



DATE: January 25, 2012
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FOR RELEASE: Immediate

Farmington Public Schools adopts Project Lead The Way (PLTW) STEM Education Program

Farmington, Mich. – In February 2011, as part of the Choice Options Committee recommendations as presented to the Board of Education, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) was recommended to be expanded throughout all of the District's K-12 schools over the next five years. The STEM fields are those academic disciplines that fall under the umbrella areas represented by the acronym. According to both the United States National Research Council and the National Science Foundation, these fields are collectively considered core technological underpinnings of an advanced society. In many forums the strength of the STEM workforce is viewed as an indicator of a nation's ability to sustain itself. Schools with a strong emphasis on STEM education often integrate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics into the entire curriculum.

In an effort to align our District's curriculum with STEM objectives, Farmington, Harrison and North Farmington High Schools have adopted Project Lead The Way (PLTW) and will begin offering in the 2012-2013 school year PLTW's STEM courses. PLTW is a not-for-profit organization and the nation's leading provider of middle and high school STEM education programs to 4,200 schools throughout the country.

Parents and students in grades 8-11 are invited to attend a STEM Informational Meeting on Tuesday, January 31. The meeting will be held in the auditorium at Farmington High School, 32000 Shiawassee, Farmington beginning at 6:30 p.m.

PLTW designs and offers schools project-based curriculum in everything from Energy and the Environment to Biotechnology, Engineering Design and Development, Innovation and more. Courses offered through the program can be used as electives or as part of a school's core science and math curriculum and allow students the opportunity to apply what they are learning in traditional math and science classes

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to authentic engineering, technology and biomedical sciences-related projects.

Bureau of Labor Statistics projections show that 16 of the 20 fastest-growing occupations, from biomedical engineers to data communications analysts, will require a background in STEM.

“PLTW has a long history of successfully engaging students in STEM subjects,” said Heidi Skodack, Farmington High School Architectural and Engineering CAD/Technology teacher. “This will give Farmington students a huge advantage over their peers when it comes to college and career readiness, and it will increase the pool of highly-skilled workers for local industry.”

PLTW provides training for middle and high school teachers so they can effectively implement and teach the hands-on, project-based curriculum. PLTW’s university relationships provide students opportunities for college credit, scholarships and admissions preferences. School-based PLTW Partnership Teams complement the curriculum by recruiting local business and industry professionals to serve as mentors and share real-world experiences with students.

“In today’s global economy, Americans are competing not just against each other but against peers in countries like China and India,” said Vince Bertram, CEO of PLTW. “It is more critical now than ever for our education system to help students develop the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills they’ll need so that the U.S. remains economically competitive.”

According to a recent study by PLTW, students in these programs achieve significantly higher scores in reading, mathematics and science, and in many cases students have the opportunity to receive college credit. They earn higher GPAs as college freshmen, and PLTW alumni are studying engineering and technology in greater numbers than the national average, with a higher retention rate in college engineering, science and related programs than non-PLTW students. As the nation's leading provider of rigorous and innovative STEM education programs, the vision is to spark ingenuity, creativity and imagination within all students. PLTW courses are preparing students to become the most innovative and productive in the world.

Project Lead The Way, Inc., is a non-profit organization with 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status and provider of STEM education curricular programs used in schools. PLTW's curriculum is collaboratively designed by PLTW teachers, university educators, engineering and biomedical professionals, and school administrators to promote critical thinking, creativity, innovation and real-world problem solving skills in stu-

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dents. The hands-on, project-based program engages students on multiple levels, exposes them to areas of study that they typically do not pursue, and provides them with a foundation and proven path to college and career success. More than 400,000 students at 4,200 schools in 50 states plus Washington, D.C., are currently taking PLTW courses. For more information, visit www.pltw.org.

For more information or to set up a school visit, contact: Heidi Skodack, Farmington High School, (248) 426-2733; James Stuef, Harrison High School, (248) 426-4728; or Mark Skodack, North Farmington High School, (248) 426-2830. For more information, visit www.farmington.k12.mi.us.