



**Project Lead
The Way
Partnership
Team Guide**



PLTW Partnership Team Overview

Through their experiences in PLTW programs, your students are learning in-demand, transportable skills such as problem-solving strategies, critical and creative thinking, and how to communicate and collaborate. They are applying what they know to solve hands-on problems, reflective of real-world scenarios and careers.

A strong PLTW community – including students, educators, and supporters – is instrumental in reinforcing student learning and creating opportunities for student recognition. It also connects your PLTW students to global and local challenges that capture their interests, and links the program to your broader community, business, and industry.



One key strategy to build community around your PLTW program is to form a PLTW Partnership Team. A PLTW Partnership Team is a group of collaborative stakeholders that provides leadership and action to support and enhance PLTW student learning experiences. PLTW Partnership Teams play a vital role in the sustainability and efficacy of PLTW programs. A strong PLTW Partnership Team has the potential to help support your program and help build it into an exemplary, sustained program with influence that reaches beyond the bounds of your school and into the workforce.

PLTW Partnership Team Benefits

In addition to creating real-world connections and providing student opportunities, PLTW Partnership Teams advocate for PLTW programs to school administrations, school boards, and local businesses.

Across the country, PLTW Partnership Teams provide:

- Resources and/or supplies for PLTW classrooms
- Student tours of local hospitals, manufacturing sites, and more
- Mentors and role models for students
- Professional opportunities for students such as real-life interview practice with hiring managers, resume evaluations, and internships
- Connections to local college and career options

Establishing a PLTW Partnership Team

PLTW Partnership Teams may include business and industry professionals, college and university representatives, district-level decision makers, teachers, administrators, parents, students, and alumni. Most schools have found that it works well to have a PLTW Partnership Team that ranges in size from seven to 15 members. We also highly recommend that it includes representatives from elementary, middle, and high school.

To maximize positive outcomes, we recommend PLTW Partnership Teams include diverse representation across different areas of expertise. Team composition should also reflect the community in terms of gender and ethnicity. We recommend a district leader, principal, PLTW teacher, and PLTW student(s) participate in the initial planning process and PLTW Partnership Team member selection.

6 Steps to Build Your PLTW Partnership Team

1 Set Initial Goals

How would you like for your PLTW Partnership Team to support your PLTW program? What is your vision of a successful PLTW Partnership Team?

During this period of planning, take time to consider these questions and set some initial Partnership Team goals to help shape your preliminary direction and early priorities.

Determining what you hope to accomplish with your PLTW Partnership Team at the outset will help you with all the steps that follow: outlining desired team member characteristics; sketching out team member responsibilities; etc.

2 Outline the Skills, Resources, and Expertise Needed to Reach Those Goals

After setting your initial PLTW Partnership Team goals, carefully consider the skills, resources, and expertise you need on your team to accomplish those goals.

Consider the following attributes:

- Experience in computer science, engineering, and/or biomedical science
- Knowledge and experience in PLTW course concepts
- Awareness of community workforce needs
- Ties to local higher education and/or industry
- Experience with community leadership
- Marketing, public relations, and media experience
- Networking expertise
- Fundraising experience
- Technical experience with software and equipment used in PLTW courses

3 Set Expectations for PLTW Partnership Team Members

Questions to consider:

- In what ways do you expect your PLTW Partnership Team members to contribute to the team's goals?
- What responsibilities do you want team members to have?
- Will the structure of the team include specific roles such as chairperson?
- What kind of time commitment is involved? When/where/how often will your PLTW Partnership Team meet?
- How long of a term will PLTW Partnership Team members serve?

Many PLTW Partnership Teams have found success in setting membership terms lasting one to three years. In addition, staggering membership terms can support smoother transitions.

6 Steps to Build Your PLTW Partnership Team

4 Brainstorm Potential Partnership Team Members

Identify organizations and individuals you want to target for participation on your PLTW Partnership Team. You may want to consider the following sources:

- Businesses and industries within the community, especially those with structured outreach programs
- Economic and workforce development organizations and boards
- Rotary, Lions, and Kiwanis clubs and other community organizations
- Local government agencies
- Chambers of commerce
- College dean's office or outreach coordinators for staff and faculty support
- College alumni coordinators for connecting with local alumni with relevant experience
- Parents of students
- Students and former students

5 Set Up Outreach Meetings and Send Invitations

Reach out to the organizations and individuals you want on your PLTW Partnership Team, either through one-on-one meetings and/or written invitations. Hosting PLTW classroom tours are another effective way to recruit PLTW Partnership Team members.

When possible, work through people in your school who have connections to potential PLTW Partnership Team members.

6 Onboard Your PLTW Partnership Team Members

Before your team gets started, we recommend onboarding all new team members by providing a detailed overview of PLTW and your PLTW program(s).

Ideas for bringing your new PLTW Partnership Team members up to speed:

- Share [PLTW's Overview Brochure](#) and other materials specific to your PLTW program(s)
- Take your PLTW Partnership Team members on a tour of a PLTW classroom(s) to experience the program firsthand
- Invite PLTW teachers and student ambassadors to share their experiences

This onboarding period is also a good opportunity to familiarize new PLTW Partnership Team members with expectations, roles, and responsibilities.

Once you have established your team, we recommend conducting periodic evaluations of your PLTW Partnership Team's goals and effectiveness, taking care to make adjustments accordingly. In addition, we suggest creating a recruiting process that includes exploration of needed skills and identification of new potential team members.

Potential PLTW Partnership Team Roles

Structured roles – such as PLTW Chairperson, PLTW Liaison, etc. – may be useful to your PLTW Partnership Team, as these defined positions can help keep your group organized and give participants clear-cut definitions of their responsibilities.

The following defined positions have played a vital role in the success of many PLTW Partnership Teams:

PLTW Chairperson

The PLTW Chairperson is often a business or industry professional who champions the benefits of the school's PLTW program to the community.

With the leadership structure outlined in this section, the PLTW Chairperson works closely with the PLTW Liaison to strengthen and sustain the tie between the PLTW program and the community.

Responsibilities of the PLTW Chairperson may include the following:

- Assist the PLTW Liaison in developing agendas and planning meetings
- Lead all PLTW Partnership Team meetings
- Participate in the development and implementation of strategic plan for program expansion
- Help establish targets to make progress towards achieving PLTW program recognition
- Create subcommittees, as needed
- Serve as a spokesperson for the PLTW Partnership Team
- Conduct outreach with potential new members of the PLTW Partnership Team

We recommend developing a succession plan for the PLTW Chairperson to ensure strong, steadfast leadership in this role. Many PLTW Partnership Teams have found success in holding an annual election for the role of PLTW Chairperson.

PLTW Liaison

The PLTW Liaison is typically an administrator or a PLTW teacher. He or she acts as a vital link between the PLTW program and the PLTW Partnership Team.

Responsibilities of the PLTW Liaison may include the following:

- Help organize and develop the PLTW Partnership Team
- Arrange PLTW Partnership Team meetings
- Collaborate with other PLTW teachers to outline program needs
- Share program needs with PLTW Partnership Team



- Participate in the development and implementation of a strategic plan for program expansion
- Help establish targets to make progress toward achieving PLTW program recognition
- Establish and maintain communication with PLTW Partnership Team members
- Onboard new PLTW Partnership Team members
- Invite students to join the PLTW Partnership Team or attend meetings
- Invite PLTW Partnership Team members to attend events, such as student presentations, competitions, award ceremonies, and open houses
- Provide updates and feedback on program improvements resulting from PLTW Partnership Team efforts
- Use local and social media to communicate program events and successes
- Recognize PLTW Partnership Team members for their support
- Recommend new PLTW Partnership Team members



In this leadership format, the PLTW Partnership Team may have an executive committee that includes the Chairperson, Liaison, Past-Chair, and Chair-Elect. This committee would take primary responsibility for key program decisions and planning.

General Members

No matter the leadership structure of the PLTW Partnership Team, each participant acts as a vital link between the community and the PLTW program.

Each PLTW Partnership Team member's responsibilities may include the following:

- Serve as an advocate for the PLTW program with parents, school board members, school administration, and the community
 - Engage with elected and district-level officials about the value of the PLTW programs, as well as the importance of continued support and expansion of programs
 - Share PLTW program information with local stakeholders including industry, economic development, workforce development, and government officials
 - Connect PLTW students and the PLTW program to the community
 - Understand and support the PLTW program, and helping other community members do the same
- Contribute to the development and implementation of a strategic plan for program expansion
- Make progress toward achieving PLTW program recognition
- Actively participate in all meetings
- Work with local colleges and universities to create student recognition opportunities such as scholarships and admission preferences
- Provide support for PLTW teachers as they continue to build their knowledge base and expertise
- Assist in student outreach and recruitment efforts
- Support PLTW students through mentoring and feedback on their coursework and projects

5 Tips to Help Your PLTW Partnership Team Thrive

1 Develop a Strategic Plan for PLTW Program(s) Expansion

Your PLTW Partnership Team will benefit from setting goals and creating a plan to drive toward meeting those goals.

Your plan could include specific strategies related the following areas:

- Develop initiatives that support student empowerment:
 - Outline plans for student recruitment, enrollment, and mentorship
 - Make connections between the PLTW program and local businesses
 - Create student opportunities for career development and work-based learning
 - Establish scholarships and awards for students
 - Recognize and celebrate student achievement and success
- Elevate the profile of the PLTW program through marketing and advocacy
- Create, promote, and organize opportunities for community involvement
- Budget for the PLTW program's resource needs and take steps to secure resources
- Plan for ongoing professional development for teachers and counselors
- Make progress toward achieving PLTW program recognition

2 Prioritize PLTW Partnership Team Member Engagement

To help members of your PLTW Partnership Team prioritize meetings and events, we suggest providing them with plenty of advance notice. One way to do this is by creating a shared online calendar that contains dates for the following:

- Regularly scheduled meetings
- Events related to your PLTW program(s), such as career fairs, internships, student capstone presentations, open houses, and community meetings
- Deadlines related to goals and action items
- PLTW Core Trainings
- PLTW conferences and events
- School board meetings and competitions

3 Activate Your Community

PLTW Partnership Team members can greatly enhance your PLTW program by helping to get the community involved.

Some ways team members can contribute:

- Provide teachers and students with real-world industry insights, knowledge, and trends

5 Tips to Help Your PLTW Partnership Team Thrive

- Support PLTW classes:
 - Offer advice on how to use specific equipment
 - Provide additional resources to students and teachers
 - Lead students through a relevant project and show them the finished product
- Participate in review sessions for End-of-Course (EoC) assessments
- Provide guidance around school-day or after-school activities
- Organize field trips for teachers and students to places of business, manufacturing facilities, hospitals, and/or colleges
- Talk to students about the challenges and rewards of various career fields
- Be a mentor and help students explore the various paths they can take with their knowledge, skills, and interests

4 Celebrate PLTW Partnership Team Contributions

Publicly acknowledging the work of the PLTW Partnership Team is an excellent way to thank them for their time and talents, as well as raise the profile of the work your team is doing.

Ways to recognize PLTW Partnership Team members:

- Highlight PLTW program accomplishments in the school newsletter, on the school website, or at school board meetings
- Send a thank-you note to company leadership for any industry PLTW Partnership Team members
- Host a recognition breakfast or luncheon
- Ask students to send letters to PLTW Partnership Team members

5 Learn From Other PLTW Partnership Teams

Established PLTW Partnership Teams can provide your own team with inspiration and guidance.

Ways you can learn from other PLTW Partnership Teams:

- Reach out to PLTW Partnership Teams in your local area for inspiration and guidance
- Make plans to connect and collaborate with fellow PLTW Partnership Teams at PLTW events such as the PLTW Summit or PLTW State Conference
- Read success stories on the [PLTW website](#)