



Wisconsin Schools Build Partnerships to Benefit Students with Connections to Career Opportunities

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Community engagement and partnerships with local industry are critical to connecting what students learn in the classroom with the real-world career opportunities available to them. During a recent visit to Wisconsin, PLTW President and CEO Dr. Vince Bertram had a chance to see firsthand the ways many schools in Wisconsin are creating partnerships that build those connections for students and teachers.

The Kenosha School of Technology Enhanced Curriculum (KTEC) partners with many local business to expose students to people who work in industry. One such partner is Snap-On Tools, a manufacturer of shop equipment products, automotive diagnostic tools, and repair information solutions.

“These partnerships don’t just benefit our students,” said Kristen Kief, media and community relations manager for KTEC. “KTEC has helped Snap-On Tools develop a tool safety, identification, and application curriculum.”

Kief said the impact of these partnerships is immeasurable.

“Education does not exist in a vacuum. It only makes sense that all parties participate in creating the most beneficial system,” she said.

At Rogers Street Academy, part of Milwaukee Public Schools, there is a partnership between the school, PLTW, Rockwell Automation, and the Boys and Girls Club that is providing students across the district with access to a STEM Center.

Rebecca Rogert, assistant principal at Rogers Street Academy, said the partnership has led to a dramatic improvement in math achievement. She also said PLTW has helped improve literacy achievement through a focus on cross-content vocabulary.

“The strategies taught in PLTW are being used in other content areas and real-life experiences that students encounter on a daily basis,” she said. “It appears students are more confident and open-minded as they work through hands-on tasks and real-world problems due to the collaborative training experiences with PLTW.”

Patricia Contreras, manager of Global Community Relations & Contributions for Rockwell Automation, says that to ensure a skilled workforce, one that reflects the diversity of Rockwell Automation’s customers and partners, they must focus on improving and increasing STEM education, particularly among young women and underrepresented groups.

Through STEM programs like PLTW, they are furthering their goal and building connections to support STEM education and corporate sustainability.

“Our goal is to build a pipeline of diverse public school students who are interested in pursuing a STEM education and, ultimately, join Rockwell Automation,” she said. “With our company’s expertise in innovation and technology, we selected program partners with a proven track record to fulfill the educational need – partners that are experts in their fields.”

Case High School in Racine Unified School District believes community partnerships are important for teachers as well as students. Last year, more than 400 Racine teachers, counselors, and administrators traveled to local businesses to learn directly from employers the skills students need to succeed in the workforce.

“A vision has been established as we prepare our next generation of learners to be engaged and able to apply learning in the real world, having them equipped with critical 21st-century skills,” said Daniel Thielen, PLTW teacher at Case High School.