

Bridge to Employment Success Story

BTE Success Story

New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA

November 2021



Why BTE?

In the City of New Brunswick, New Jersey, New Brunswick High School and the Health Sciences Technology High School serve a low-income population of working-class African American and Hispanic students. The BTE New Brunswick program was designed to increase both the number of New Brunswick youth who enroll in and attend higher education and the number who pursue STEM2D (science, technology, engineering, math, manufacturing, and design) or healthcare careers.

To this aim, the BTE New Brunswick program focused on three principal components: activities to help students increase their knowledge and workplace skills; mentorship for students from Johnson & Johnson science, healthcare, and business professionals; and tutoring services and academic support in the areas of science, language arts, and mathematics.

One BTE partner talked about the importance of exposing students to the workplace: "I think for our community it's very much needed. Because even though some of the students have professionals in their family, it's usually from a different country where the requirements are different. I think it's really important that the kids see there are

people in the community that care about them and who they can also really learn from about what they need to succeed.”

BTE is designed specifically to provide these types of college and career readiness exposure to students. Working together, Johnson & Johnson, secondary and postsecondary schools, and community organizations develop programs that feature academic enrichment, career readiness and exploration activities, and higher education preparation. They aim to increase the number of students enrolling in higher education and pursuing careers in STEM2D or health care.

BTE: A Catalyst for College & Careers

The BTE New Brunswick program sought to select a group of 50 rising sophomore students to become participants in the program. The selection began with vetting students’ grades for major subjects and then inviting just over 100 students to complete an application. Partners hosted a Family Night to introduce students and parents to the program. As a result of this recruitment effort, 50 students were selected to participate in the BTE participant group beginning in September 2018. A comparison group was also selected.

In order to improve students’ academic achievement, BTE New Brunswick provided tutoring and academic supports and enrichment, including college-level courses and SAT prep classes. To encourage students to consider pursuing higher education, the program offered a variety of trips to universities, skill-building workshops, and mentors. To assist students in exploring their education or career paths, the program included guest lectures, visits to partner sites, and career-focused workshops.

Because the COVID pandemic and quarantine occurred during much of the BTE New Brunswick program years, the BTE partners also emphasized the importance of providing

SITE PROFILE

Location
New Brunswick, NJ

Grant Period
2018 - 2021

Sponsor
Johnson & Johnson

Coordinator
Rutgers University

Community Partners
New Brunswick High School, Health Sciences Technology High School

Volunteers
45 volunteers
1181 total hours

Students Directly Served
50 students
66% completion rate

emotional support to students to help them during this time.

Impact of BTE

Of the 50 students who started BTE in the 10th grade, 33 (66%) completed the program in 12th grade. All 33 (100%) graduated from their respective high schools. Nearly all BTE students (96%) applied to higher education institutions and were accepted into the college of their choice.

Colleges BTE students were accepted into included:

- Barnard College
- Lipscomb University
- Cornell University
- Gwynedd Mercy University
- Middlesex College
- Montclair State University
- Pomona College
- New Jersey Institute of Technology
- Rutgers University - Camden
- Rutgers University - Newark
- Rutgers University - New Brunswick
- Saint Peter's University
- The College of New Jersey

A large majority of BTE students (93%) agreed that the program had prepared them to achieve their career goals.

One of the BTE partners shared that he could see gains in students' essential skills. He described seeing shifts in "how they present themselves to me, how they start an email to a professor or a teacher. So I can see growth in those areas."

The BTE students also increased their knowledge of the range of careers available within the healthcare field. A BTE partner explained, "I feel as though a number of students wanted to be doctors. Not that being a doctor is a bad thing. It's not, but they had this focus primarily because they weren't quite sure what careers [were available] in the healthcare field. I think there's a much larger diversity of career choices among the

STUDENT OUTCOMES

100% of BTE students who completed the three-year BTE program graduated from high school

96% of BTE students applied to an institution of higher education

96% of BTE graduates were accepted to a college of their choice

100% of BTE students reported being aware of health careers (up from 69% at baseline)

The majority of BTE students secured a scholarship for college.

“I think the guest speakers really connected with a lot of the students and it made the careers that they had seem less like a dream and more like a goal.”

- BTE partner

students now that they've been exposed to all of the folks at J&J, and to various speakers. Now, you're starting to see that the students have a broader idea of what a successful career is and are actually pursuing things that fall within their interests. So, to me, that's exciting.” Partners mentioned that some BTE students changed their career goals because of their exposure to different choices through BTE.

BTE students indicated that they enjoyed the opportunities the program provided and the connection with Johnson & Johnson mentors. They found the college preparation assistance, the college credits, and the career exploration to be some of the most beneficial program components.

J&J employees volunteered an average of 90 hours per year on the BTE New Brunswick program and engaged in a total of 1,181 hours.

Sustainability

At the time of our interview, the BTE partners did not have any formalized plans for sustaining the BTE program. However, they agreed that BTE could benefit all students and wished that BTE could be expanded across more grades to a larger number of students.