

# Bridge to Employment Site Reflection

## BTE Site Reflection

Englewood, Florida  
October 2024



### Why BTE?

Englewood High School is home to students originating from 62 different countries who speak over 30 languages. With a huge immigrant student population, the school ranks among one of the most diverse in the state of Florida—an asset that fosters a global mindset in its students. Many parents of Englewood

High School students work long hours in demanding jobs to support their families, which can make it challenging to offer the full academic support their children need. Additionally, both students and their families may not be familiar with the complex process of preparing for post-secondary education in the United States, including the college application process and overall college readiness. In partnership with Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Communities In Schools (CIS) of Jacksonville, Duval County Public Schools, and Florida State College at Jacksonville, the Englewood Bridge to Employment program has been empowering these students with the tools and knowledge to navigate their post-secondary education journeys since its inception in 2021—and helped them discover a world of exciting careers in large, reputable companies like Johnson & Johnson.

To prepare these students for their post-secondary journeys, BTE Englewood leaned on the invaluable support of CIS Jacksonville—a nonprofit that provides students with a community that empowers them to stay in school and succeed in their post-secondary education. Together with Johnson & Johnson volunteers and mentors, BTE Englewood designed interactive, hands-on activities like Johnson & Johnson facility walkthroughs and exciting workshops where students learned how to do 3D printing and what it's like

to run a manufacturing line. Students also participated in activities like “Finance Day,” which helped them acquire valuable, real-life skills needed to navigate life as young adults. Additionally, the program collaborated with Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) and took the students on college campus visits to gauge their interest in different careers.

The program kickoff was a great success, where parents as well as students got to tour the nursing simulation facility at UNF MED NEXUS and see the technology used on the ground, such as the medical mannequins that doctors practice on as well as other complex equipment.

### **BTE: A Catalyst for Post-Secondary Education & Career**

The BTE Englewood program officially launched with 45 students at Englewood High School, with the goal of providing students with limited access at home with the additional academic support and mentorship they needed to succeed in their post-secondary education journeys.

When it came to ensuring students remained engaged, program staff highlighted the importance of maintaining partnerships and keeping all stakeholders updated and informed throughout the program. In particular, the BTE Englewood program greatly benefited from involving school leaders and educators to define clear goals and smoothly roll out the program. "I feel like we've been able to do so much with BTE because we've had our principal on board from the very beginning. I've worked in schools where you don't have that principal buy-in, which makes it really difficult to get on their calendar and to use the school space for program activities," said Dykisha Potter, Program Site Coordinator from Communities in Schools.

### **IMPACT OF BTE**

Out of the initial 45 students who started the program, 24 stayed until the end of the initial three years. This high retention rate was made possible by the BTE Englewood Leadership team and volunteers implementing attendance contracts to guarantee attendance and participation,

## **Site Profile**

### **Location**

Englewood, Florida,  
USA

### **Grant Period**

2020 - 2024

### **Sponsor**

Johnson & Johnson

### **Coordinator**

Communities in  
Schools

### **Community Partners**

Duval County Public  
Schools  
Florida State College at  
Jacksonville

### **Volunteers**

22 volunteers

engaging parents, and shaping the activities around student feedback to ensure they were always eager to come back. "I think we have such a great program offering that these students were already asking when the next BTE day would be," said Drake Smalley, BTE Champion. Additionally, students shared their positive experiences with their parents, encouraging them to see the activities firsthand.

Another significant focus of BTE Englewood was encouraging students to find affordable options such as community college when it comes to their post-secondary education to reach their goals.

Out of the 24 students graduating from the program, most will be pursuing post-secondary education, and many among them are the first ones from their families to go to college. "Normally, 40% of students pursue post-secondary education. Now, more than half of BTE students are going thanks to our college partner," said Dykisha Potter from Communities in Schools.

## Sustainability

To ensure the success and continuity of the BTE Englewood program, the BTE Englewood Leadership Team started planning at least a year prior to the launch of the program—and said that such preparation was crucial to ensuring the sustainability of the program. They also placed emphasis on getting buy-in from site leaders who could potentially fund the program beyond the initial corporate grant. Regular program assessment also helped make constant improvements to the program and its activities and recruitment strategies. Also, an external NGO partner and coordinator who knew the school site was invaluable to the program's success and sustainability. "The dedication of the people running the program - the ability to find mentors and all the core things needed to start the program just made everything successful," said Spencer Clem of Johnson & Johnson.

The team is already recruiting students for the next phase of the program, set to kick off in January 2025!

## Student Outcomes

53% of BTE students completed the program.

90% of BTE students improved their college entrance exam.

90% of BTE students met all graduation requirements.