



West Independent School District

With Children as our First Priority

**Office of the Superintendent
David Truitt**

NEWS RELEASE

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West Middle School Adopts Project Lead the Way (PLTW) STEM Education Program to Better Prepare Students for Jobs of the Future

For the 2015-2016 school year, West Middle School has adopted Project Lead the Way's (PLTW) middle school program as part of the campus' Technology Applications curriculum for grades 7 and 8 students. PLTW is the nation's leading provider of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs, and West Middle School joins more than 6,500 schools across the U.S. in offering PLTW programs to their students in grades K-12.

The PLTW Gateway program is designed for students in grades 6-8. Through topics like robotics, flight and space, and DNA and crime scene analysis, the program engages students' natural curiosity and imagination and helps build a strong foundation for further STEM learning in high school and beyond. Students in PLTW Gateway use math and science as tools to solve real-world problems like cleaning oil spills and designing sustainable housing solutions. Using the same advanced software and tools as the world's leading companies, students see the application of STEM to their everyday lives.

"PLTW has a long history of successfully engaging students in STEM subjects," said David Truitt, West ISD Superintendent. "West Middle School is excited to offer PLTW Gateway to our middle school students, giving them an advantage over their peers when it comes to high school, college, and career readiness. In addition, I know our students will enjoy learning about robotics, basic engineering processes and skills, the health science fields, aviation, and space travel."

"One of the main charges of West Middle School is to ensure our students are ready for high school," stated Michele Scott, West Middle School Principal. "Courses like PLTW will better prepare our students for the rigors of the advanced coursework at West High School and help instill an interest in creative problem solving and courses in the STEM fields of study. We want all students to take a minimum of four years of math and science at West High School, and PLTW will help our students better understand why courses in the STEM areas are important as they discuss and decide their college and career interests and pathways."

In addition to providing world-class K-12 STEM programs, PLTW provides high-quality professional development training that equips teachers with the content, skills, and pedagogy required to teach each PLTW course. PLTW schools also benefit from the organization's engaged network of Fortune 500 companies, educators, and partners. School-based PLTW Partnership Teams complement the curriculum by recruiting local business and industry professionals to serve as mentors and share



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their real-world experiences with students. This summer, West Middle School teacher, Tanya Snook, attended the training session at the University of Texas at Tyler.

“West Middle School is offering its students a tremendous advantage through the PLTW Gateway program,” said PLTW President and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Vince Bertram. “Through PLTW Gateway, students will develop a strong math and science foundation, as well as the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills that will prepare them for success in high school, college, and ultimately, the global economy.”

“After reviewing the program goals at the middle school level, West ISD will look next at adding the PLTW program strands at West Elementary or West High School for the 2016-2017 school year,” added David Truitt. “We want West ISD to be an education destination for families in central Texas, and we know that strong STEM programs and creative and critical problem solving skills are needed for the career goals of all West High School graduates.”

For more information on West Middle School’s new PLTW Gateway program, please contact Michele Scott at (254) 981-2120. The PLTW website is www.pltw.org.

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