



GENERATION SUCCESS

*Harnessing Boston's Collective
Energy to Prepare Students for
College, Career and Life*



In 2017, the Boston Opportunity Agenda convened a group of stakeholders from Boston's education ecosystem.

We gathered leaders from Boston's district, charter and Catholic schools, the City of Boston, high education institutions, foundations and nonprofits throughout the City to define college, career and life readiness – and get clear on what our kids need to succeed.

In sketching out expectations for the future based on insight into the industry, education and civic landscapes, the group recognized that the future, particularly today, is characterized by its dynamism and that any singular vision narrows how we expect our graduates will live. So instead, the group coalesced around a set of forces that shape trajectories for career, college and life. These forces inform the skills and beliefs students will need to succeed in this fast-shifting environment. Testing in practice and against research, we created definitions and measurements to understand what it means to be college, career and life ready in Boston.

To fulfill the needs of young people, we have launched Generation Success, a city-wide campaign in collaboration with schools, out-of-school programs, parents and private industry groups across Boston, to prepare students for college, career and life after high school. We're putting our collective energy behind Boston's young people so they can discover, explore and prepare for the universe of opportunities in our city and region. We want students to learn about who they are as individuals – including their unique strengths and interests – so they can design their own futures.

We know that students learn through curiosity, exposure and hands-on experience. We also know that private industry, in partnership with educators and nonprofit organizations, is taking a leadership role in advancing student success, which in turn creates a pipeline of students entering into the workforce after high school or college. Access to learning opportunities is imperative to empowering and inspiring students and strengthening our communities and economy – and the business community has the chance to make an even greater impact on their success.

We understand from our research that business leaders in Boston need a roadmap to help illustrate the types of efforts that youth would find valuable, so, as a part of this work, we have created this "bright spot toolkit" to high-quality programs in Boston that are run by businesses and private industries in the area. The hope is to share examples of the great work being done to prepare students for college, career and life and motivate other businesses to follow suit in creating programs that students find valuable. We invite businesses as well as out-of-school providers to submit their programs as we continue to expand this toolkit.

Please visit the Generation Success website, gensuccess.org, to learn more about preparation opportunities for life after high school. Over time, more content and resources will be added to the site. If you have questions, or would like more information about creating a high-quality program for Boston students, reach out to me at Kristin.McSwain@bostonopportunityagenda.org.

Cheers,

Kristin McSwain

Executive Director, Boston Opportunity Agenda



Boston Society for Architecture

*In partnership with
Apprentice Learning*

"Design Challenge: A Space for Your Future Self" brought hands-on design to students' home, with live instruction, mentorship and actual design tools that ultimately transformed their bedrooms into design studios.

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How We Support Students

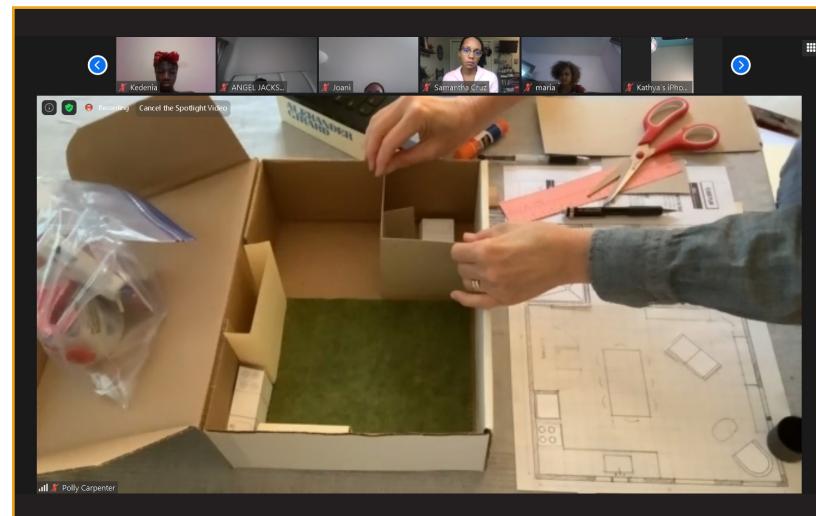
During the summer of 2020, 40 young women from Boston Public Schools preparing to enter ninth grade took part in an experiment – to create and deliver a hands-on design experience. Design is a creative, collaborative process where people experiment, take risks, make mistakes and learn from each other and about themselves. "Design Challenge: A Space for Your Future Self" brought hands-on design to students' homes with live instruction, mentorship and actual design tools that ultimately transformed their bedrooms into design studios.

The design challenge complemented and supported Apprentice Learning's

City Summer Internship. Its theme, "Blueprint for Success," had participating students exploring their strengths, weaknesses, interests and curiosities to inform their career and life choices going forward. Apprentice Learning asked the Boston Society for Architecture (BSA) to create a complementary hands-on design project, where students could craft and build at a time when all learning was happening through a screen due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We tailored the design curriculum to this age group and to Apprentice Learning's methodology that addresses both personal and career discovery. We developed a curriculum where students

would consider how design and the design of space influence the way they feel. The result was an expression of themselves in the future, including a design of a future apartment. To align with real design projects, students were paired with another student acting as their client, whom they had to understand, design and build for.



Students experience a model building tutorial via Zoom

At the end of the project, students presented their designs in a Zoom celebration with a "jury" of professional architects from Boston. We are continuing to work with Apprentice Learning during the school year and hope to expand the project to Boston Public Schools.

How the Program Prepares Students for College, Their Careers and Life

This program gives students a glimpse into the design careers, but also expands their thinking on who they are and who they want to be when they grow up. The organizational structure that is the foundation of the Design Process is a tool that can be used the rest of their lives in any setting whether personal or professional.

“ I learned that being an architect requires a lot of thinking and planning out before you go to the construction site. You have to know what you’re doing and plan it out before you start building.”

STUDENT PARTICIPANT

Our Unique Approach

Our approach centers around gathering, learning and building together as individuals rather than teacher to student.

The curriculum also aligns with real design projects as students were paired with another student acting as their client, whom they had to understand, design and build for. The process was a mix of questions, brainstorming, sketching, building and sharing; having a multi-phased approach helps students to build up their ideas, accept mistakes and find out which parts of the process they shine in, are interested in or are challenged by.

How We Did It

Each year, we collaborate with our long-time partner, Apprentice Learning, whose mission is to introduce middle school students to career options and connect them with area professionals as they begin to design their futures.

Shifting their summer's two-week design workshop into a fully virtual setting required the BSA and Apprentice Learning to collaborate in a new way. We spent the month of June designing a digital version of the curriculum, publishing it on an online platform, Milanote, and working with Apprentice Learning to collaborate on schedules, learning objectives and the overall structure of the Zoom program. Alongside the digital curriculum was a matching physical kit, delivered to each student for the

hands-on portion of the workshop. The kits provided students with step-by-step instructions designed to match the online classes, office supplies and a variety of building materials - fabrics, papers, cardboard, etc. The contents of the kit were delivered in boxes, which when emptied, became the space where students would build their apartment designs.

We also engaged with two architects from local Boston firms. Each architect shared their work experiences with the students in Zoom sessions. The first session focused on how an architecture firm approaches the design process in their work with examples of built projects, while the second session focused on the architect's journey from student to working professional, with an engaging Q+A throughout for the students.

“ Making the apartments and floor plans were my favorite parts of the presentation because I got to do hands-on work instead of just talking, so the presentation felt very interactive.”

STUDENT PARTICIPANT