

EXPANDING THE BOUNDARIES OF SCHOOL:

**CREATING ENGAGING
OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS**

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“ PARTICIPATING IN STUDENT GOVERNMENT TAUGHT ME SO MANY LIFE SKILLS.

It helped me learn what it means to be truly responsible, and it taught me how to improve myself in order to better support my community.

And of course, being in Student Government helped me bring my grades up. It taught me how to balance personal responsibility with community responsibility. When I began high school, I spoke very little English. I was shy and nervous. I immediately got involved with soccer and with Student Government, and those [extracurricular activities] helped me become a leader...[and] taught me how to work with others in order to achieve a goal.”

Cateryn Mendez,
12th grade student,
International High
School at Langley Park



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Introduction

When you ask students what they remember most about their high school experience, they often talk about what happened outside of the classroom—experiencing a new culture on a school trip, developing a passion for art or music, learning the value of teamwork through sports, or discovering a career interest through an internship. At Springpoint, we help our partners design new high school models that provide transformative experiences for students both in and out of school. We guide them to establish interwoven school-wide systems and structures that can support these types of boundary-free learning experiences. While Springpoint’s focus concerns the design and implementation of entire school models, we will concentrate here on what is generally referred to as “enrichment.”

Broadly, we define enrichment as the organized components of a school experience that occur outside of the core academic offerings. Enrichment experiences are educational, usually geared toward the development of 21st century skills, including life skills and applied skills. These components can occur during or outside of school time, on or off campus, and with or without facilitation.

In March 2020, the coronavirus created mass disruption nationwide, forcing millions of students to shift to remote learning. While schools worked to provide essential services and continue foundational schooling, enrichment opportunities were put on hold.

The coming school year holds the promise of more in-person programming. As educators work hard to ensure the safety, social-emotional well-being, and academic success of their students, enrichment programming should be a key part of return planning. These experiences have the potential to build student engagement, reinforce academic success, attend to students’ social emotional needs, and imbue joy in learning.

Enrichment programming can expand the boundaries of school and the world of learning. The community is invited into the school in an authentic way, and students can comfortably leave the school to participate in enhanced learning experiences. A metaphorically “porous” school, therefore, creates a two-way street, giving students access to new opportunities and building strong and lasting partnerships with the community.

Enrichment is quite literally needed now more than ever and we encourage schools to continue to prioritize it as they think broadly about student success.

This guide can help practitioners develop an enrichment program scope and sequence that takes into account students’ passions and goals. We hope it can serve as a valuable resource whether you are designing a whole school model, building an enrichment program from scratch, or working to add or expand current opportunities for students.

Why Enrichment?

Today’s high school graduates need far more than traditional academic preparation to navigate and actualize choice-filled lives. While a strong academic foundation is as essential as ever, students also need opportunities to become engaged in areas beyond their immediate surroundings as a way to tap into their power as future leaders and change agents. Enrichment opportunities provide an important entry point for students to access forums where they can develop unique interests, passions, and talents—and gain skills and knowledge that help prepare them for college and career.

A body of literature suggests a strong correlation between vibrant enrichment programming and both student interest and achievement in school. When schools ignore enrichment, they miss crucial opportunities to engage students and help them

develop the necessary skills for college and career. This is especially pronounced at the high school level; a 2015 Gallup poll demonstrated that while three-quarters of 5th graders felt engaged in school, only about one-third of 11th graders reported feeling similarly.

Just as omitting algebra would be unthinkable, bypassing enrichment leaves a crucial gap in students’ education. It is our belief that a school isn’t truly whole until it embraces enrichment programming and provides opportunities for students to build 21st century skills in and outside of the school context.

Further, while there is a wealth of information on the “achievement gap,” less well known is the “enrichment gap,” which shows that underserved students are less likely to have access to

enrichment opportunities. Enrichment opportunities—especially those that allow students to develop mentoring relationships and expose them to new and unfamiliar experiences—can create authentic opportunities to build social capital. Social capital can facilitate access to new learning opportunities, lay groundwork for employment prospects, and cultivate personal and professional connections. Researchers have explored the relationship between demographics and social capital, with some scholars claiming that low-income students and students of color have less access than their wealthier white peers to a range of social networks that can lead to strong social capital (Kao and Rutherford 2007; Putnam, 2016).

Finally, it is worth noting that enrichment programming can act as one of many mechanisms that can help facilitate a positive youth development (PYD) approach to school, which is critical in supporting all students to thrive. PYD is a comprehensive and practical framework that makes a strong case for porous learning environments, including enrichment programming.

A PYD approach requires helping adolescents develop their identity, build core competencies, and engage in opportunities to form connections in school, the community, and the broader world. Enrichment programming creates these deeply authentic connections while complementing and augmenting the PYD work happening inside of classrooms. Moreover, PYD provides guidance on the kinds of activities to offer (i.e., those that are rigorous, relevant, relationship-focused, and allow for student voice).

We have seen successful schools that are remarkably creative and skilled at developing enrichment programming, and the next page includes examples of the type of enrichment programs that a school might offer.



“ There are two dimensions of equity in enrichment programming that I always considered when I led enrichment work at the Urban Assembly Bronx Academy of Letters. First, **DID MY STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO THE SAME BREADTH AND DEPTH OF ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT STUDENTS IN MORE AFFLUENT COMMUNITIES HAD?**

And secondly, did all students in my school get connected to relevant and transformative opportunities? Our enrichment program design was highly responsive to student interests and needs and we worked hard to engage partners and comb our community's vast array of youth programs and opportunities to ensure everyone had robust out of school experiences. ”

Victoria Crispin, *Senior Director*,
Springpoint

**Enrichment opportunities
might include:**

SERVICE LEARNING

Cleaning a beach, volunteering at a soup kitchen, annual charity fundraising walk, in-school climate and culture programming to promote inclusion and support of the LGBTQ community

APPRENTICESHIPS

Internships, work-based learning in various trades/careers

PEER SUPPORT

Gay-Straight Alliance, restorative circles, peer mentoring

GUEST SPEAKERS & EXPERTS

Inviting community members into the school for panels, roundtables, and to engage in student portfolio presentations

INTERNATIONAL STUDY ABROAD AND PROGRAMS IN RESIDENCE

Service-oriented, immersion/exchange, such as backpacking in Mexico and visiting the Great Wall of China

PRE-COLLEGE AND COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAMS

Class on a college campus, residential pre-college summer program, career shadowing

SCHOOL-BASED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Arts, sports

POSTSECONDARY PANELS AND FAIRS

Group tour of a college campus, in-school or city-based college fairs

LEADERSHIP AND TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Student council, Model UN

This list, and the accompanying examples, are by no means exhaustive but can provide a starting point for those thinking about the many options available to schools as they build out programming.



While we recognize the limitations of referring to this critical strand of programming as “enrichment,” we also acknowledge that the term is currently understood and embraced by educators. This guide will, therefore, use the term to refer to these types of student experiences. But we encourage educators to think broadly about what constitutes an effective enrichment program.

To further concretize our approach to enrichment, let’s emphasize what it is not:

- ⊗ **Enrichment should not be separate from the core elements and mission of a school;** rather, it expands the boundaries of where and when learning takes place and is strategically interwoven throughout all aspects of a school model.
- ⊗ **Enrichment is not one-off;** each set of enrichment opportunities is designed to build upon previous experiences, so that students are increasingly self-guided and engaging in specialized activities.
- ⊗ **Enrichment is not secondary to academic programming;** it is embraced by the school community as an essential aspect of students’ development and discovery.
- ⊗ **Enrichment is not limited to any one set of students;** rather it is an embedded and ongoing set of opportunities that all students experience at all points in their high school careers. More importantly, these opportunities are available to every student no matter their academic or behavioral records. In fact, enrichment programming can often re-engage students who have felt unsuccessful and disengaged in other aspects of their school experience.

An Enrichment Snapshot

When a school prioritizes enrichment programming, it becomes palpable throughout the school, shaping culture as well as the student experience. Bulletin boards feature information on new opportunities outside of the building. The halls are lined with profiles of students who have returned from summers abroad and residential pre-college programs. Students are consistently exploring new ideas and experiences.

Ana, who is in her first year of high school, has just been accepted to the Red Hook Youth Court, where she will adjudicate real offenses in her community. This appeals to her love of fairness and will push her to see all sides of a story, imparting valuable and transferable skills along the way.

Trey is preparing to lead a service-learning day in the community and is enjoying the challenge, as he hopes to be a community organizer someday.

Fahrid is working hard on a personal statement for his college application, in which he describes living with a host family in Peru as an experience that awakened both his empathy and his interest in international studies.

As **Ashley** approaches graduation, she is concluding a semester-long internship and notices that the way she interacts with adults and partners both at her internship and at school has changed; she now feels more confident and comfortable when engaging with adults.



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Designing an Enrichment Program

Designing and implementing a school-wide enrichment program requires intention, creativity, and time. Ideally, a strategically assembled design team will develop the core program elements and structures. Once these elements and structures are built out, a substantial portion of one full-time staff role should be dedicated to the implementation and continuous improvement of the enrichment program. While it is important that one person owns the work, enrichment must be part of the fabric and culture of a school. Leaders can ensure this by building systems that facilitate collaboration between key staff and the enrichment point person.

Once design team members and a point person are identified, it is important to start by understanding the interests and aspirations of students as a basis for all enrichment program design work, and to ensure accessibility and efficacy from the start.

Some of the ways educators might accomplish this include:

- ⌘ Engaging students in facilitated conversations that unearth existing interests and passions so opportunities incorporate and build off of these areas.
 - ⌘ Tapping students, colleagues, and local business leaders to identify the skills, competencies, and mindsets necessary for college and career success.
 - ⌘ Engaging families and caregivers in regular conversation about the importance of enrichment activities.
 - ⌘ Mitigating participation constraints for students and families through attention to building partnerships that yield free and subsidized enrichment opportunities.
 - ⌘ Incorporating student voice into enrichment program planning at the outset and on an ongoing basis.
 - ⌘ Developing systems to collect feedback from students and gather data about engagement as a way to assess efficacy and strengthen programming over time.
-

A Robust Enrichment Sequence

There are two essential sides of enrichment planning: 1) **group experiences** that prompt early exploration and provide exposure to and information about a range of opportunities, and 2) **targeted, individual experiences** that become increasingly skill-based over time.

As students engage in enrichment opportunities during their first few years of high school, they will explore many paths and fields. Younger students entering high school from schools that

have less than dynamic enrichment offerings may need a push to understand the value of these opportunities and tap their own internal motivation. With intentional scaffolding, and a robust academic program, students will hone in on key interest areas and seek personalized experiences. Building individual enrichment opportunities may seem daunting, but as the school and the program grow and begin to develop a pool of interested supporters, name recognition can attract government, community, and private partnerships that allow

for customized experiences. When a school builds a strong reputation as a good partner, it becomes easier to recruit additional partners and provides students with new and better enrichment options. Schools thinking dynamically about partnership development treat every touchpoint with an external organization (e.g., visitors, partners of partners, etc.) as an opportunity to cultivate new relationships and source new opportunities for students.

Designing a multi-year scope and sequence allows designers to anticipate how student interests can fuel the creation of more tailored enrichment options. Mapping available opportunities can illustrate how they build on each other to provide increasingly deep experiences for students. It may help to consider how colleges might view an “on paper” applicant. Increasingly, colleges and universities look beyond students’ academic transcripts and test scores, which is why a comprehensive portfolio of enriching experiences can bolster college candidacy. A student’s

application materials should tell a story. For example, one student might have attended a “Women in Broadcasting” summit early in her high school career, which led to an internship the following year at NBC and informs her present-day interest in majoring in communications.

Also note that while a strong advisory program is enthusiastically encouraged as a hub for enrichment programming, this guide will not go into great detail on developing an advisory approach or curriculum. If you are interested in how advisory can be structured in a way that provides key supports, please read our advisory publication, [Designing Advisory Systems: Innovative Approaches from High Schools](#).

The table below provides sample enrichment areas. Prioritized thematic areas will look different for each school and should be grounded in student interest, as well as overall relevance and accessibility.

Initial high school years	Later high school years
Whole-Grade, Broad, Introductory	Individual, Deep, Specialized
ARTS <p>The school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ hosts a grade-wide arts day ⦿ convenes a visual arts club ⦿ invites an artist speaker from the community 	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ engage in studio-based music production ⦿ develop a visual arts portfolio ⦿ plan and execute a community exhibition
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP <p>The school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ convenes a social justice forum ⦿ develops a community service program ⦿ hosts a multi-cultural event 	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ serve as social justice forum organizers & speakers ⦿ act as Model UN delegates ⦿ participate in a pre-college program in Asia
STEM <p>The school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ runs a mathletes club ⦿ cultivates an interest in robotics ⦿ hosts creative challenge activities, such as lego-building 	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ participate in regional or national science and math competitions ⦿ have internships with local environmental groups ⦿ immerse in coding and game design

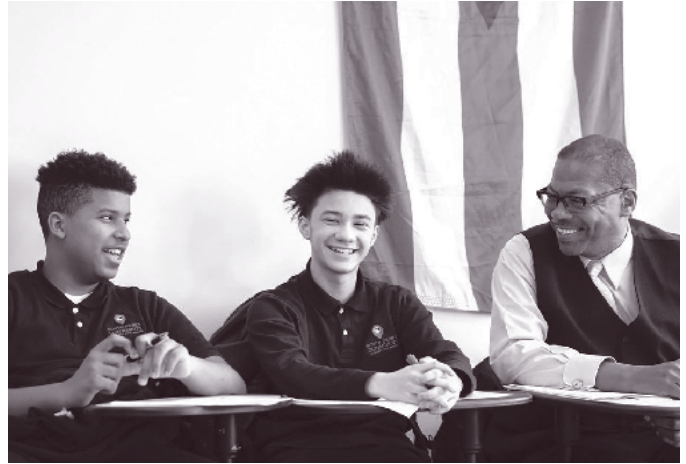
These categories and accompanying examples are only meant as an illustrative example. Schools should seek to create personalized focus areas that resonate with their specific students and community.

// TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS FROM INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AT LANGLEY PARK (IHSLP) HAVE ALWAYS BEEN OPEN TO COLLABORATION

and have proactively sought out partnerships with our university and community organizations.

IHSLP has offered a welcoming space where university students and pre-service teachers can act as academic and language mentors. IHSLP leaders have also helped support IHSLP students who visit [the] University of Maryland campus and have presented on panels discussing issues of social justice. //

Dr. Melinda Martin-Beltran,
*Associate Professor of Language,
Literacy, and Social Inquiry,*
the University of Maryland College
of Education



Defining Purpose

When embarking on any design work, it is crucial to start with goals and intended outcomes. We recommend that designers think broadly and strategically about what success looks like for their students. Setting a high-level and inspirational purpose is a starting place that can elucidate who and what is needed for planning. Collecting and analyzing data along the way can help designers understand the impact of enrichment programming and drive continuous improvement efforts.

We know that a successful school exemplifies fluid lines between academics, enrichment, college planning, and other programs. We have seen time and again how enrichment planning naturally overlaps with college programming, in particular. While this guide is not intended to go into as much detail as one would need to develop a robust college planning scope and sequence, we hope practitioners are prompted to think deeply about how college awareness and college access fit into the enrichment equation.

What is the purpose of enrichment programming in high school?

Choose and explore as many of these sample goals as apply and think about prioritizing them to guide your work.

Goal	The program will have	The program will look & feel like
Students build relationships with each other, avoid negative influences, and have positive feelings about attending school.	Diverse, on-site after-school programming most days (school has a “round the clock” feel).	Staff and space to run after-school programs, budget for staff time, and materials and supplies for clubs.
Students develop tangible and/or technical skills not covered by classroom instruction.	Robust on- and off-site programs that develop and deepen abilities and interests that build a wide range of workplace skills.	Strong partnerships that result in training and skill-building experiences for students, such as apprenticeships or early exposure trade programs in the music production or health fields.
Students develop life skills to underpin and accelerate classroom learning.	Touchpoints with role models, and opportunities to take risks and experience personal growth.	Partnerships with sites connected to a 21st century skills framework; opportunities to develop meaningful, one-to-one mentoring relationships.
Students are prepared for careers of interest and the world of work.	Career exposure programs, internships, and expert career counseling from staff who explicitly make time to design these types of experiences.	Strong partnerships with employers in a wide range of sectors.
Life after college is demystified and students become comfortable with new contexts and new adults.	Quantity and diversity as much as quality and depth in programming (i.e., interaction with multiple adults in multiple fields).	Frequent interactions between students and outside adults and experiences that familiarize students with new situations.
Students have exposure to the arts even when in-school staffing and program constraints prevent it.	Long-term engagements with on- and off-site visual and performing arts programs, and a mechanism to respond to emerging and evolving student interests.	Strong partnerships with arts organizations that can invest in students over time.
Students acquire social capital; they learn to navigate institutions and communities to grow their network and capitalize on opportunities.	Discrete opportunities to teach “wayfinding” skills that help students discover their passions and talents and find their place in the world.	Partnerships that allow for both ongoing mentorship relationships as well as more limited (but still impactful) engagements, connections, and networking opportunities.
Students are well-rounded, competitive candidates for college admission.	All of the above, overtly linked to individualized college counseling and planning.	All of the above, with enrichment and college staff who work closely with students and a school culture that emphasizes the importance of enrichment in the college application process.
Other (list your school's specific purposes)		

Planning Process Snapshot:

Key Steps

While all schools and students are different, these general steps can help practitioners begin to conceptualize their enrichment planning process.

We have included guidance for how practitioners might think about the full trajectory of a student's experience at their school—both for students just starting their high school career, as well as for students who have accumulated enough credits to graduate in the next year or so.

Step	Why it matters	How to approach this step	Considerations for programs with students who have multiple years until graduation	Considerations for programs with students closer to graduation
1. Mapping graduate goals to program areas: Articulate whether each goal is best achieved through the academic, and/or enrichment program.	It will help leaders decide where to add or reduce programs in accordance with goals that matter at each stage.	List all possible program inputs and crosswalk them to goals, then categorize the inputs by program area.	Create a full and flexible scope and sequence that builds toward each goal; think of programs for entering students as introductory and varied (as opposed to personalized and deep).	Consider what experiences need “backfilling” for students who are not yet on track to reach key goals.
2. Identifying inputs for enrichment programs: Review your current enrichment offerings (if applicable) and determine which existing resources are available to devote to enrichment program development.	An understanding of what is already available allows schools to leverage low-hanging fruit and build on existing work and success to date.	Cast a wide net throughout the school and community to determine available options and decide what not to offer.	Program inputs can be spaced out strategically over time (i.e., across students' entire high school careers).	Program inputs may need to be “crunched” developmentally, (i.e., to maximize students' remaining time in school).
3. Prioritizing program inputs: From the previous steps, choose all inputs that make sense for the school's graduate goals and consider related constraints.	Determining which program ideas are both mission-relevant and feasible narrows the focus and scope of designing enrichment programs.	Rate how well each input would achieve its graduate goals (benefit), and compare that to how difficult it would be to carry out (cost).	An understanding of the makeup of the incoming class will dictate priorities.	Determine priorities based on the need to collapse the program area into less time.

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Step	Why it matters	How to approach this step	Considerations for programs with students who have multiple years until graduation	Considerations for programs with students closer to graduation
4. Defining program metrics and benchmarks: Identify short- and long-term outcomes and craft a data collection strategy across strategic inflection points.	Designers need to be able to determine if an enrichment program is reaching its goals; this can guide them in making smart changes, updates, and additions.	Review goals to develop observable, quantifiable indicators that can result in clear, actionable data.	Develop systems to capture and analyze data over the course of a multi-year scope and sequence, and create strategic inflection points to implement learnings from data.	Identify most critical data needs that can elucidate data that is easy to collect and operationalize immediately.
5. Putting key structures in place: Decide who will implement and monitor enrichment work and how.	Clear and shared understanding of the “who and how” sets the stage for success and continuity.	Find existing interest or capacity and build in explicit duties, collaboration points, and feedback loops.	Patterns of solo work and meetings set in motion a permanent flow.	Use ad hoc solo work and meetings to address some immediate needs and gaps.
6. Choosing a place to start: Select pilot programs based on opportunity, need, and what feels naturally “first.”	A concrete starting point makes the planning process less daunting and more approachable, and successful pilots create momentum.	Find the fulcrum between what is immediately accessible through existing partnerships and/or staff capacity and what is most high-leverage.	Dedicate ample time for intake and introduction as students get set up for individual paths.	Introductory programming and experiences are abbreviated; tailor starting places to different students or groups of students.
7. “Marketing” enrichment to staff: Establish clear protocols and checkpoints for updating staff about opportunities and participation.	Enrichment should feel integrated and essential to the school’s goals so that all staff champion its importance; messaging about enrichment throughlines and specific programs should be just as clear and concise for staff as it is for students.	Advertise and share successes and participation; provide professional development for staff including metrics and partnerships.	Use teachers of younger students as liaisons.	Build on what is already in place, including teachers who are already champions of enrichment.
8. “Marketing” enrichment to students: Figure out how to inform students of, and get them excited about, new program offerings.	Emphasize the aspects of enrichment that can pique student interest, including relevance, choice, and novelty.	Use signs, word of mouth, announcements, notes home, and common notification protocols.	Marketing can follow acculturation work that builds interest and involvement.	Older students who are bought into enrichment can be ambassadors; while others may lack the will to participate due to competing priorities at work or home, so marketing may need to be more explicit and enticing.

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Step	Why it matters	How to approach this step	Considerations for programs with students who have multiple years until graduation	Considerations for programs with students closer to graduation
9. Enlisting partners*: Find support from outside parties where inputs call for abilities beyond the school's own.	Partners can help students build life skills and develop specialized interests that go beyond what classroom teachings can offer.	Have a strong and concise "sell" that takes into account value propositions for each partner.	Bring partners in "on the ground floor" to help nurture and develop students over time.	Partners will have expectations of older kids even if they aren't experienced.
10. Implementing programs for all (content): Plan and execute activities for whole classes or grades.	All students get access to experiences that can spark their interests.	Determine what you think students' "barriers" are, and plan experiences meant to address and overcome them.	Emphasize exploration and variety to set up personalized experiences down the line. Include a plan for prep and debrief to maximize impact.	Opportunities should not feel remedial but should be rolled out with variety and zeal.
11. Implementing programs for all (budget): Programming sustains itself with outside funding and in-kind resources.	All students get access to experiences that can spark their interests.	Mitigate participation constraints for students and families by building partnerships that yield high-quality, free, and subsidized enrichment opportunities.	Identify programs that offer scholarships, and collaborate with partners who are also patrons and donors where possible.	Identify patrons and donors that have the means to 'adopt' longer-term and more dynamic programs suitable for older students (summer immersion, travel abroad, etc.) that will require fee-based admission.
12. Implementing personalized programs: Promote key opportunities to students who are most interested and ready for them, and work to get all students primed for similarly impactful experiences.	As students commit to enrichment, there will be increasingly organic choices for them that will help them build skills and carve out a future path.	Enrichment staff should know students well, but teachers should always be consulted when supporting students to engage in programming.	A formal intake practice can help staff know their new students more deeply. This can include a brief survey to be administered to all students in advisory or class.	Some "one time only" intake will help, as will existing staff knowledge of student interests.
13. Creating a culture of enrichment: Intentionally make enrichment an aspect of what it means to be part of the school community.	Recruitment is an opportunity to announce diverse and robust options as well as an inflection point to create a sense of identity.	Have students who are bought into enrichment be ambassadors; create rituals and swag around enrichment.	This will be staff-led until there are older students who have participated in enrichment to be role models.	This will be staff-led and may need to hinge on postsecondary planning.
14. Stewarding enrichment partnerships: Keep partners interested in and excited about the school and their role in it.	Intentional stewardship avoids partner fatigue, ensuring that they won't "run out of steam," pull back on commitment, or stagnate in their roles.	Solicit partner feedback, have partner check-ins, and send partners school updates and news.	Stewardship can include a chance to watch students "grow up" and come into their own.	Stewardship can be about getting kids to the finish line with some great experiences under their belts.

*We go into more detail on how schools can expand opportunities through partnerships in section 3 of this guide, which starts on page 21.

Considering Equity in Enrichment Programs

Much has been written on using equity audits in education¹. While the limitations of this guide do not allow us to create a fully comprehensive equity audit guide, this tool intends to support practitioners to begin thinking about how their enrichment program facilitates strong opportunities to every single student in the building. We encourage practitioners to use this as a starting place, build strategic inflection points for the program, and continue to expand and develop an equity audit system that accounts for the assets and needs of every student.

How will you ensure that enrichment offerings consider **all** students, especially those traditionally marginalized students who can gain deep benefits from participation in these experiences?

Some examples of student subgroups can include English Language Learners, students who are off track to graduation, students who are performing above grade level, students with IEPs, etc.

List specific student groups with regard to **demographic characteristics**.



List specific student groups with regard to **interest areas**



List ways that your school's enrichment program is **relevant** to student groups.



List ways that your school's enrichment program will **connect** these students to opportunities.



List ways that your school's enrichment program is **accessible** to students.



¹ Skrla, Linda; Scheurich, James Joseph; Garcia, Juanita; Nolly, Glenn. "Equity Audits: A Practical Leadership Tool for Developing Equitable and Excellent Schools." *Educational Administration Quarterly*, February 2004, Vol.40(1), pp.133-161.

Developing a Data Collection and Assessment Plan

How will data be collected about the effectiveness of your school's enrichment program? How will you ensure that student and partner voices and perspectives are represented in data collection efforts?



How will the data be analyzed? By whom?



How and where will data be used to continuously improve the enrichment program at your school? Who is responsible for making those changes?



// ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMING IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR SCHOOL.

Every student participates. Early in their high school career, students partake in group experiences to start honing in on their interests. For example, we bring in speakers and explore different career paths. As they progress, students start engaging in more personalized experiences where they make professional connections and gain skills that are imperative for success in college and career. //

Diana Moldovan,
*Director of Programs, Urban
Assembly School for
Law and Justice*

3

Expanding Opportunities through Partnerships

Schools can bolster their own offerings and create successful enrichment programs by partnering with outside institutions to tap into talent and resources in their community. In a vibrant city or region with numerous partner prospects, schools can explore almost limitless programming opportunities. In locations where the surrounding community does not provide as many partner prospects, there are ways to leverage technology to create virtual connections or draw in individuals or neighboring school and college partners to create a “campus without boundaries” approach.

Schools may find that there are many outside entities to partner with, such as pre-college programs, visual and performing arts organizations, corporate institutions, career exposure programs, community-based organizations, government agencies, higher education institutions, fellow high schools, and the private sector. Partnerships begin by understanding a school’s enrichment program needs and assessing how the goals of outside entities might align to create mutual benefit.

**We've heard from school-based practitioners
that ideal enrichment partners:**



While many partners will likely be youth providers that offer both site-based and applied learning programs and opportunities across these categories, remember to think expansively about who can help provide enriching opportunities and refer back to what students shared about their aspirations and interests.

Who Stewards Partnership Work?



Schools with robust partnership strategies have at least one full-time staff member who owns and drives the work. While it might be tempting to assign the role as a portion of multiple people's jobs, we have heard from practitioners and learned in our work that a single point person (e.g., a partnership coordinator) is not only imperative but an enabling condition for the development of a robust partnership approach. Partnership coordinators can take ownership, provide coherence, and be a consistent contact for internal and external stakeholders.

Partnership coordinators have the most success when they demonstrate a specific set of competencies. Often, they have natural instincts, are self-taught, and draw from existing examples of other schools that have been successful in cultivating partnerships. This section is intended as an introduction to the basics of forming partnerships that can help guide staff members who lead this work.

For many schools, investing external stakeholders in the school's mission in a meaningful way is an unfamiliar undertaking. The role of a partnership coordinator is complex, extending not only outward to cultivate external partners, but inward to manage the school's stakeholders and coordinate programming. When designing enrichment opportunities, partnership coordinators also focus on personalizing student experiences, connecting with groups of students and individual students, and interfacing with teachers, leaders, and other support staff.

Time is precious and, as with everything a school undertakes, identifying and recruiting partners is a matter of need, opportunity, and strategy. Schools often make the mistake of recruiting as many partners as possible rather than the partners that make sense and whose contributions they can guide and steward.

Strategy, therefore, is the place to start.

Types of Partners

There are different types of partners that might match students' interests and needs, and fit into a school's ecosystem. While not exhaustive, the list below breaks them down by category, to help facilitate schools' planning processes as they begin to think about potential partnerships.

- ④ **Youth-Serving Partners** - By and large, these are existing non-profits and community-based organizations that already have a youth-serving mission and tend to offer a specialized type of program (e.g., film-making, study abroad opportunities, etc.). They tend to be easy to partner with because they already know how to work with young people and actively seek young people to serve. Consider program costs, quality, and alignment of values in the research and outreach process.
- ④ **College Partners** - College partnership runs the gamut from superficial to deep. At their most conservative, college partnerships can tap undergraduate students for college panels, provide field trips to local campuses, and coordinate in-school appearances by admissions representatives. More expansively, they can include pre-college programs and early college courses, formal relationships with undergraduate student groups and alumni groups for social events and mentoring, and admissions advocacy (i.e., trusting relationships between colleges and high schools in which the two confer on good-match acceptances). Explore relationships with colleges that have a dedication to diversifying their campuses and understand that building bridges to high schools is part of the solution.
- ④ **Employer Partners** - While employer partners may be somewhat harder to recruit, it can be deeply worthwhile. Carefully steward partnerships with companies—especially those that do not usually work with young people and that might struggle to make the necessary philosophical and logistical adjustments. A concrete set of agreements, outcomes, and checkpoints can be useful. The most common reason schools seek employer partners is for internships, though this can be a big initial ask. It might make more sense to ease employers into a partnership and build their interest in deeper engagement with smaller and possibly one-off collaborations, including job shadows, guest speakers, and career days.
- ④ **Multifunction Partners / Anchor Partners** - Occasionally a school will be “adopted” by a partner—usually an employer partner with diverse in-house functionality—that wishes to be seen as a patron or sponsor of large swaths of the educational program and experience. Sometimes these are themed alliances, as with schools that have a specific focus and are supported by companies in that industry (e.g., a law firm for a school with a law and justice theme, or the EPA for a school with a green careers focus). Anchor partner contributions include those of employer partners but go further. Anchor partners can advise on curriculum and school culture, and it is not uncommon for them to provide extracurricular offerings and mentors. Occasionally they also contribute funding or in-kind resources.

“When I started engaging in community partnership work, my team and I had a robust vision for what a fully-formed partnership could look like. But it was more difficult to conceptualize what year 0 or year 1 would look like. It can be helpful for those just starting out with this work to be methodical and strategic about how to grow relationships, so partnerships get off of the ground in an intentional way with an eye toward

SUSTAINING A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP.”

Daniel Sass, *Assistant Principal,*
International High School at
Langley Park





Shorter-term partnerships are a valuable aspect of high-quality Project-based Learning (PBL) and an effective entry point for long-term, personalized engagements with students.

For example, when I led PBL at The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria in Queens, NY we had a photographer join us to support a project, giving a presentation and providing feedback to students on their work. One student was especially excited to continue her study of photography beyond the course. I connected her to the photographer and she ultimately interned with the photography studio.

IT WAS AMAZING TO SEE THE PARTNERSHIP BUILD, DRIVEN BY STUDENTS' INTEREST DIRECTLY. //

Christy Kingham, *Director, Leadership & School Design, Springpoint*

The Partnership Sweet Spot

Successful partner recruitment and stewardship practices proceed with three simultaneous and equally crucial questions in mind:

- ④ What are the needs of my students?
- ④ What is the value to this partner of working with us?
- ④ What resources or skills do they bring to the table?

The very best partner programs are always dictated foremost by student need, as well as a clear sense of the partner's interests and offerings. This can be visualized as follows:



Making the Pitch

Imagine being in a prospective partner's shoes, especially when there is no precedent for working with a school. What might reassure a partner that connecting with a school is the right decision? What might invest them in the school's mission? What can help them understand that involvement with students will be a fruitful exercise? Some tips for a partner pitch include:

- ④ **Have a brand** - Having a compelling mission and message helps build confidence in the school, its identity, and its purpose. A compelling press or information kit, a one-page fact sheet, and/or a strong website and social media presence can be the touchstones of a pitch and a great "leave-with" in a pitch meeting.
- ④ **Show results** - Partners will want to know that schools are good at what they do. A pitch that includes anecdotes, data, and statistics that emphasize results will go a long way. For schools too new to show results, try to convey early signs of promise and/or projected future results, and always underscore other relationships or backings, awards and honors, and/or positive media mentions.
- ④ **Bring ideas** - Practitioners who enter a conversation with a vivid sense of a partner's potential role (or a list of potential roles) can set the groundwork for a productive discussion. Ideas can be sourced directly from program ideation work and tailored to each individual prospect. Demonstrating a vision for potential partners' roles and a concrete sense of the impact they can have will impart confidence and cultivate deeper interest.
- ④ **Be flexible** - Leave room for the partner to have ideas, and be mindful that if you've misinterpreted their appetite for size or scale, they might become overwhelmed or uninspired. Adapt ideas to potential partners' reactions throughout the course of the conversation(s). Pay attention to what seems like too much of an obligation or too little involvement, and note where the partner's interests lie.
- ④ **Let students speak** - Your brand and track record should reflect firsthand student accounts and profiles, but students themselves will have an even greater impact. When and where possible, invite students to describe how opportunities have helped them. This will show partners exactly who they'll be serving and get them excited to do so.
- ④ **Start small** - Regardless of the size to which a partnership ultimately grows, the partner may first need to dip a toe in the water, whether out of overall conservatism or because they need early success to build will among their leaders. A small or short-term collaboration that provides an easy and immediate win can create tremendous will to go further.
- ④ **Show responsiveness** - Make sure the partner knows there will be accountability all around. Students will be prepared for their partnership experiences, with young students being supervised closely by school staff. Partners will receive regular communication and have standing check-ins if applicable, especially at the start, to make sure the collaboration is working and moving in the desired direction. Ask partners to make specific commitments and make sure they feel confident gently bringing concerns to the table when needed.

Successful Stewardship

The initial collaboration period is bound to have bumps, so we recommend careful monitoring and transparent communication. Starting with something small and tangible makes it easy to manage the implementation, correct for errors, and evaluate success. Partner stewardships will rely on several strategies, including the following:

- ④ **Liaisons on both sides** - The partner will want to know that they can always reach their school contact. Likewise, partners should have a designated representative who is excited about the collaboration, able to execute it from their end, and available to confer and troubleshoot as needed.
- ④ **Regular check-ins** - Liaisons should know that they can contact each other at any time. School staff will want to avoid over-communication in a way that makes the partner feel burdened or stretched thin. Having semi-annual partnership meetings is sound practice and helps the partner feel embedded and respected.
- ④ **News and updates** - Partners may enjoy receiving occasional communication, especially if it helps them feel more informed and excited about the school they are supporting. Add partners to any newsletter listserv, and make sure that they are updated as students are accepted to college, the school appears positively in the press, etc.
- ④ **Celebrations** - Naming student awards after partners, publicly thanking partners in newsletters and publications, and honoring partners at events or ceremonies can be an effective way to ensure partners know their impact and feel good about the relationship.



As noted earlier, it is important to have clear and strategic asks for partners without overwhelming them. Crafting a robust set of optional offerings and touchpoints gives partnership coordinators a ready wellspring of ideas to pull from. Review these category examples and brainstorm how they might take shape in your school. Please refer to the previous pages for examples of which partner types might be best suited to these categories. Remember to think broadly and creatively about the kinds of opportunities and partnerships to explore!

Offerings and Touchpoints	BRAINSTORM: Current or potential partners that fit	PLAN: Next steps to engage partners and plan
Family services	Identify organizations that offer summer opportunities, including experiential programs (e.g., NOLS , EarthWatch Institute), academic opportunities (e.g., Pre-College Summer Programs), travel programs (e.g., AFS-USA , CIEE), and internships (e.g., The Met High School Internship Program).	Think broadly about potential partner targets but consider program costs, quality, and alignment of values throughout the research and outreach process.
Facilitated college visits, pre-college, and admissions partnerships	A wide range of colleges and universities that speak to the cultural, financial, geographical, and academic preferences and realities of students and families.	Create a list of potential colleges and tap your network for introductions. Once you start the outreach process, be sure to prepare clear asks. Also consider creating a plan to address the financial burden associated with college (e.g., FAFSA support, scholarship planning, etc.)
In-kind resources for students (e.g., tech) and operations (e.g., furniture, etc.)	Conduct a resource scan of new and potential partners, which may include industry partners that work in tech and curriculum spaces as well as businesses in the community that may be looking to donate materials.	Develop a proposal or plan to acquire the most needed materials and create a handout for new and potential partners to list precise asks. Talk with trusted partners about ideas for in-kind donations they might provide.
Job shadows and internships		
Mentors and tutors		
Integrated classroom programming		
Physical and/or mental health resources		
Summer programs		

Student Voices from Jefferson County Open School

The Jefferson County Open School is a PreK-12 public school in Lakewood, CO. Since 1970, the Open School has provided a viable, vibrant, and life-changing alternative to conventional schooling. At all levels, students work closely with their advisor in the development of their personal curriculum. The Open School's emphasis on personal, social, and intellectual development helps prepare students for an ever-changing world. As part of the Open School's many innovative offerings, students can participate in a public relations class, in which they learn about the public relations field and represent their school to external partners, stakeholders, prospective students, and community members. Students from the public relations class spoke with Springpoint about their enrichment experiences. These quotes demonstrate how one school provides a wide array of opportunities, personalized to student interests and trajectories.

“ A graduation requirement at the Jefferson County Open School is to participate in a wilderness trip. The trip is three nights and four days of backpacking with our Advisory group. It is a great bonding experience that lets us connect with our advisors and classmates. It puts us all on the same level; no one is above anyone else. Also, being in the wilderness means that we are fully present with ourselves and those around us. ”

Kate Bain, 11th grade student

“ I went to Belize last year on a service learning trip. It was really amazing to see animals that are native to Central America, including animals that I didn't know existed. Since it was a service trip, my classmates and I volunteered at an education center. For example, we helped maintain hiking trails and created new habitats for endangered tapirs. ”

Hailee Duran, 12th grade student

“ Getting involved in enrichment programs here is easy and accessible to all students. We are on a first name basis with all the adults and they help us with whatever we need. Our advisors have connections with local organizations and people. For example, my advisor coordinated a physical therapy career shadow so I could see the types of jobs that relate to my interests. ”

Matthew Kellogg, 12th grade student

“ Last year, I took a Holocaust and Human Behavior class. A holocaust survivor, Sarah Moses, visited the school to have a dialogue with students about her experiences. She spoke about her life and her story, including being separated from her family when she was young. It was important because it made the experience of the Holocaust real; it was right in front of me. I could ask questions and really listen. ”

Max Nelson, 11th grade student

“ I will be going on a trip to Oaxaca, Mexico in two weeks. It is a language immersion trip that will let us apply our Spanish language skills in the real world. I am excited because it will take our learning out of the classroom. In preparation, we had a cultural immersion simulation to learn about communicating across cultures, including appropriate greetings and social norms. ”

Elsa Aberg, 10th grade student

“ I am doing an apprenticeship in the Kindergarten classroom here at the Jefferson County Open School. Three mornings a week I am in the classroom, where I learn from the teacher and work with students on math and writing. I love this experience and it has shown me what it would be like if I choose teaching as a career path after graduation. ”

Sofie Nazarens, 11th grade student

“ We are helping build a house for Habitat for Humanity as part of our geometry class. It's showing us how to apply geometry concepts. It shows me how math applies to real life, which I've never experienced before. I really like learning applicable skills such as scaling, measuring, and other basic concepts that connect math problems to the process of building a house. ”

Baila Burnam, 10th grade student

“ I participated in a STEM-focused summer program for six weeks with the Frontiers of Science Institute at the University of Northern Colorado. I took classes—like chemistry and micro-biology—and completed a research project and a full research paper. My math teacher told me about the program and helped me prepare my application. And my advisor helped me as well. About 10 students have done this program in the past few years so I know that our school has a good relationship with the program. ”

Molly Sloan, 11th grade student

“ I am studying American Sign Language and, for my apprenticeship, I have been connected with an interpreter. She works with a student who is hard of hearing and autistic. She both teaches me sign language and I work with her student. This will help me in my future because I want to open a veterinary clinic. With my ASL skills, I will be able to help deaf and hard of hearing people who have pets. ”

Anna Hutchinson, 11th grade student

“ I took classes at Red Rock Community College. At the Jefferson County Open School, we can engage in learning outside of our building and take advantage of opportunities in the community. I took a Math and English course for half a day, twice a week and received college credit. It was a unique experience for me to work with professors and see their expectations at the college level. ”

Emily Nichol, 11th grade student

If you would like to learn more about the Open School, please visit <https://jcos.jeffcopublicschools.org> or read their Advisory case study here: bit.ly/DesigningAdvisory

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Conclusion

We hope that this publication can serve as a resource for practitioners who are thinking broadly and expansively about the kinds of opportunities students deserve outside of the core academic offerings. Defining a purpose, ensuring that entry points exist for all students, creating a cohesive scope and sequence, and strategically stewarding valuable partnerships are among the most important components of this vast work.

But it is worth the tremendous effort. Enrichment opportunities have the potential to catalyze life-changing experiences for all students, including engaging (or re-engaging) them in learning, imparting valuable skills and mindsets, creating opportunities to develop social capital, strengthening students' resumes, and allowing them to discover and deepen interests and passions.

// I joined the Step Up program in 10th grade. It was a partner organization that worked with my school, The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria. I participated in after school programming and field trips.

In my senior year, I joined in the Young Luminary Sessions, where I met with a mentor one Saturday each month. This was such a valuable experience where

WE WORKED ON BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH.

One of our professional activities was writing a personal pitch. I still have that pitch and, while things have changed and I have grown, the construction of it is helpful and I even pull it out before an interview or networking event as a reminder. //

Shakila Khan, *alumna* of The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria and current Hunter College student



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ABOUT US

Springpoint, a national nonprofit, was founded on an unwavering belief that all young people, regardless of environment or background, can succeed in high school, college, and beyond. To realize our mission, we partner with districts, charters, philanthropies, and networks to support the design, launch, and continuous improvement of new public high school models and surrounding ecosystems.

Springpoint supports partners to tap into visionary leadership in their community, champion high expectations, and focus resources to create transformative learning experiences that prepare students for a successful future. We meet each partner where they are, providing design and planning workshops, capacity-building and model implementation supports, resources and tools, and customized coaching as partners design innovative learning environments to meet the needs of traditionally underserved students.

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