class periods which meet daily, Linworth has eight longer class sessions which meet every other day. Each day has a designated color, Green or Orange, as well as four periods labeled A, B, C, & D, which correspond with the daily periods at the main campuses (A is 1-2, B is 3-4, etc.). Using this vernacular, Linworth classes are known as Green A, Green B, Green C, Green D, Orange A, Orange B, Orange C, and Orange D. Block scheduling creates many opportunities, including more depth and complexity in lessons and discussions in class, as well as longer blocks to meet with teachers or do school work outside of class.

Linworth does offer everything a student needs to meet all graduation requirements. However, doesn't have the capacity to offer everything available at the main campus. Each period, a shuttle bus runs between Linworth and the main campus, giving each student the opportunity to take a class at that location. If a Linworth student is interested in a course at the student's main campus, a shuttle bus travels between each campus every period of the day, providing the opportunity for the individual to attend at the main campus for a portion of the day and return to Linworth. However, since a main campus class operates every day, as opposed to Linworth's block schedule, a conflict is created which prevents the student from participating in a Linworth class with the paired (1 with 2, 3 with 4, etc.) main campus class. Because the main campuses occasionally alter their schedules for activities, students shuttling between the campuses can arrive late for a class going either direction.

This is a sample of a Linworth student schedule:

student name

School & grade: main campus, grade level

Linworth blocks	Green	Orange	WK & TW Period
A	science	math	1
			2
B	foreign language	social studies	3
			4
C	Option time		5
	main campus class instructor		6
D	english language arts	Option time	7
			8

Experiential Learning

Experiential Learning is learning through doing with a process for reflection. At Linworth, Experiential Learning is constantly evolving in the classroom. In a more universal manner, Linworth practices Experiential Learning through a series of events throughout the school year.

The Scheduling Process

One way students learn through experience is the Scheduling process. Scheduling at Linworth happens the first two days of school and the first day of the 2nd semester. Stated simply, the school year begins with neither students nor teachers having a structured schedule of when courses will be offered or who may be taking whichever class. Students meeting multiple times of these two days in Advisory Groups with an Academic Advisor. Staff serve as a dedicated Academic Advisor to a group of students over the four year process. For example, an Academic Advisor may collaborate with Freshmen in the first half of the alphabet this year. Each year, that Academic Advisor will work those same students throughout the graduation process. Students engage in the decision-making process of course selection with the Academic Advisor.

Course Advertising

On the first day of each semester, teachers advertise each course being offered by posting a course description, including instructor and credit area, first on the wall of the Big Room and later as a set of announcements, providing students the opportunity to ask questions about each course.

Student Co-taught courses

Often teenagers are extremely engaged and passionate about a particular concept. Linworth provides the opportunity for students to teach a semester-long course in conjunction with a Linworth teacher. To teach a course, a student must approach the corresponding teacher, demonstrating a set of expectations from that teacher, including grading standards and content. Ultimately, the Linworth teacher is responsible for the content and grading of the course. Student-taught classes can only go for elective credit, either in the designated area of study or in general.

Schedule Building

As stated earlier, the school year begins with neither students nor teachers having a structured schedule of when courses will be offered or who may be taking whichever class. Students build the schedule by going through a process of voting when each course will be offered. Any student interested in taking a particular course stands for that class. The teacher then lists each of the eight blocks, taking a vote of who is available each block. Upon announcing when a class is offered, a designation is posted on a large board in the Big Room. After all of the dozens of sections are offered, the schedule is complete.

Arena Scheduling

After the schedule is built, students are randomly assigned numbers, listing the order in which each will be permitted into a room to enroll in each course of interest.

Walkabout

All Linworth Seniors, having met graduation requirements, conduct an out-of-district, 500-hour full-time volunteer internship. Walkabouts happen in-town, around the state and country, and in every habitable

continent. Preparation for the Walkabout occurs through the first semester of Senior year through work with a designated Walkabout Coordinator on Linworth staff, as well as a Senior Retreat. Walkabout requires a regular, reflective journal shared with a member of the Linworth staff. Individual Walkabouts may be financially supported by resources at Linworth. All graduation requirements must be completed by the middle of senior year for a student to participate in Walkabout.

Walkabout is designed to develop the skills, attitudes, and values of responsible adulthood. Central to the program is the belief that being tested in a classroom setting doesn't prove the ability to apply the knowledge. The test of Walkabout, and of life, is not what a student can do under a teacher's direction, but what he or she can do as an individual.

Interim

Often some of the most profound learning experiences can occur regarding something other than what is offered as school curriculum or beyond the walls of the school. One week each spring, Linworth students are afforded the opportunity to pursue an area of interest with permission and support from the student's family and a selected staff member.

Linworth Forum

With 50 years of experience, Linworth has a diverse base of alumni across the world. The Linworth Forum is an opportunity for those individuals to share with current Linworth students what they've learned through experience. A one-day conference-style format gives speaker, both in-person and through video platforms, a chance to speak about life when they were a Linworth student, experiential learning opportunities, as well as lessons throughout personal and professional life.

Student Ownership & Community

Town Meeting

Each week, students are afforded the opportunity to develop student ownership and community through Town Meeting of Family Groups. Town Meeting occurs during the second half of a class block through the beginning of the next block. Students and staff meet in the Big Room, with a self-selected Town Meeting Leader, who selects a student to record minutes of the gathering. Town Meeting starts with opportunities for individuals to do a Performance. Performances have included songs, poetry, and dance. Announcements are next, giving all Town Meeting members time to share events occurring throughout the community. The third part of Town Meeting is posted Proposals. All Linworth community members may post a proposal on the Town Meeting board, providing an opportunity for the community to deliberate and vote on a given idea. Proposals have ranged from the very serious to the less practical. Every individual, including staff, has one vote in Town Meeting. With prudence, the Director reserves the right to dismiss a proposal. Next is posted Discussion Topics which are sometimes philosophical and occasional deep and practical. Linworth students have demonstrated incredible thoughtfulness in this part of Town Meeting. Finally a Linworth community member can suggest a Spontaneous Discussion Topic.

Family Groups

Occasionally, Town Meeting is replaced with Family Groups, where an assortment of students from each grade level meet with a staff member. Family Groups maintain the same roster each time throughout the school year. Family Groups are used to discuss important issues, often having older students explain and develop ideas and programs at Linworth. Some Family Groups are used to share and discuss procedures, including Emergency Safety procedures.

Overnight Camp

Each year, the Linworth community attends a schoolwide overnight excursion to Camp Christian, located immediately west of Delaware County. Camp Christian is developed weeks beforehand through the work of staff and students to create opportunities for students to dine together, participate in activities together, to learn more about each other, and to have fun together. A highlight of Camp Christian includes the Talent Show, which occurs the evening of the event. Students and staff perform a variety of sketches, dances, and songs for the community, which provide the audience to enjoy and celebrate each other. *Camp Christian is the name of the location; Linworth does not engage in any religious practices or procedures at the schoolwide overnight excursion.*

Fairness Committee

Some forms of community conflict may be resolved through a Fairness Committee, comprised of five students, one of whom is the case leader, and a staff member. This six-person group listens to the concerns of one party in the presence of the second party. Both sides are encouraged to deliberate on their perspective about the conflict, with the Fairness Committee asking clarifying questions about the disagreement, as well as potential consequences. Fairness Committee has occurred between students or between students and staff. Consequences have ranged from loss of Sign-Out (below) to an apology.

Art House

All Linworth community members may display any number and range of artistic talents. Art House affords those talents to be presented to the Linworth community in an open night of visual and performing arts. Students and staff may perform on-stage or present various forms of paintings, drawings, sculpture, pottery, and other artistic endeavors.

HAGPIE

The annual costume dance is called HAGPIE, or the Halloween And Grading Period Is Ending. Typically immediately after Halloween, HAGPIE is a low-pressure gathering that includes music and dancing, as well as a costume contest, socializing, and snacks.

Parent Board

The Linworth families have demonstrated an amazing ability to support the efforts of Linworth practically, emotionally, and financially. Parent Board is the family group who conducts events, learning events, and opportunities for students and families. Parent Board neither requires selling anything nor a fee.

Self-Advocacy and Personal Growth

The time in high school serves as an opportunity for students to grow as an individual prepared for life through personal and academic events. Linworth works to develop personal growth and the ability to advocate for self through a variety of practices.

Sign-Out

The Linworth facility does not have food service resources. Community members are afforded access to a refrigerator, microwave ovens, and vending machines. With Guardian permission, students may also participate

in Sign-Out, affording the individual up to 60 minutes to leave the Linworth campus. With Sign-Out, a student uses the Sign-Out computer to indicate time of departure and destination. Each student personally enters time into the computer upon return; this is not to be done by another student. Typically, a quarter of all students use no Sign-Out each day. Another quarter use approximately 20 minutes, getting something near Linworth and eating at the school. Another quarter use Sign-Out for approximately 40 minutes, typically eating at a local establishment or going more than once per day. The final quarter use Sign-Out for nearly the entire 60 minutes; these students typically have access to transportation beyond walking distance. Sign-Out can be revoked by the Teacher-Director or the Guardian through communication with the Teacher-Director.

Option Time

When a Linworth student isn't designated to be in class, that individual has Option Time. Option Time can be used for meeting with a teacher, tutoring other students, socializing, using Sign-Out, doing homework, or relaxing. Stated differently, the student is responsible for use of Option Time without the designated oversight of a Linworth adult. Linworth students are not assigned to the classic study hall, but are welcome and often encouraged to take advantage of Option Time in a productive manner. When students struggle academically, the Linworth staff may assign a Quiet Study to create temporary structure for the student.

Lockers

All Linworth students have access to a school locker. However, students rarely use the locker and none of the lockers are locked. Linworth operates on the expectation that community members respect the items of the school and community members. Backpacks, laptops, and other student items are regularly left unattended throughout the school and in the Big Room. Community members are also expected to respect the quality of the restrooms.

Miscellaneous

Special Education

Linworth has a Special Education population similar to the main campuses, including IEP's and 504's. Linworth has a part-time Intervention Specialist who works on Consult with Linworth students. Individuals who access services including daily work with an Intervention Specialist, as well as Inclusion and Direct courses, do so at the main campus.

Graduation Expectations

Linworth is a program of Worthington City schools, requiring all students to meet the same state and district graduation requirements. While the size of Linworth prevents the program from offering every course available at the main campuses, Linworth does offer everything necessary to meet graduation expectations (except art credits typically earned in middle school). If a Linworth student is interested in a course at the student's main campus, a shuttle bus travels between each campus every period of the day, providing the opportunity for the individual to attend at the main campus for a portion of the day and return to Linworth.