

# Bridge to Employment Success Story

## BTE Success Story

Singapore

June 2024



### Why BTE?

The BTE Singapore program launched in March 2021 at Jurongville Secondary School in the western part of Singapore. The initiative is a collaboration between Johnson and Johnson (Singapore), the secondary school, and the site-coordinating agency, Trybe, a social service agency that serves youth facing adversities.

The program was designed to engage students in STEM<sup>2</sup>D and prepare them for post-secondary education and careers. The BTE partners believe that STEM<sup>2</sup>D careers are a path to breaking the community's cycle of poverty. During its three-year implementation period, the BTE Singapore program offered participating students academic achievement and enrichment, career exploration and readiness, post-secondary education exploration and preparation, and community engagement activities. Some of the activities for students included exam study sessions, mental wellness workshops, career fairs, career interest sessions, community-building activities, and a "Planet T Gameshow" that highlighted the education pathways available after secondary school.

BTE is specifically designed to prepare students for their post-secondary journeys. Working together, Johnson & Johnson (J&J), secondary and post-secondary schools, and other community organizations and partners develop programs that feature academic enrichment, career exploration and readiness, and post-secondary education preparation activities. They aim to increase the number of students enrolling in post-secondary education and pursuing careers in STEM<sup>2</sup>D or healthcare.

## BTE: A Catalyst for Post-Secondary Education & Careers

The BTE Singapore program officially launched with 48 tenth grade students at Jurongville Secondary School with the goals to 1) increase the number of students who enroll in post-secondary education and 2) increase the number of students interested in STEM<sup>2</sup>D careers. The students were selected by school management staff after completing an application to participate in BTE. The school then identified a comparison group by matching students based on gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic level.

To improve students' achievement, BTE Singapore provided a range of workshops on college, career, and life skills, engaging activities, and community-building experiences. One BTE partner highlighted the importance of listening to students in designing activities, sharing, "If I could really sum it up, the keyword is adapting. It's really to understand the needs of the student." The BTE team routinely gathered student feedback in Years 1 and 2 to revise and improve the program offerings. BTE Singapore focused many sessions on STEM<sup>2</sup>D but recognized the need to present STEM<sup>2</sup>D principles in a manner different than how students are traditionally taught in school—by incorporating fun and engaging activities.

### Impact of BTE

Over the program's three years, BTE Singapore maintained an impressive retention rate—of the 48 students who started BTE in 2021, 96% (46) completed the program in 2023. BTE partners explained that teacher support was key in this retention. Teachers supported the program, encouraged students, and at times provided snacks to motivate students to attend BTE events. Another factor in the high retention rate was the BTE students' sense of belonging. One BTE partner discussed Singaporean youths' common struggles with mental health, "We also wanted to create an identity that they know they're a part of [something]...providing access to peers, access to mentors, access to other adults in your life." In focus groups, students reported that advice from mentors and sharing sessions were the most significant activities.

## SITE PROFILE

**Location**  
Singapore

**Grant Period**  
2021 - 2023

**Sponsor**  
Johnson & Johnson

**Coordinator**  
Trybe

**Community Partners**  
HATCH (The Innovation Centre for Public Safety & Security), The Astronauts Collective (TAC), Outward Bound Singapore, Science Centre Singapore

**Volunteers**  
74 volunteers

Of the 46 students who completed the BTE program, 52% (24) graduated from high school and all 24 enrolled in a post-secondary institution. The BTE students spoke positively about their experience in the program and were appreciative of the BTE activities. In surveys, 100% of BTE students reported that BTE provided an advantage to them when applying for a job. Surveys showed increases for BTE students from baseline to Year 3 in STEM career awareness, career choices, and the steps to attain those careers. In addition, surveys showed increases for BTE students in key foundational skills such as goal setting, resume writing, time management, problem-solving, and presenting. In Year 3, 44% of BTE students applied for Early Admission Exercise (EAE) for STEM<sup>2</sup>D-related courses in higher learning.

### Sustainability

The BTE partners have met to discuss plans to sustain the BTE Singapore program. One BTE partner reported that both the school and J&J are committed to continuing the program. The team is exploring a shorter 1-year model, hoping to start in 2025.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

96% of BTE students completed the program.

44% of BTE students applied for Early Admission Exercise (EAE) for STEM<sup>2</sup>D-related post-secondary courses.

96% of BTE graduates were exposed to essential career skills.

98% of BTE students indicated that they would attend further education.

*“I think we have seen the students grow quite a lot... I think that BTE helps open their eyes to things, expose them to things that they may not have seen.”*

- BTE partner

