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What is Linkage?

Linkage is a process that attributes instructional influence on student academic progress for core foundation teachers of students in grades 4–8 with a STAAR exam, teachers of students in courses with a STAAR EOC exam, and language acquisition teachers of students in grades 3–8 who take the TELPAS reading exam.

This includes:
- Verifying a roster of students taught throughout the year;
- Indicating the month(s) when students are in and out of the class; and
- Reporting the percentage of instruction for which the teacher was responsible for a given student in a given subject.

Importance of Completing Linkage

The linkage process provides the opportunity for teachers and campus-based staff to review and verify the data that is submitted to calculate their STAAR and TELPAS Comparative Growth analyses. Although student data is obtained from the Student Information System, teachers have the opportunity to review this information for accuracy and completeness and to report on the percentage of instructional time for which they were responsible.

All student-teacher linkages submitted during this period are final. It is extremely important to complete, review, and correct student-teacher linkages during the stipulated time period.

Core foundation teachers who do not provide student-teacher linkages will have those student-teacher linkages assigned by the support team and/or the principal.
Accessing the System

Step 1: Go to www.houstonisd.org/aim and log in on the “My Resources Login” tab.

Step 2: On the “My Resources Home” page, click the “Link” icon.

Welcome

Core Foundation Teachers

FOR ALL CAMPUSES DISTRICT-WIDE

Teachers of students in the following grade/subjects participate in the Linkage Period:

- ELA grades 4–8
- Math grades 4–8
- Writing grades 4 & 7
- Science grades 5 & 8
- Social Studies grade 8
- ESL/ELD (student is tested on TELPAS) grades 3–8

Campus-based teachers of the grades and subjects listed above at all campuses district-wide are required to complete the linkage process.

Reviewing and Modifying Rosters

Class rosters requiring review and percentage of instruction assignment are located in the “My Class Rosters” section of the “Link” page. This list should include each of your classes. Each class period could have its own class roster. To begin reviewing a class roster, click Actions and then Begin.

⚠️ If your list of rosters requiring linkage is incomplete, contact your principal or a support team member to add the missing rosters!
In the “My Class Rosters” section of your “Link” page, select Begin next to the class you want to review and verify. The “Class Roster” page will display the list of students in section 1 on the class roster page. Review the list of students to determine if there are any changes required.

Note: You may find it helpful to change the “class name” of your classes. Some teachers, for example, find it easier to call classes “Math period 1,” “Math period 2,” etc. To change the class name of your class rosters, click the Actions button, then select Edit (see below). You must be in a roster to change the name.

If an error exists in your class roster, you can Add Students or Delete Students.

Numbers on this diagram correspond to following explanatory text.

Adding Students
When students are missing from a class, you can modify the class roster to add students.

1. On the “Class Roster” page, select Add Students in section 1 (“I taught these students”) of the class roster to search for students by name, partial names, grade, or ID. 1
2. To search for students, enter as much or little information as you wish. To narrow the search, enter additional letters in the first and/or last name, grade level, and/or student ID. For example, if you’re searching for a 5th grade student whose last name starts with “G,” then select “5” from the grade-level pull-down list and enter “G” in the last name field. **Note! If you do not select a school, you will be searching for all students in the district that meet your parameters!** Therefore, it is strongly suggested that you also select your school from the drop-down list.

**Tip:** If you are looking for a specific student, use the District Student ID number. If you are looking for all students in a particular grade level at your school, use the grade level and school drop-down menus.

3. If the student is displayed in the results list, click the Add button beside the student name. If your search returns more than one page of results, then use the page indicators at the bottom of the screen to see more students matching your search criteria. Because there may be multiple students with the same name, please be sure to pay close attention to the student’s grade level and student ID to select the correct student. **Tip:** If you are looking for a specific student, use the District Student ID number. If you are looking for all students in a particular grade level at your school, use the grade level and school drop-down menus.

4. Select Return when you are finished. **Tip:** Select All from the school drop-down to search across the district, or leave the school drop-down pre-selected to your campus to see students from your current campus only.

5. If you have searched the entire district and still cannot find a student, you can submit a question to the Research and Accountability Support Team by clicking Contact Support under the:
   A. Actions button in the roster; or
   B. Submit Support Ticket link in the “Resources” section on your “Link” page.

   You can also contact your principal or campus support team member for assistance.
Tip: If you want to add all students on your campus within a grade level (e.g., a 5th grade science lab teacher who teaches all 5th grade students), then search for all students in a grade and click the Add All button. Make sure the “school” drop-down shows the campus where you would like to find all 5th grade students. If you are adding students to a new roster and teach most students in a grade, you may want to “add all” and then remove a few students rather than adding many students individually.

Deleting Students
If students need to be removed from the class roster, you can modify the roster to remove them.

1. Select ✗ to the left of the student name you wish to remove. Students removed from a roster will appear at the bottom of the page under “Deleted Students.”

A deleted student can be returned to the active roster by selecting the Restore link under the “Deleted Students” list at the bottom of the roster.
Setting Start and End Dates

Student start and end dates indicate the period of time when instruction was provided.

1. On the “Class Roster” page, in section 2 (“during these months”), use the drop-down menu to indicate the month when a student started in your class. To save time, you can set the same value for all students using the “Set Values for All Students” feature in the green first row.

   **Warning:** Students’ start and stop months are pre-loaded from the Student Information System, based on their start month and stop month at your campus and in your roster. That information can be changed by selecting new start and stop months for a student. However, if you inadvertently change the start and stop month for a student who was not in your classroom for the entire year when you chose “Set Values for All Students,” and another teacher claims the same student for the appropriate months, the student will be over-claimed for those months. This will cause an alert, which will require you to change the start and stop months for that student, as appropriate.

2. From the “End Month” drop down menu, indicate when a student left your class. In many cases, this will be the end of the school year. However, you should use the Enter by month option if, for example, a student was in your class, moved to another, then returned, or if you were out on FML for several weeks/months, or if you shared instruction of a student or group of students for only part of the school year, etc. See the Entering Percentage of Instruction by Months section of this guide for more information and detailed instruction on how to use this function.

   **Note:** If you primarily teach a group of the same students in multiple content areas, you can correctly establish one roster—set class enrollment and indicate percent of instruction—and then copy all the students from that roster with linkage data to another class of a different content area by clicking the Actions button, then selecting “Copy Students.” See the Copying and Replacing Rosters section of this guide for more information and detailed instructions on how to use this function.
Setting Percentage of Instruction
This function indicates the amount of instruction you provided for the given class and subject for the student during the time he/she was enrolled in your class.

1. From the “Class Roster” page, use the drop-down menu to indicate the percentage of instruction you provided a student. To save time, you can set the same value for all students using the “Set Values for All Students” feature in the green first row.

2. Review your selections for accuracy, and select Submit to save your linkage.

   **Note:** You should be able to read each line like this: “I taught this student from Month A to Month B for this % of instruction.”

What Percentage Should I Claim?
If you were the **only** teacher for that subject for the student/class, the percentage of instruction for which you were responsible should be 100%. This means that all of the students’ instruction in that subject is attributable to you.

   **Do not** account for student attendance in the percentage of instruction for which you are claiming. If you were the **only** Math teacher for the student, you should claim 100% of instruction for the student—even if the student only attended 50% of the days.

If a student was receiving instruction from **more than one** teacher for a particular subject, then all teachers who were providing instruction should claim the student for a percentage of time. A few examples of this include:

- **Co-teaching situations:** Both teachers will indicate a percentage of instruction that represents how much instruction was provided by each. For example, if the students were taught one out of five days a week by a Math specialist, then he/she may indicate 20% instructional time, and the primary Math teacher would claim the student for 80% time, or four out of five days.

- **Double-blocking situations:** At times, students are “double-blocked” for a particular core foundation subject. In these situations, if more than one teacher is responsible for teaching the content area, both teachers should claim the student. If, for example, the student is with both Ms. Jones and Mr. Sanchez five days a week, each teacher may be responsible for an equivalent amount of instruction. In these situations, the teachers could claim the student for 50% time each, which totals to 100% instruction in the given subject for that student.

   All of these scenarios are **guidelines, not** suggestions or recommendations. It is important to remember that percentage of instruction claimed **must reflect campus practice**, and that percentage assignments ultimately are a **campus-based decision**. If you need help in deciding how much instruction you should be claiming, it is important that you discuss this with your principal or a member of your support team.
- **Double-blocking plus co-teaching:** There may be students who are double-blocked for a subject (therefore 50% instruction from Ms. Jones and 50% instruction from Mr. Sanchez), but where Mr. Sanchez works with a co-teacher (Ms. Carter). In this situation, Ms. Jones might claim the student at 50% time, while Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Carter might claim the student at 30% and 20% time, respectively.

**Entering Percentage of Instruction by Months**

This function allows data to be reflected more accurately where there may be multiple entries and exits from the classroom. The “Enter by months” mode can be used for as little as one and as many as all students on the roster, but does not have to be used for every student or by every teacher.

**When Should “Enter by Months” Mode be Used?**

“Enter by month” mode is not necessarily for everyone. Here are a few examples of when to use this feature:

1. One or more of your students left part way through the school year and then came back. You were not responsible for his/her instruction for a period of time in the “middle” of the class/year.

2. You left part way through the school year and then came back. You were not responsible for student instruction for a period of time in the “middle” of the class/year.

3. You were responsible for all students at 100% time except for the months of February and March, when your students received additional instruction from a specialist.

**How Do I “Enter by Months”?**

1. From the Class Roster page, select **Enter by months**.
Sections 2 and 3 combine showing nine months of instruction. Select the appropriate values from the drop down menu to indicate the percentage of instruction you provided that student during each month. If the student was not in your classroom for the majority of the month, select “0%” for that month. (Please note that data entered by month can only be edited by month.)

2. If you need to make changes to most or all students (for example, your students received additional instruction from a specialist for 2 months), you can set the same value for all students using the “Set Values for All Students” feature in the green first row and then make any student-specific changes.

3. You can toggle back and forth between “Enter by months” and “Enter by year” modes. To toggle back to “Enter by year” mode, select Enter by year.

4. Review your selections for accuracy, and select Submit at the bottom of the class roster to save your linkage changes and submit for principal approval.
Examples of Entering by Months

Note: The following are examples only—everyone’s situation is unique.

Example 1: The teacher provides 100% of instruction for Katherine when she is in this classroom. Using “Enter by months” mode, select 0% for the winter months when Katherine was not in this classroom.

Example 2: The teacher provides 50% of instruction for Shelly when she is in this classroom. Select 0% for the winter months when Shelly was not in this classroom. In this case, another teacher should link the student for the other 50% of instruction in this subject area.

Example 3: The teacher provides 100% of instruction for Julie for the entire school year. Use “Enter by year” to make revisions to Julie’s data.

Selecting “Enter by year” will display sections 2 and 3 separately where Julie’s data can be changed. You will need to toggle back to “Enter by months” mode to change Katherine or Shelly’s data.
Submitting Rosters

1. Review “Class Roster” page for accuracy.

2. Click the Submit for Approval button at the bottom of the page to save and submit your changes.
   
   **Note:** If you have a large list of students, you may need to scroll down to see the bottom of the screen.

3. If you still have information to verify on your roster but need to stop working on it now, click the Save button to save your work. You may later return to continue your verification and make further updates as needed by clicking Edit to go back into the roster.

   ![Screenshot of a class roster with Save, Submit for Approval, and Cancel buttons]

   **Remember:** Clicking Save does not submit your roster for approval. If you “Save” your roster for later, you must re-enter the system, and then select Submit for Approval to submit your roster for approval prior to the deadline.

4. After submitting your roster for approval, the “Statement of Accuracy & Completeness” dialog box will appear. Click the OK button. The class roster status will be updated to “Submitted” and will automatically be set for Principal Review and Approval.

   ![Screenshot of the “Statement of Accuracy & Completeness” dialog box]

   **Note:** If you click Cancel, you will return to your roster with the changes you made. However, your changes have not been saved. You can continue to make additional changes and save them at that point, or you can close the roster and lose your changes.

5. Repeat this step for each of your class rosters. You can review and, if necessary, update class rosters up until the Teacher Linkage Period ends—even if you have already submitted them.
Copying and Replacing Rosters
This function allows you to copy students from one class that you taught to another class that you taught to create a combined list of students.

When Do I Copy/Replace Rosters?
This function can be used by teachers who teach the same group of students for the same months at the same percentage of instruction for more than one core content class. For example, if you teach ELA, Math, and Social Studies to the same students, you can complete one of your rosters, then copy that roster to the other two content areas.

This can save you time and effort, and result in more accurate linkage for all of your content areas.

Copying rosters is useful for ensuring all of the same students appear across all content areas you teach before you start adjusting months and assigning percentages of instruction—that Johnny was not inadvertently left off of your Math roster, for example. Replacing rosters is useful for ensuring that all of the same students, for the same months, at the same percentage of instruction are linked across all of the content areas you teach.

How Do I Copy Rosters?
There are two ways to copy students. From the “Class Roster” page, click the Actions button and select Copy Students.

Or, from the “Link” page, which lists all of your rosters, click Copy Students.
Next, select “Copy Student Roster” by selecting the “Continue” button.

All of the students in the roster you are copying will be put into another roster, as well as any other students who are already in the receiving roster. For example, the roster you are copying from contains students A, B, C. The roster you are copying to contains students C, D, E, F. Once complete, the roster you are copying to will contain students A, B, C, D, E, F. Student C will not be duplicated, and Students D, E, and F will not be lost or deleted.

To copy the current months and percentage of instruction settings with the student, click the “Include membership and % instruction” button inside the box.

(Recommended selection) Include membership and % instruction: The months and percentage of instruction in the class roster will be transferred with the students. If you have not yet completed the linkage process, the months that were automatically populated from the Student Information System will be transferred with the students.

(Not recommended) Default to entire term and 0% instruction: The months and percentage of instruction in the class roster will not be transferred, and default values (From: Sept. to May/June, % Instruction is 0%) will be used instead. The months that were automatically populated from the Student Information System will not be transferred with the students.

Select the class(es) to which you want to copy the roster, then click Continue.
How Do I Replace Rosters?

This function allows you to replicate the class roster of one of your classes to some or all of your selected classes.

From the “Class Roster” page, click the Actions button and then select Copy Students.

Or, from the “Link” page, which lists all of your rosters, click Copy Students.

Next, select “Replace Student Roster” by selecting the Continue button.

All of the students in the roster you are copying will replace any students who are already in the receiving roster. For example, the roster you are starting with contains Students A, B, C. The roster you are replacing contains Students C, D, and E. Once complete, the roster you replaced will contain Students A, B, and C. Student C will not be duplicated, and Students D and E will be deleted.
To copy the current months and percentage of instruction settings with the student, click the “Include membership and % instruction” button inside the box.

(Recommended selection) Include membership and % instruction: The months and percentage of instruction in the class roster will be transferred with the students. If you have not yet completed the linkage process, the months that were automatically populated from the Student Information System will be transferred with the students.

(Not recommended) Default to entire term and 0% instruction: The months and percentage of instruction in the class roster will not be transferred, and default values (From: Sept. to May/June, % Instruction is 0%) will be used instead. The months that were automatically populated from the Student Information System will not be transferred with the students.

Select which class(es) to which you want to copy the roster, then click Continue.
**Helpful Hint:** If you are a self-contained teacher, you may want to complete linkage in one roster, and then **Replace Student Rosters** to all the other rosters. If you taught slightly different students in the other subjects, you can edit the individual subject rosters to indicate additional students taught.

### How Do I Merge Rosters?
If rosters are the same subject, staff can merge them.

If you have multiple class rosters in the same subject area (e.g., MTH20680, MTH20670, MTH2061G, and MTH20630) and wish to merge them into a single roster, you may do so using the “Merge Classes” function. This will give you one single roster that contains all of your students for that content area. This is particularly useful for teachers who have many rosters that represent the same class, or many rosters that represent the same course. This can help you to eliminate duplicated students and to reduce the number of over claimed student alerts.

From the “My Class Rosters” page, click the **Actions** button and then select **Merge Classes**.

A pop-up will display classes in the same subject area. Select the **Continue** button next to the group to merge.

Select the classes to merge by clicking in the boxes—two or more from the list of classes in that subject. Next, provide details for the resulting class.
**Helpful Hint:** You do not need to select a specific course to merge the classes into; you can and should use the Default course, which is listed first on the drop-down menu. The class name can be anything you want to name it (e.g., Ms. Jones Algebra I Class).

Then, click on **Merge Classes**.

The resulting class will appear in the Active Class list, and the source classes will be deleted.
Reviewing Alerts
At the bottom of your “Link” page, you will see the “Teacher Alerts and Notifications” section.

These alerts will help you identify issues that may occur when students on your rosters are over claimed, under claimed, or claimed when they were not at your campus. An alert is also generated when you have empty rosters.

How Do I Correct Alerts?
Click on the Alerts link at the right to display a list of alerts in that category.

Note: If there are “0 Alerts,” you cannot click the Alert link. You may only click an alert link when there are one or more alerts to be corrected.

1. Click View/Edit to display the “Link detail” page. This page will show you details for that student, including each teacher who has claimed that student and for what percentage of instruction for each month of the school year. An example is shown here:

2. You may need to make corrections on your own roster, or discuss the percentage of instruction claimed with another teacher who may need to make corrections.

3. You may want to check your alerts several times during the Teacher Linkage Period as details will change when other teachers submit their own rosters.
4. The check boxes at the bottom are disabled (for viewing only). They will display a ✓ if one has been set by the principal or support team member indicating that a student was not receiving instruction from your campus for the majority of the month(s) checked.

5. Click on the roster name to go directly into your roster. From the roster, you can make changes to the information for the student that is causing the alert.

What if I Can’t Correct an Alert?
You can only make changes to your own rosters. If you find a change that needs to be made is in another teacher’s roster, you should discuss that change with the other teacher. If this is unsuccessful, and you need assistance in correcting an alert, please contact your principal or a support team member. Please note that the Research and Accountability team cannot assist with changes to your rosters or another teacher’s rosters; this must be done at the campus-level, either by the teachers or support team members.

Special Note about Submitted Linkages
After you have submitted your roster(s) for approval, your principal or a support team member may find it necessary to make changes to your roster prior to approval. If changes are made to your roster, you will receive an automatically-generated email informing you of a change and the roster affected. This will allow you to review the changes that have been made to your roster, and to discuss them with your principal or support team before linkages are used for analysis.

Your principal and support team have until May 22, 2020 to clear any outstanding alerts and approve all rosters on your campus.

Note: When changes are made to teacher linkages or rosters, the date of change and the staff member who made the changes are documented within the underlying data on the AIM portal. Teachers will also be informed by email if any changes are made to their rosters after they have submitted the rosters for approval.
If you believe there is a problem with any changes made to your roster by your principal or support team member, please discuss this with them by **May 22, 2020** (the last day of the Principal Review and Approval Period).

You will also receive an automatically generated email informing you when your roster has been approved.

**Now Available!** Teachers, support team members, and principals can see the changes that were made to their rosters—and who made these changes.

To view the history of changes made to a class, choose “View Class History” from the **Actions** button on a roster.
Getting Help

This section provides a listing of the resources available to assist teachers during the Linkage process, from start to finish.
Username and Password Support
The HISD Help Desk is available for username and password assistance at (713) 892-7378. Help Desk staff will only be able to provide username and password support, and are not in the position to answer questions related to the Linkage system or process. You may also use the “Forgot Password?” feature on the portal. Charter school employees who do not know or remember their username should email research@houstonisd.org for assistance.

Campus-Level Support
Teachers should seek assistance from their principal and campus support team members. The support team is displayed on the “Link” page.

PowerPoint Slides
PowerPoint slides with screenshots are also available 24/7 on the AIM portal.

Online Support
Teachers can submit an electronic help ticket if they need assistance during this process.

From the Link screen, you will be able to find these tabs. Click on the “Support” tab.

From the Home screen, click “Help.”

General support for teachers will be available through the Support System on the portal. Users submit questions online, and a “case” or support ticket is created. If you submit a question online, you will have to log back into the portal to review responses.
Battelle for Kids’ Help Desk: Navigating AIM Portal and BFK•Link® Support
The BFK Help Desk is available at (866) 543-7555 Monday through Friday from 7 a.m.–4 p.m. CST to help with:
- Accessing the AIM portal
- Logging into the AIM portal with username and password
- Locating/navigating the BFK•Link system
- Locating support team members as listed on the “Link” home page
- Locating missing students
- Adding missing students to the AIM portal (note that the Help Desk cannot add missing students to rosters—only to the portal itself)

Questions should be specific to the Linkage process only, not to Comparative Growth reports.

Houston ISD Research & Accountability Linkage Support Team
Teachers may contact the Research & Accountability office to directly connect with members of the Linkage Support Team at research@houstonisd.org.