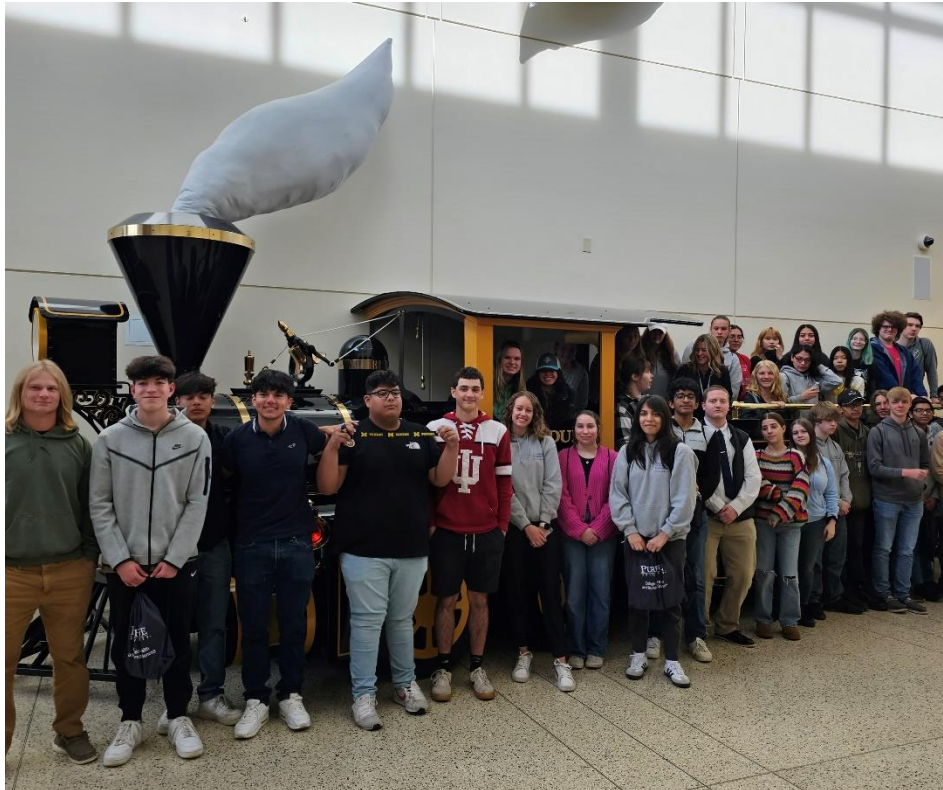


Bridge to Employment Site Reflection

BTE Site Reflection

Warsaw, Indiana
January 2025



Why BTE?

Serving over 2,000 students, Warsaw Community High School is the largest school in the Warsaw, Indiana, area. With a Johnson & Johnson Depuy Orthopedics facility in the area, the high concentration of orthopedic professionals puts Warsaw on the higher end of the socioeconomic spectrum. However, Warsaw Community High School has a growing number of students from different economic backgrounds. At the moment, 50-60% of students are on a free or reduced lunch program. Additionally, there is a fairly high population of Latino students of immigrant parents who may not be as familiar with navigating the school system and post-secondary education preparation process.

Launched in 2021, the BTE Warsaw program provided students at Warsaw Community High School with awareness of the numerous job opportunities in their area—especially those who may not have had access to career guidance at home. Primarily, the aim of the program was to broaden the career horizons of these students. “I grew up in the community, but I had no idea what went on here in terms of professional opportunities. So it has been a cool opportunity to engage the students in the area and show them what their futures could look like,” said BTE Champion Anne Hill.

BTE: A Catalyst for Post-Secondary Education & Career

In hopes of bringing as much diversity as possible into the program, BTE Warsaw launched officially in 2021 with 60 students. Though the initial target for Latino students in the program was 7%, BTE Warsaw served a 20% Latino student population—highly exceeding the original target and more accurately representing the school’s demographics as a whole. One of the main goals of the program was to ensure that these students become more aware of the many great professional opportunities available in their community, especially careers in STEM²D. To keep students engaged and interested in the program, program coordinators ideated a mix of hands-on activities as well as events and activities that involved students exploring new environments. Throughout the program, BTE students had the opportunity to shadow and be mentored by Johnson & Johnson STEM²D professionals. They also got to visit different colleges and participate in tours at DePuy Orthopedics’ local facilities, which exposed them to the different STEM²D career pathways available to them. Additionally, students participated in a number of fun, hands-on activities—such as the Spaghetti Tower activity, where teams are tasked with using their problem-solving, collaboration, creativity and resilience skills as they attempted to build the tallest and strongest tower made out of spaghetti and marshmallows. They also had the opportunity to apply their STEM²D skills through a gingerbread house building competition. Additionally, students had the opportunity to witness a virtual robotic surgery facilitated by the Liberty Science Center.

Year after year, students reported one of their top favorite experiences from the BTE program was the mentorship and guidance they received from their Johnson & Johnson mentors and BTE leadership team. BTE Program Coordinator Nichole Rouached recalls, “Students loved the free time of just hanging out with the mentors, and I think the

Site Profile

Location

Warsaw, Indiana, USA

Grant Period

2021 – 2024

Sponsor

Johnson & Johnson

Coordinator

OrthoWorx

Community Partners

Warsaw Community
Schools
Orthopedics Capital
Foundation
DePuy Synthes

mentors really enjoyed this as well.”

Another important priority for program leads was ensuring that BTE students acquire and utilize important skills needed for success that they might not necessarily learn at school, particularly workplace readiness skills. “We really wanted them to understand the importance of communicating over email because that’s the primary mode of communication in professional settings and in college,” says Anne. Students attended skill-building workshops where they learned to use important professional platforms like LinkedIn. The BTE Warsaw leadership team also developed creative, engaging activities, such as “Don’t be an Animal: Skills for the 21st Century”, where they had students work in small groups as they completed a scavenger hunt at a local zoo and put into practice some of their workplace readiness skills such as time management, communication, and leadership.

Overall, BTE Warsaw students responded well to the variety of activities implemented and appreciated the opportunity to get out of their regular routines. “They *loved* the hands-on stuff, and they especially loved the field trips. Some of our best days were the days where we had job shadowing visits,” says Anne.

IMPACT OF BTE

Out of the initial 60 students, 40 completed the program, all of whom graduated from high school. Most of the students who participated in the BTE Warsaw program are now first-generation college students, with many of them pursuing a STEM²D degree. This outcome is well-aligned with BTE Warsaw’s mission: to expose students from underserved backgrounds in Warsaw Community High School to the different STEM²D career pathways and job opportunities available to them in their own community.

BTE Warsaw truly served as an eye opener for students who might not have been confident about the path they wanted to pursue after high school. One student ultimately decided to switch their major choice to engineering because of the exposure they received while in the program; another was accepted to an internship at DePuy and is attending Indiana University as a first-generation college student. In addition, multiple students who

Student Outcomes

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

60% of BTE students plan to pursue a career in STEM²D

82% of BTE students completed a volunteer project in Year Three

completed the BTE program in Warsaw completed internships with DePuy.

Sustainability



When it comes to ensuring program success, BTE Champion Anne Hill strongly emphasized the importance of having a dedicated program coordinator who not only has experience in education but also understands the corporate landscape. Additionally, having a knowledgeable and involved guidance counselor made recruitment easier. The dedication and collaboration across all partners helped make the BTE Warsaw program a success.

In terms of successfully rolling out the program, leads expressed the importance of planning ahead and establishing clear roles. To ensure transparency and synergy, it was incredibly helpful for all stakeholders to be present at the strategic planning session—including school representatives and post-secondary education partners. “This definitely created the

foundation for the success that we have today,” says Nichole.

In September 2024, the BTE Leadership Team facilitated a sustainability session with Warsaw Community High School and local community partners to reflect on the success of the three-year pilot program. The team has developed a sustainability plan and is working to begin recruitment efforts in the near future. Program partners feel it was a highly successful three years where students’ career pathways were broadened, and where they got to see firsthand what a future in STEM²D could look like. They look forward to working with additional BTE cohorts in the future.