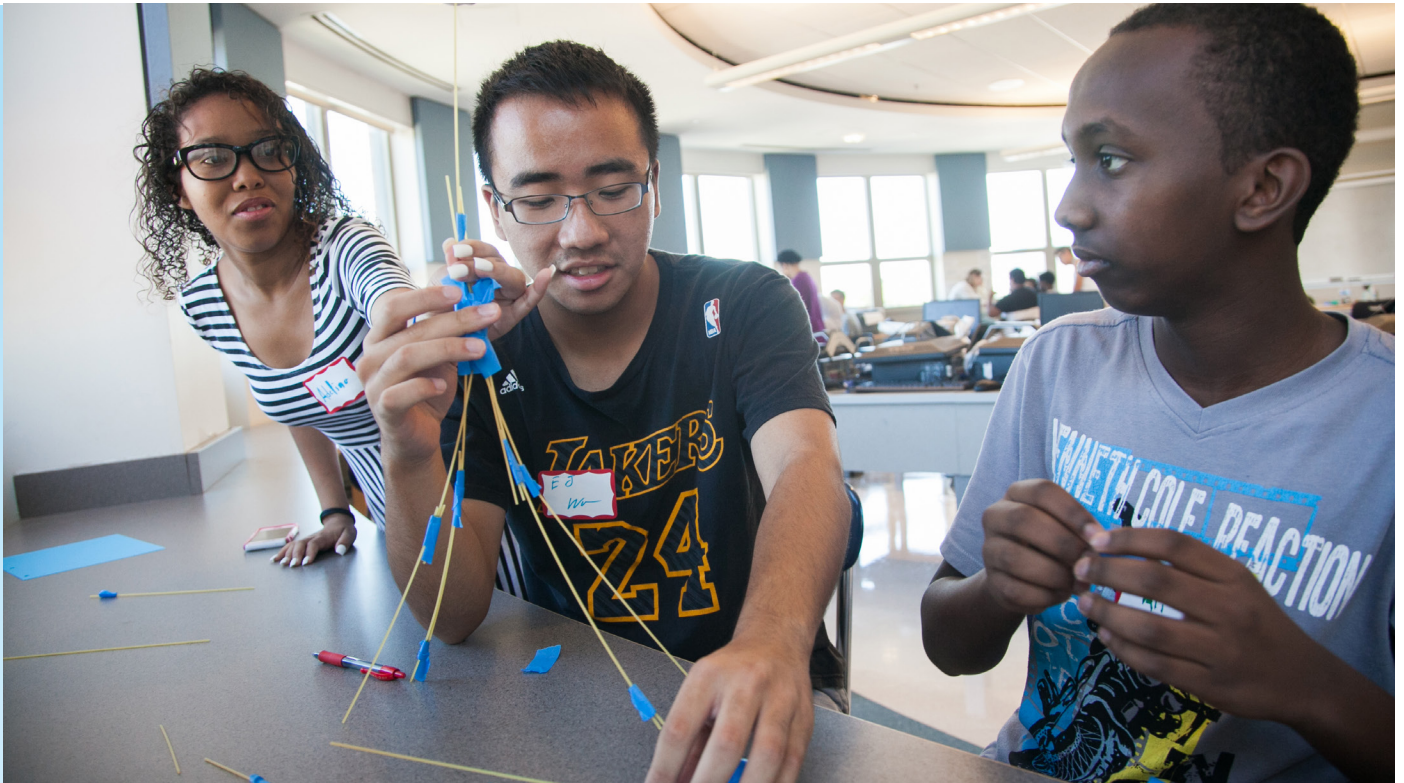




SIGNAL SUCCESS IN ACTION: Expanding College and Career Readiness in Schools



"For students who were new to the whole world of work, this was life-changing... It helped them to know themselves in a different way, one that showed them they could succeed and aspire for more."

~Beatriz Zapater, Head of School, BDEA

"Being able to practice what I would say in certain situations was so helpful. It helped prepare me for what I would say to a manager."

- TaPoe, Student, Lowell

Use of the curriculum is an integral component of our efforts to infuse college and career readiness into student learning at Malden HS. The curriculum is clear and concise, informative, engaging and relevant, and the CommCorp staff have gone above and beyond.

Dana Brown, Principal, Malden HS

The Context & The Challenge

Schools agree that college and career readiness for all students is of paramount importance, but youth employment is at its lowest point since the Great Depression and many youth leave school with no work experience, few references, and little idea of how to present their potential to employers.

The Massachusetts Task Force on Integration of College and Career Readiness states that "students who are able to gain experience and exposure to the world of work while in high school are better prepared to persist in and complete a post-secondary education and succeed in pursuing livable wage careers." Unfortunately, most schools- small and large- struggle to find the time and resources to expose students to the world of work, develop crucial soft skills and engage in meaningful career planning.

The Solution at Boston Day and Evening Academy

BDEA is an alternative public charter high school located in Roxbury and dedicated to serving high needs Boston Public School students with innovative competency based model.

CommCorp designed and piloted a custom version Signal Success that reached over 100 students in BDEA's introductory Humanities course, Beyond BDEA, and then continued with a smaller elective course offering paired with work placements. Students focused on preparing for job interviews, improving soft skills like communication and dependability, and identifying more detailed career plans. Within two months of the end of the course and placements, 80% of the program graduates had part-time competitive employment and/or were enrolled in post-secondary education.

“The Signal Success Curriculum has been an important and timely addition to the vocational and work readiness classes offered at Malden High School.

The curriculum is offered in several formats to meet diverse student needs, is engaging and participatory, and teaches youth many of the professional skills most critical to success in today’s workforce.

Teaching the curriculum has been a pleasure... Youth who have participated in these classes and work programs have demonstrated skill gains and many have obtained competitive employment.”

~ Kelli Collomb,
Transition Coordinator, Malden HS

The Solution at Malden High School

Malden High School is a large public school north of Boston that offers a wide range of academic and extra-curricular opportunities. The school already had a partnership with the Mayor’s Office and some students were learning about work through the YouthWorks program, but Malden wanted to serve a more diverse group of students in a more in-depth manner.

CommCorp worked with several teachers to adapt over 100 hours of the Signal Success curriculum to meet the needs of a small cohort of students who went through a rigorous selection process to participate in an after-school program. All of the participating students demonstrated strong gains in core soft skills and many of the students secured competitive part time employment. As a result of the initial success, Malden High School chose to expand use of the curriculum into school day programming related to transition, service learning and internships. Over 250 students at Malden High School will now have the opportunity to use the Signal Success Curriculum.

The Solution at Lowell High School

Lowell High School is a large public school in Northern part of Massachusetts that serves over 4,000 students. The school had run work-release programs in the past, but they were looking to provide more structured career readiness and exploration alongside internships.

Lowell High School used Signal Success as part of an elective course that included work placements provided by the Career Center of Lowell. All of the participating students completed resumes and developed detailed post-secondary plans. The school is hoping to offer more than one section of the elective and is expanding the use of the curriculum into courses offered through the Business department.

