

## Points in the Process for Community Member Engagement

D&P challenges are well positioned to provide opportunities for schools to connect with and engage family members, community members, local businesses, and/or town governments. Students love the opportunity to share their work with people external to the classroom. Local STEM professionals, entrepreneurs, or other members of the community with expertise in areas relevant to each challenge can serve as mentors throughout the design process, offering feedback on prototypes and business plans, and may be recruited to judge final projects. Having expertise “relevant to the challenge” can be interpreted in a broad sense, as most adults have some level of expertise to draw upon, even if it is just from the perspective of a consumer using products and services created by entrepreneurs. The [Opportunities for Community Member Engagement by Challenge](#) document includes a list of occupations and characteristics that would make a community member a good fit to provide feedback in each challenge.

### Expert Check-In

Early on in the experience, students will have brainstormed many ideas and started moving forward with the idea that they think is best. They will have the opportunity to think through some of the details when working on the Key Business Proposition (KBP) and should be forming a good foundation for their business. Community members can be invited to serve as mentors throughout the design process, providing feedback during **expert check-ins** and **practice pitches**, or serving as judges during the **final pitches**. Each check-in with a team of students can last anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes depending on the engagement of the expert(s). It is important to invite enough experts to support the number of student teams you have. You can prepare experts for the experience by sending the challenge statement video and this [Tips for External Judges during the Practice Pitch and Expert Check-In's](#) guide. If you would like your experts to provide each team with organized, written feedback, provide them with this [Feedback Form](#) when they arrive.

### Practice Pitches

It is important for students to practice their pitches 1-2 days before Pitch Day. It is especially helpful for students to practice in front of an adult who has not yet heard about their ideas. This helps to prepare them for pitching in front of the panel of judges and to ensure they are explicit in their description of their team's solution. Any adult can serve as a practice pitch judge, but it is often nice to have people who are familiar to the students so that there is a level of comfort during the practice. You can prepare practice judges for the experience by sending the challenge statement video and this [Tips for External Judges during the Practice Pitch and Expert Check-In's](#) guide. If you would like your practice judges to provide each team with organized, written feedback, provide them with this [Feedback Form](#) when they arrive.

### Final Pitches

Pitch Day should be an exciting experience for students to share their entrepreneurial ideas with the “investors.” As you think about the panel of judges for this day, consider recruiting at least 2 adults, and no more than 5 adults, to serve on one judging panel. They can be a variety of people, including school principals, personal friends, neighbors, or family members. You can prepare them for the experience by sending the challenge statement video and the [Pitch Judging Rubric](#). Additionally, if you plan on having them provide superlatives to each team, you may consider sharing [this list](#) with them so they have some ideas to draw on.