PLTW High School Enrollment FAQs

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1. What are recommended ways to "market" PLTW high school pathways to rising 9th graders coming from feeder middle schools?

Some ideas a number of MA PLTW high school programs have employed include:
- Sending home a family letter (or one of the new flyers :)) to families
- Sharing PLTW student work at grade 8 parent night
- Providing tours of the space/classes specifically for MS Schooler's looking at the high school
- Working with existing students and teachers to create a recruitment video to share with 8th grade students and/or setting up a student panel
- Creating and sharing promotional materials about the pathways for grade 8 teachers
- Meeting with grade 8 guidance department so they understand the program

We recently created recruitment resources to help share the excitement and value of PLTW classes with students and families: posters, flyers, social media materials and expanded course descriptions. You can learn more and download all of these for use at mass-stemhub.org/recruitHS.

2. What are suggestions for recruiting female students to the PLTW Engineering and Computer Science pathways?

One helpful piece of advice we've heard over and over again in this space is to help young women realize that they *belong* in these spaces and their perspective is necessary for ongoing innovation. Consider using the female empowerment poster aimed at the women STEM professionals of the future available for download here. Additionally, have teachers and guidance counselors encourage participation and raise awareness of the program with students and families. This could be a great place to tap into 8th grade teachers to help encourage students to sign up as well.

3. How can PLTW courses be designated as Advanced courses?

To capture the advanced course work distinction for the DESE accountability system, schools need to use the PLTW course codes. These course codes are specific to PLTW classes and automatically register in the system as advanced coursework

- All MA Course COdes can be found in the" EPIMS Appendices A" files on the DESE website here: https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/epims/ . DOwnload the Excel and look at tab G2 Secondary Subject Area-Course Codes

4. How students can get college credit for the PLTW classes they take in high school?

There are two main ways students can do this: (A) getting credit directly at the college in which they matriculate and (B) getting transcripted credit from a different college and then transferring it to their college. Going into each of those with a bit more detail:

(A) Credit at the college in which they matriculate -- In MA, there are at least 3 colleges that give credit: Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), UMass Lowell, and Wentworth Institute of Technology (WIT). You can learn more about the specifics of all three on the MSH website here. In brief, if students take the course and score above a certain level on their EoC, the college will provide them credit – free of cost - once the student enrolls and shares their official EOC report. This is usually for a required course for the engineering major, but specifics are listed on the website linked above. These colleges also have scholarship opportunities for students who have completed PLTW courses and enroll there.

(B) Transcripted credit -- Some institutions, such as Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), will provide students with 3 transcrpited semester credits for the PLTW courses they have taken – and paid for, proven through the EoC report. Students who do not matriculate at RIT can request their RIT transcript (on which those PLTW courses and the relevant RIT credit it listed) be sent to the college in which they do matriculate. Often their college will accept the transfer credit, usually as an elective, but the specifics are different for each college.

The full list of colleges that provide credit (and other opportunities) can be found on the PLTW student opportunities page. Here a student could search to see what opportunities may be available for PLTW students at their college(s) of interest.

5. How do I get students interested in PLTW Computer Science Principles when we offer AP Computer Science Principles?

PLTW's AP CS Principles class is endorsed by the college board and can be used as an AP course. Many schools run one AP CS Principles course using PLTW and allow students to choose to sit for the AP exam.

6. Can the PLTW Biomedical Science pathway replace regular biology?

No, it does not work as a replacement. While it covers similar things, the labs go much deeper into certain topics so there is not full coverage of traditional biology. They work well together and some have seen positive impacts on AP Biology results in students who are taking both courses in parallel.

7. How can my PLTW program help my school receive the DESE Innovation Pathway distinction?

PLTW courses satisfy the technical and/or academic course requirements of the Innovation Pathway model. Additionally, PLTW's capstone courses can count for the work-based learning component. In addition to the recognition and support that comes from the state for the pathway, earning the distinction may also unlock additional funding down the line through the capital skills program. The effort, along with the Early College Pathway, is part of the High Quality College and Career Pathways initiative to expand student access to high-quality career pathways. The application is now posted on the DESE website at this location http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/innovation-pathways/. Details on the application process and timeline are in the website. This can be a helpful way to increase recognition and additional structure to your program and also can be a powerful way to engage local industry.

8. How can I apply for Perkins funding through my PLTW program?

DESE is working on streamlining the process for Perkins and has completed a crosswalk for PLTW programs that should help simplify. The deadline for this school year has passed, but below is the process and new resources from DESE, as it should apply for next year!

> *For Districts New to Offering Perkins V CTE programming in FY22*
> *The Department is looking ahead to FY22 programming under the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the 21st Century Act, more commonly known as Perkins V ("Perkins Five"). The federal Perkins V Act is designed to develop more fully the academic knowledge and technical and employability skills of secondary and postsecondary education students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs.*
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> *Schools and districts considering pursuing federal Perkins funding should bear in mind that there are specific program requirements necessary to qualify for Perkins V funding, and there are reporting, performance, accountability and monitoring expectations associated with Perkins programming. Districts should review MA definitions for Perkins V to ensure programs are of size, scope, and quality. For these reasons, the Department encourages districts to carefully review plans for long term sustainability of Perkins career and technical education program(s). See the Assurances at the survey below, and also the Perkins V Manual website, for more.*

The Department recognizes that technical, career-oriented programs in some high schools (for example, designated Innovation Pathway programs or those implementing ==Project Lead The Way curriculum==—see [link](#)) generally meet many – although not all – of the requirements for federal funding under Perkins V, and that districts may be planning to develop these into Perkins-eligible CTE programs over time.

==Districts that do not offer CTE Perkins programs currently and are considering offering CTE Perkins programs next year (School Year 2022, or Fall 2021 enrollment) should submit a letter of intent== [by filling out the following survey by 10/27](#). By completing this survey, you are showing interest in your district potentially applying for Perkins funding in school year 2021-2022. Districts are ineligible to apply directly for Perkins funding unless there are plans in place to begin providing eligible CTE programming and can comply with the [various requirements of Perkins V](#).

9. How can PLTW Core Training support teachers in obtaining graduate credit or DLCS teachers license?

Middle and high school teachers can apply their PLTW Core Training towards **graduate credit** through the UMass Lowell School of Education. Online courses are offered in summer and winter, through which teachers confirm their completion of 10 days of PLTW Core Training (Gateway/Middle School courses can be combined), complete a reflection paper and sample pedagogy project of how they'll apply the training in their classroom for 3 graduate-level credit. Learn more [here](#).

PLTW Computer Science Core Training can help teachers obtain a **[5-12 Digital Literacy Computer Science (DLCS) teachers license](#)**. WPI can provide certificates stating the SMKs covered by PLTW Core Training for middle school and high school computer science courses. We've had many teachers in our community already obtain this license! There is currently no MTEL required to receive this license. To provide teachers guidance in the process of applying for the license prior to an MTEL, review [this document](#) outlining the steps.