



Strategic Plan

Mission

PLATO nurtures young people's curiosity, critical thinking, and desire to explore big questions, through philosophy and ethics programs for students, educators, and families.

Vision

A future in which all young people confidently ask questions, express well-reasoned views, and welcome the perspectives of others.

Core Values

Community Respect Equity Inclusivity Openness Humility Curiosity Playfulness

We are committed to creating a **community** in which everyone feels welcome and experiences a sense of belonging. We **respect** the dignity, autonomy, and worth of all people of all ages.

We strive for **equity**. Recognizing the importance of making our world more **inclusive**, we are dedicated to ensuring that all who wish to participate in our programs can do so.

We cultivate **openness**, embracing creative and thoughtful new ideas; we value **humility**, realizing how much we can learn by listening to others.

Curiosity is at the core of our work: we wonder and ask questions throughout our lives. This work is serious, but we also value **playfulness**, celebrating the joy of all we discover by inquiring with others.

KEY STRATEGIC GOALS

Ensure Organizational Sustainability

Why is this important?

PLATO must demonstrate that for decades to come it will remain a preeminent organization nationally and internationally in the field of philosophy for young people and play a significant role in expanding the field; cultivate organizational investment from educators, students, family members, and the public; create opportunities and stable conditions for long-term giving; recruit and retain strong, high-capacity staff, boards, and volunteers; and establish deep relationships and trust with donors, partners, sponsors, and grantors.

Key Strategies

1. Pursue tactics that will financially strengthen PLATO into the future
 - Continue to develop a culture of philanthropy that permeates the organization
 - Diversify revenue streams
 - Build a strong institutional and individual donor base
 - Investigate multi-year corporate and government grants
 - Support the board's transition to a fundraising and governance board
2. Continue to develop stable and strong internal capacity
 - Focus on opportunities for development and retention of staff, board members, and volunteers
 - Provide training and support for board members to become organizational ambassadors
 - Foster future adult and student leadership opportunities
 - Support the development and growth of regional PLATO communities, building upon already-existing infrastructure and cultivating opportunities for expansion
 - Continue to hold conferences and other events that draw new attendees and offer them pathways to become involved

What does success look like?

PLATO will be viewed as a vital organization capable of and committed to generational impact in the educational sector. A financially stable organization, PLATO will have an effective plan for long-term financial viability and sustainability that includes an array of strategies – financial, educational, and operational.

Timeframe: 4-5 years

Broaden and expand PLATO's visibility

Why is this important?

PLATO reaches thousands of individuals each year, nationally and internationally. Well-known within the field of philosophy for young people, PLATO must reach beyond those already interested in its work to broaden and deepen engagement in its mission. Doing so will create a new pipeline of teachers and students, family members, and donors to help support the organization, encourage new investment, and introduce new points of view and ideas.

Key Strategies

1. Work with marketing professionals to refine outreach and marketing strategies to reach people who do not already know about philosophy with young people
2. Create a road map for classroom teachers, graduate students, and faculty about the organization's range of learning opportunities available
3. Refine and expand outreach to those within and outside the field by creating and regularly updating hard copy materials, social media posts, and the website
4. Expand PLATO's media profile and strategy
5. Targeted outreach to schools and teachers
 - Develop relationships with key curriculum coordinators in school districts
 - Present at content-specific conferences that are important to teachers and school administrators responsible for curriculum
6. Expand PLATO's grants program to increase the number and expand the diversity of innovative philosophy projects that receive funding

What does success look like?

PLATO's constituency grows in number, demographic, and geographic diversity. Nationally, the organization is seen as an important educational resource, providing resources and support to classrooms and other programs serving young people around the country. Educators are offered a clear and systematic description of the variety of learning opportunities the organization offers and the ways in which philosophy can transform educators, students, and classrooms.

Timeframe: 3-4 years

Refine PLATO's programmatic offerings

Why is this important?

In response to the pandemic, PLATO developed several new online programs for students and families and, since its 2022 merger with the University of Washington Center for Philosophy for Children, PLATO has continued to expand its programs, experimenting with new initiatives to determine the organization's most effective future direction. PLATO must now focus on those programs that align most closely with our mission and vision, are ultimately sustainable, and reach the most people. We are committed to ensuring that our programs retain the highest quality, are both accessible and philosophically rich, and emphasize inquiry and facilitation skills as well as philosophical training.

Key Strategies

1. Bringing philosophy into K-12 classrooms remains PLATO's central organizational purpose
 - Use a variety of methods and models, including the philosophers-in-residence program, focusing on public schools, under-resourced schools, and marginalized student communities
 - Provide more professional learning opportunities and resources for teachers with multiple levels for engagement, including low-cost one-time programs and more extensive training such as the Certificate of Mastery
 - Guide the philosophy in K-12 classrooms by creating a road map for philosophical pedagogy in elementary, middle, and high schools
 - Develop more opportunities for philosophy graduate students
2. Ensure that the Philosophy Toolkit continues to grow, maintain its quality, and remain relevant
3. Continue to expand the readership and use of the journals *Questions: Philosophy for Young People* and *Precollege Philosophy and Public Practice (P4)*
4. Expand PLATO's *Philosophy Across the Ages* program

What does success look like?

A growing number of schools around the country offer philosophy classes, clubs, and other programs that are led by classroom teachers, graduate students, and other trained educators. PLATO runs widely attended online and in person professional development programs and intergenerational events. PLATO's online resources continue to be widely used.

Timeframe: 2-3 years