

Developing the Workforce of Tomorrow: Reflections on Youth Workforce Development

Akia S. Callum | Hakiem Ellison | Theresa Simmonds | Jay Roscup



Netter Center
for Community Partnerships
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



**BUILDING A COLLEGE &
CAREER PATHWAYS ECOSYSTEM**

ABOUT BTS

At Bridge to Success, our goal is to make life better for youth and families in our community, especially those who are Black and/or Latiné. We want to fix unfair systems and create more opportunities for everyone, from when they are born to when they start their careers. To make this happen, we work together with different groups and people in the community to build stronger relationships and support each other. Our mission is to create a brighter future for all of us from cradle to career!

Imagine a world where a child's potential is not dictated by the conditions into which they were born. Where people can regardless of race, zip code, or circumstance can be successful. Nice, right? We want that ... and more.

Our Focus Areas

One organization. Nine Brands. Community Driven. At Bridge to Success, our mission is clear: we're dedicated to improving the lives of youth and families in our community, with a special focus on those who are Black and/or Latiné. Our commitment lies in dismantling unfair systems and paving the way for increased opportunities for every individual, from the very beginning of life to the start of their careers. We actively collaborate with diverse community groups and individuals, forging strong connections and mutual support.



Early Care
& Education



Positive
Youth Development



College & Career
Pathways



Parents of
Waterbury



Youth Advisory
Think Tank



#Day43
Black Maternal
Health Campaign



Transforming
Communities
Initiative



BOOST!
Community
Schools



Black Educators
Matter Group

College & Career Pathways (CCP) Collaborative Action Network

In 2021, Waterbury Public Schools, backed by Waterbury Promise, embraced the citywide Family Engagement initiative to boost FAFSA completion rates throughout the city. This approach was initially piloted by Waterbury Bridge to Success (BTS) in preceding years as the #RaiseTheRate campaign. Additionally, the school district has reinstated the Citywide Financial Literacy Fair for high school students in the academic year 2023-24, following its redesign and pilot phase led by BTS in prior years. Moving forward, the CCP Collaborative Action Network is set to launch pilot programs aimed at fostering career exploration for both students and families within the city.

Our Approach (2024 – *until*)



Adoption or development of Universal career assessment for Waterbury Students



Community Survey Collection Launch



2nd Pilot of Advanced Manufacturing Program



Pilot of Health Equity Program



Community Shareback of Data Outcomes



Resource Gathering and Implementation



Pilot initiatives based on data in and around Waterbury Public Schools



Community Basee Organization & District Wide Workshop for CCP Support



Goal-Career Assessment Becomes Integrated Into the WPS System



Coordinating Community Resources
to Support Student Achievement ■

Every child deserves a safe home, help to learn, and encouragement to lead. That's why Waterbury Bridge to Success and Waterbury Public Schools joined forces in 2016 to bring BOOST! to our schools.

BOOST! Community Schools are public schools that bring together the school and community to support our students. Here, educators, families, and community partners work together to provide a well-rounded education and positive learning experience for every child.

COLLEGE & CAREER PATHWAYS GOALS



2018-20

Create a culture of high demand/high Interest fields that encourages graduation matriculation, college retention and job placement.

2020-21

To expose students and families to careers and post-secondary opportunities in the city of Waterbury

2021-Present

To connect youth, families, and organizations/providers to resources that will close equity and access gaps for all post-secondary opportunities to meet the demand of mid to high-wage careers.

Our College & Career Pathways Impact At-A-Glance



Hosted a Virtual 'Meet the Deans' conversation with the four brick and mortar colleges/universities in the city



Development of #RaiseTheRate FAFSA completion campaign in partnership with Waterbury Public Schools – with student ambassadors.



Liberty Bank partners with local high schools to host Credit for Life Fairs, interactive events that teach students about managing a household budget and the financial challenges they'll face as adults through role-playing.



Support of key workforce legislation - Senate Bill 881: An Act Concerning Workforce Development (2021)



CCP partners, including GearUp, Upward Bound, and BTS, sponsored a trip for 16 students and 2 support staff from Wilby and Enlightenment Schools. The trip focused on manufacturing and aimed to provide college and career exposure.



Participated in YMCA College Fair and distributed 2,500 'Road to Completing FAFSA' postcards to seniors at all schools.



Provided family and community engagement support for FAFSA completion (& tax support) with our partners WPS, CAHS, and Higher Heights.



Piloted a 4-day summer camp for Waterbury students to attend.

PAID SPRING BREAK

INTRO to MANUFACTURING

**5 DAY SPRING BREAK CAMP FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS AT
ENLIGHTENMENT**

Do you have a passion for technology? Are you curious
about manufacturing or engineering as a career?

Join us for a **FREE 5-Day Manufacturing Spring Break**
Program at CT State Naugatuck Valley with a field trip to
Manufacturing Alliance Service Corporation (MASC). This
opportunity is for rising High School Juniors and Seniors
at Enlightenment to learn what it's like to work in
manufacturing. Only 14 spots are available.

Students participating in the program will receive -



Breakfast
& Lunch



Bus Pass



\$250
Giftcard



T-shirt,
Safety Goggles
& More

**PAID SPRING BREAK PROGRAM
APRIL 13 – APRIL 19, 2024**

CT State Naugatuck Valley
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Register: nrwb.digicon.com

**\$250
gift card for
participation
in the
program!**



Secure your spot today!
Register using the QR code

If you have any additional questions about
the program feel free to text (475) 377-3702

Intro to Manufacturing Pilot

- Attempt for Spring Break Pilot – Pushed to 2025
- 5-Day Summer Program for *Rising* Junior & Seniors
 - 9 AM - 1 PM
 - 4 Days @ Naugatuck Valley Community College
 - 1 Day Field Trip MASC
- Bus Pass
- Breakfast & Lunch
- 14 Slots Available
- **\$250 Gift Card** for Participation
- T-shirt, Safety Goggles & More

Advance Manufacturing 4-Day Summer Camp

High-level Stats

This program was **FREE** and opened to all students who were in high school. Students who participated in the program for 3 days received a \$100 gift card. Snacks were provided. An In-kind donation of bus passes was given courtesy of Gear-up. Use of space and Instructors were also provided by NVCC advanced manufacturing free of cost to us.

49

Students applied to attend the program

38*

Students attended the program.
*1 student stopped attending.

27

Surveys inserted & analyzed
*clerical error, 14 were collected

37%

Identified as Black or Multiracial

34%

Identified as Female

85%

would recommend it to a friend and was satisfied with the program.

45%

would definitely do the program again. * 100% said "maybe" or "yes"

45%

said it was too short! and would like for it to be longer

Roughly
\$13,000 was invested in this program from BTS

"This was the best program I have been to. It's very fun and interesting. You learn a lot of useful skills for the future, at home or at college."

– Summer 2023 participant

"I learned some basics of manufacturing, like how to cut a piece with a machine and how math is incorporated into manufacturing."

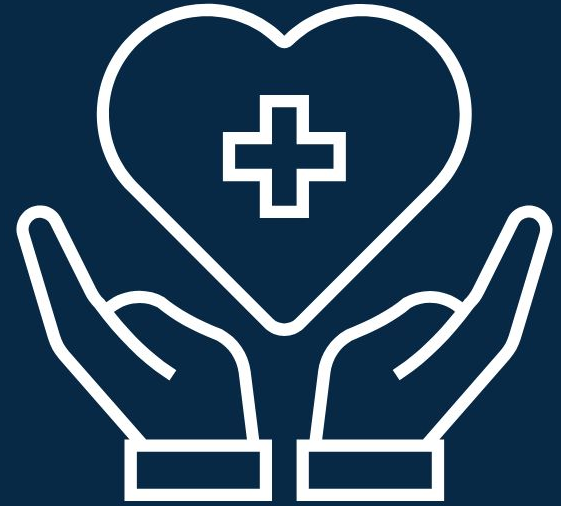
–Summer 2023 participant

Students mentioned that –

- they earned trust and Independence
 - "We were able to work independently after we learned everything"
- They gained practical, hands-on skill building
 - "Designing the metal holder and using the CNC"
- 91% of the students mentioned that they learned how to use the machines – with 2 explicitly connecting what they learned to math!

UConn Health Equity Scholars Program

- For *rising* 9th Grade Students
- Equity research, career exploration, and collaborative problem-solving to address community inequities and opportunities to present their findings.
- **4 Week Program**
- The program will occur on the UConn Waterbury Campus, Mondays to Thursdays, from 9 AM to 3 PM.
- Breakfast and lunch will be provided.
- Students will receive a **\$575 Stipend/gift card**



**Pilot of
Health Equity
Program**

CHALLENGES



The need to work within the policies, schedules, and expectations of local schools and districts. Aligning the program with existing curricula, coordinating with school schedules, and navigating institutional constraints could pose challenges, especially if school leadership has competing priorities.



The existing MOU only covered Pre-K through 8th-grade students, BTS did not initially have formal access to high school students. Without direct access, BTS would have to find creative and strategic approaches to connect with these students, which could delay engagement and complicate recruitment efforts.



Creating an incubator requires a substantial investment in resources, including funding for staff, technology, training programs, and materials.



Ensuring students had reliable transportation to attend incubator programs was a significant challenge, particularly for those without easy access to transit options.

COLLEGE & CAREER INCUBATOR

The College & Career Pathways (CCP) Collaborative Action Network (CAN) aims to establish a Career Incubator to provide students with the necessary skills, experiences, and opportunities to succeed in the workforce. This initiative will bridge the gap between academic education and career readiness by partnering with local businesses, higher education institutions, and community organizations. The Career Incubator will focus on career exploration, skill development, and real-world experiences to prepare students for successful futures.

PHASE 1: LAUNCHING OF SUMMER PILOT PROGRAMS

- Advanced Manufacturing Program (AMP)
- UConn Health Equity Program

PHASE 2: PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (6 MONTHS)

- Establish a Career Incubator Steering Committee comprised of WPS staff, local business leaders, higher education representatives, and community members.
- Conduct a needs assessment to identify the skills and careers in demand in the local economy.
- Develop partnerships with local businesses, trade schools, and colleges.
- Secure funding through grants, donations, and sponsorships.

PHASE 3: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT (12 MONTHS)

- Develop a detailed curriculum and schedule for workshops, internships, and other programs.
- Pilot the program with a select group of students and gather feedback for improvement.
- Train staff and volunteers to effectively deliver program components.

PHASE 4: FULL IMPLEMENTATION AND EXPANSION (ONGOING)

- Launch the Career Incubator program district-wide.
- Continuously monitor and evaluate program effectiveness through student feedback and performance metrics.
- Expand partnerships and program offerings based on evolving industry needs and student interests.
-

WHAT WE COMMITTED TO:

Align with BOOST! Community School Framework

By leveraging data outcomes from the financial literacy fair, it has become clear that students and families require essential wraparound services to support their academic and personal growth. BTS currently has 5 - Pre-k - 8th-grade BOOST! community schools. The College & Career Pathways Collaborative Action Network is committed to providing a comprehensive education to all students, and the adoption of the community school model is a crucial step toward achieving this goal.

Streamlining Data to Measure Direct Outcomes

By ensuring that data is collected consistently and accurately, organizations can better understand the impact of their programs and make informed decisions about future initiatives. In the context of College & Career Pathways, streamlining data is particularly important to measure direct outcomes for students. By collecting data on key metrics such as graduation rates, college enrollment, and career readiness, the program can identify areas for improvement and track progress over time. With streamlined data, the College & Career Pathways program can make data-driven decisions to enhance student outcomes and ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Co-developing a MOU for Network Members

Co-developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an essential step towards establishing a clear understanding of expectations and responsibilities among partners in the College & Career Pathways network. By working collaboratively to create an MOU, partners can ensure that they are aligned in their goals and committed to achieving them together. The MOU will serve as a roadmap for effective communication, collaboration, and decision-making, helping to build trust and strengthen partnerships. Through this process, partners can build a strong foundation for a successful College & Career Pathways network that benefits students, educators, and the community as a whole.

Seek Additional Funding

BTS has seen direct success in helping students achieve their goals through CCP and is now seeking funding through a government agency to expand our collective reach and impact. Three members of the College & Career Pathways Collaborative Action Network have signed a letter of support for the program, highlighting its importance to the community and its potential for growth. An update on whether the funding is granted will be provided at a later date.



DISCUSSION:

Your Story

- What did you hear that reminded you of the needs in your community?
- How does your work reflect or overlap with what you have heard so far?
- Consider unique attributes of your community. What assets and advantages do you have for workforce development?

The Netter Center for Community Partnerships

THE NETTER CENTER



Founded in 1992, the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships is the University's **primary vehicle for advancing civic and community engagement at Penn**. It brings together the resources and assets of both the University and the wider community to help solve **universal problems such as poverty, health inequities, environmental sustainability, and inadequate, unequal education as they are manifested in the University's local geographic area of West Philadelphia** and Philadelphia at large. The Netter Center develops and helps implement **democratic, mutually transformative, place-based partnerships between Penn and West Philadelphia** that advance research, teaching, learning, practice, and service and improve the quality of life on campus and in the community. The Netter Center works with and serves as a **model for other higher education institutions** across the United States and around the world.

Overarching Goal of Our Work

Making Penn and Penn Medicine a place where West Philadelphia high school graduates can obtain entry-level, benefits-eligible positions with the opportunity to advance

What are some Challenges in this work?

- Consistent Leadership and strong relationships with hiring managers
- Conflicting timeline of job openings and needs between the partner organization and the school
- Lack of “entry level” positions
- Outsourced workers/vendors

Netter Center: What Has Worked?



Netter pathways programs that have proved successful:

- School of Medicine Distribution Services
- Penn Children's Center
- Pennsylvania Hospital Program



How Can More Centers Use This Model?

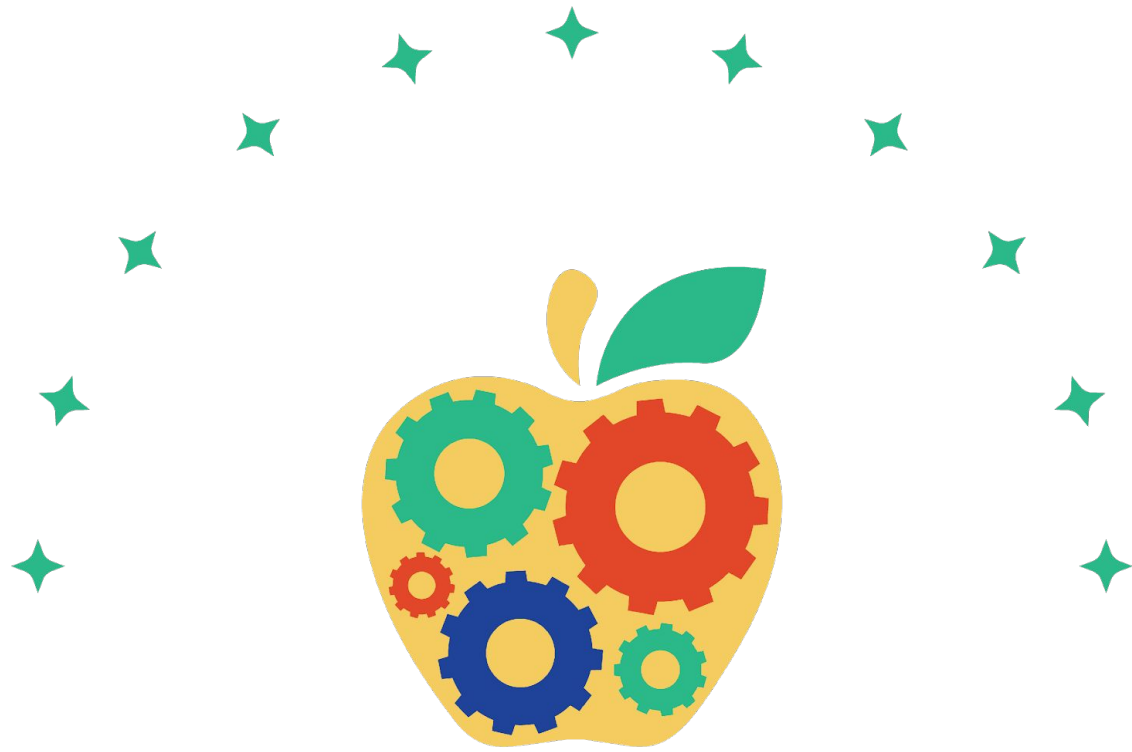
4 Common Areas of Success:

- Cohort models
- Training/'Soft Onboarding' periods
- Hands on program leadership -
Feedback, open and clear
communication, clear expectations
- Knowledge of available positions
prior to youth applying

DISCUSSION:

Challenges

- How would you categorize the types of challenges facing people working towards more equitable access for substantial employment?
- What challenges are common across the nation?
- How can colleges and universities reckon with these challenges?



STEADY Work

How can we....

- Provide something interesting and engaging
 - Position a young person as a contributor to their family
 - Build attachment to community
 - Create a place where choice matters, self-efficacy can be developed
 - Offer an alternative for paying for food and essentials
 - Provide coaching & training to build self-regulation

Factor	Wiegthed
Ratio	Score
ACE 2+	9.37
Sensation Seeking (PI)	8.89
Attachment (F)	7.41
Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement (C)	4.62
Rewards for Prosocial Behavior (C)	3.91
Low Neighborhood Attachment(C)	3.85
Impulsiveness (PI)	3.49
Fam History of Antisocial Behavior (F)	3.21
Community Disorganization)C)	3.12
Perceived Risks of Drug Use (PI)	3.10

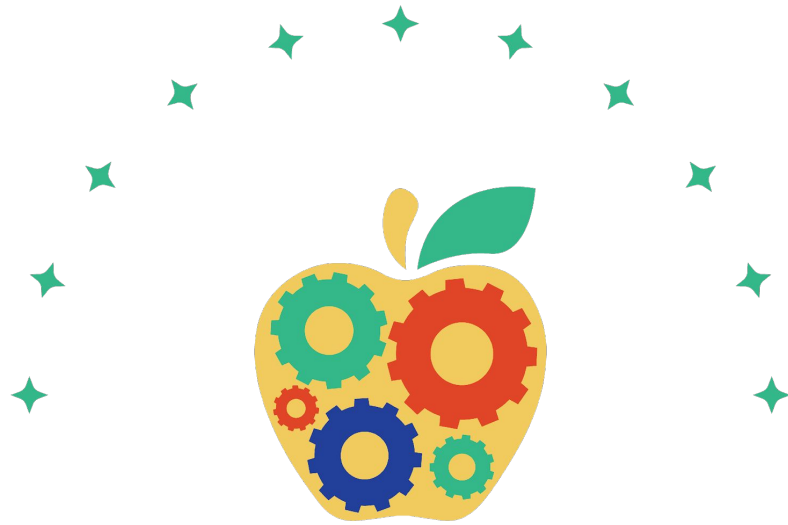


STEADY WORK

A story about how programming can be used to focus the strengths & resources on the needs of individual young people.

"Community Schools is a strategy that organizes the resources and voices of schools and communities around student success." - Abe Fernandez

A participant at PACE Electronics. PACE donated funds to offset costs for youth participants.



STEADY Work

PROGRAM GROWTH

2020- 41 Youth

2021- 108 Youth

2022- 189 Youth

2023- 410 Youth

(10x increase in four years)

STEADY Work:

Challenges

- WIOA restrictions
- Meeting the need– current waitlist of 90 youth
- Designing program to fit each community
- Maintaining a person centered approach

Rural Context: Challenges



- Access to adequate space
- Transportation
- Adherence to regulation with minimal capacity



What has worked:

Collaboration



A safer way to learn welding



Lenore Friend

October 24, 2024

[Inquiry](#)

[Leave a comment](#)

It's safer.

It saves money.

And students enjoy it.

FLCC's new welding class uses augmented reality equipment for hands-on training without the danger of sparks, molten metal and heat.

Students in the 12-week course at the Newark Campus Center don a welding visor and grasp a torch-like tool. Both are connected by cables to a computer running a simulation program.



Jahaan Williams, instructor of the FLCC welding program, observes a student using the augmented reality welding machine.

In this immersive environment, students are presented with welding tasks. The software provides real-time feedback, for example, alerting students if they are holding tools incorrectly or need to change their hand motions.

2023 STEADY Work Data

88% of youth stated they have developed effective coping mechanisms

97% of youth said that they are now more confident in their ability to solve problems

99% of youth said that have established new goals and are working towards them

87% of youth stated that they feel more connected to their community



Future of the STEADY Work Model?



Emphasis on Pathways:

- Human Services credential
- NYS Portrait of a Graduate could lead to increased dual credit work
- Increased use of program participants to accelerate program growth
- Increased cohesion with post-secondary institutions or credentials recognized by employers



Future Youth Workers

Thank you for giving me the opportunity of working at the 21st century program....

I've always loved working with kids and this opportunity could not have come at a better time. I was thinking about my future and what I wanted to do after high school. I knew I wanted to go to college but wasn't sure for what. I was in between different majors. Thanks to the program I was able to finally decide. After high school I will be majoring in education and minoring in some sort of science. These kids have helped me through so much more than they know. Everyday all I could wait for was the school day to end and to go see my fav kids who always helped brighten my day. Every bad day turned good at the sight of their faces and smiles. Hearing "miss Katlyn" became my favorite song. Their hugs became my favorite feeling. I will never forget these short months. They will never know how great full I am for them.

This program not only helped me overcome challenges and help me to decide my future but also made me a better person and I could not be more thankful.

SODUS SENIOR

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Questions & Closing Thoughts

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