

What Is Westerly Pathways In Technology Early College High School (P-TECH)?

Westerly Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) is based on the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) model, an innovative merging of a high school and associate’s degree program that is a collaboration of advanced manufacturing industry partners. This is the first P-TECH advanced manufacturing model program in Rhode Island. P-TECH is a high school plus two years, grades 9 to 14. Within this six-year time frame, students earn not only a high school diploma, but also an Associate of Science in Manufacturing Technology degree, along with the skills and experience they need to step seamlessly into available jobs in the Advanced Manufacturing industry. Westerly P-TECH is a “school within a school” at Westerly High School, and is part of the Westerly Public Schools.

Who Is Eligible To Attend?

Any 8th grade middle school student in the CTE Transportation Region is eligible to apply. Middle school guidance counselors will also recommend P-TECH to students who may benefit from the program’s extra academic support. Applicants will be chosen through a lottery system.

Are There Other Schools Of This Kind In The US?

The first P-TECH school opened in 2011, in Brooklyn, New York, as collaboration between the New York City Department of Education, the City University of New York, New York City College of Technology and IBM. Currently, eight schools in New York and Chicago follow the P-TECH model; 29 more will open in two states over the next two years. Other lead companies that IBM is working with in these schools include Cisco, Motorola Solutions and Verizon Wireless.

How Much Does Westerly P-TECH Cost?

P-TECH is a public school, open to all of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Transportation Region students. There are no tests or screening required for admission. Admittance is determined via a lottery system. How does P-TECH work? Instead of a traditional four-year period, Grade 9 students will begin a six-year program designed to advance through high school and college coursework. In addition to a high school diploma, students who complete the program will earn an Associate of Science in Manufacturing Technology degree at no cost to the student, awarded by the school’s college partner, the Community College of Rhode Island. Alongside regular core high school courses such as English and Social Studies, there will be a focus on mastery of STEM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). The curriculum will also emphasize the “soft” skills of presentation, self-marketing and communication critical to success in the workplace. Minimum requirements for entry-level Advanced Manufacturing jobs, as provided by industry partners, will be mapped to the curriculum and serve as academic benchmarks and targets. As important, students will participate in an ongoing Workplace Learning curriculum to gain the experience needed to work in a corporate setting. All students will be matched in one-on-one relationships with mentors from industry partners. They will participate in project-based learning activities and workplace visits, hear guest speakers and tackle skills-based, real-world projects through internships and apprenticeships.

How Do Students Apply?

The application is posted online for downloading on the Westerly Public Schools website, www.westerly.k12.ri.us. Guidance counselors at Westerly Middle School will have print applications available.

Why Do We Need This Kind of School?

Today's jobs require more skills, especially technology-based skills. Many positions require less than a four-year degree, but more than a high school diploma. According to projections by the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University, nearly two-thirds of the jobs created in the next decade will require some postsecondary education. Westerly P-TECH provides an opportunity for students to complete high school and, for those who may not currently see four-year college as an option, to earn a two-year degree. P-TECH graduates will be prepared for higher paying, successful careers.

What Types Of Classes Will Be Offered?

All P-TECH students will take core high school courses in English, science, mathematics, social studies as well as physical education/health, the arts and other electives. In addition, students work toward an Associate's Degree in Manufacturing Technology. The curriculum also introduces students to the business world.

What Are The Benefits To Attending?

P-TECH allows students who may not have thought about college, may be the first in their family to consider college, or who may not be able to afford college, to earn an associate degree and a real opportunity to obtain a good job after graduating. With a high school diploma and associate degree at graduation, they are prepared to join the workforce, or continue on to earn a four-year or advanced degree. The Workplace Learning part of the curriculum will help students understand how classroom learning has real-life application in the workplace. In addition, having real world experience as an intern or apprentice will give them an advantage in hiring.

Who Are The Partners In Westerly P-TECH?

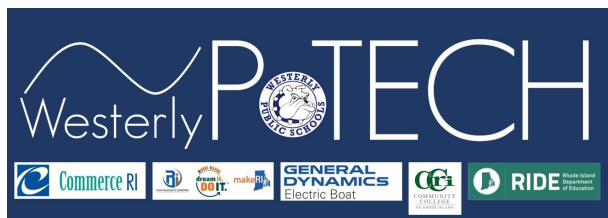
P-TECH operates within the Westerly Public Schools system, but represents a true public-private partnership between the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association (RIMA), the Rhode Island Commerce Department, the Community College of Rhode Island and Westerly Public Schools. RIMA, the school's corporate partner, works closely with the education partners to make sure that the curriculum is aligned with skills needed in today's workplace, and is also vital to the Workplace Learning part of the program. The Community College of Rhode Island provides the courses and certification required for the college level classes necessary for earning the associate's degree.

How Is P-TECH Funded?

Westerly P-TECH operates under the auspices of the Westerly Public Schools, which will provide overall administrative support. The state of Rhode Island is assisting with startup funds. Industry provides a full-time liaison, who will coordinate activities, and industry partner mentors who will work students. P-TECH will also be looking to other area companies for additional mentors. As the higher education partner, the Community College of Rhode Island will provide the associate degree requirements and support. Additional partners and funding sources will also be identified.

Why Was Westerly Chosen For The First Advanced Manufacturing P-TECH Program In Rhode Island?

Students come from a variety of backgrounds with a significant number of students speaking a second language at home. Westerly's rich cultural diversity reflects the global society in which our graduates will work and live. With more than 2,800 students in six schools, Westerly Public Schools is committed to making sure that all students graduate prepared to reach their highest potential for college, career and life-long success in a globally competitive society. A P-TECH model program like Westerly P-TECH fits perfectly with the district's personalized vision for its schools and students. Westerly also has an active supportive community along with corporate and non-profit partners who are aligned behind common goals for student achievement. With partners like the Community College of Rhode Island and advanced manufacturing industry partners, P-TECH will be well situated for success.



When Will Westerly P-TECH Open?

P-TECH will open at Westerly High School in the fall of 2016 with 9th graders. A new cohort of Grade 9 students will be added each year after that.