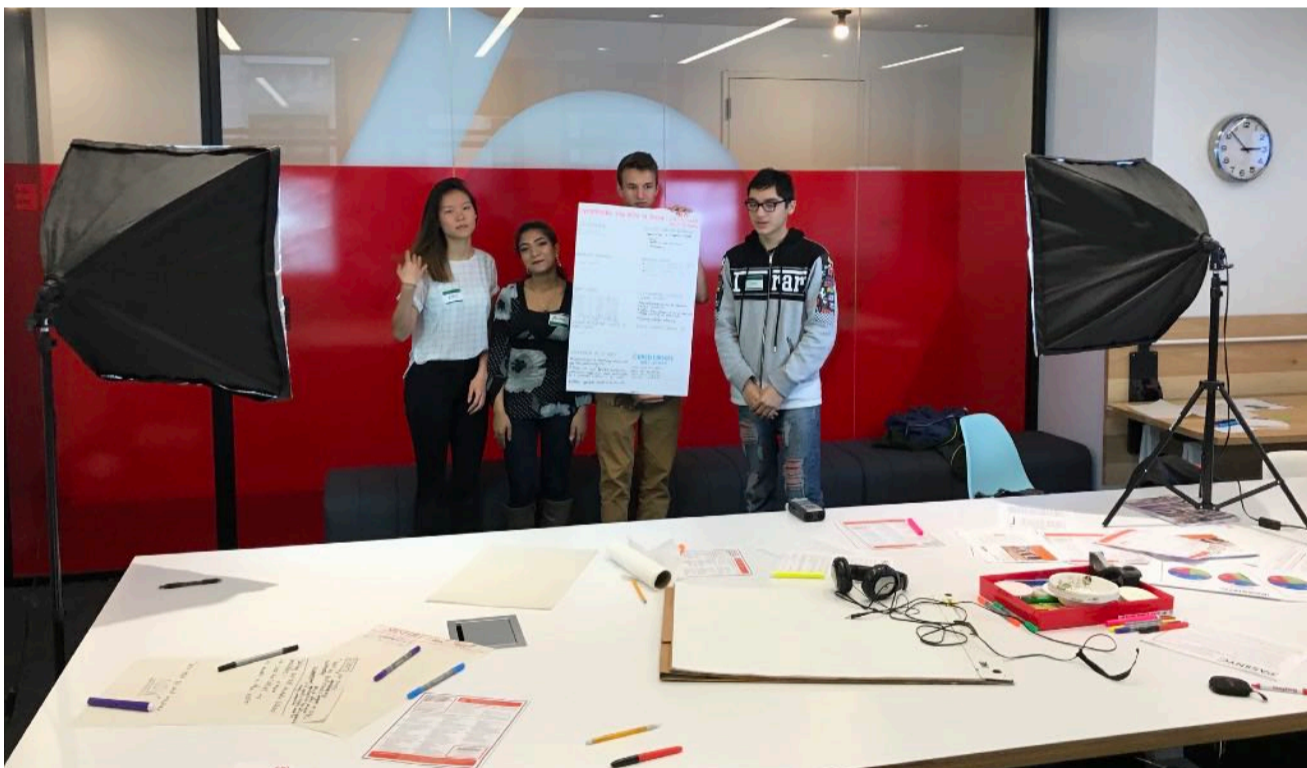
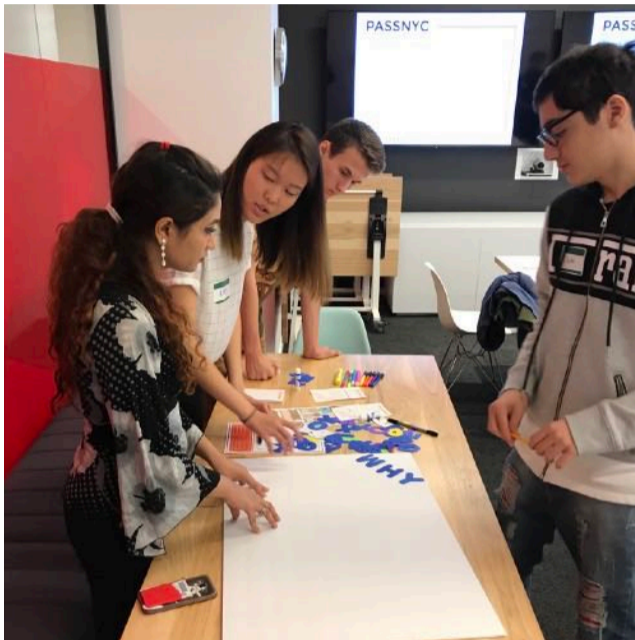


PASSNYC



2017 Student Summit Report

January 2018



Table of Contents

Founder's Foreword	3
Student Summit Overview	4
The Student Perspective	4
Making Specialized High Schools More Welcoming for All Students	7
Student SHSAT Outreach Videos	9
What Students Learned	11
Appendix	12

Special thanks to

All student participants

BuzzFeed

Sisters Caribbean Cuisine

PASSNYC Team members: Max, RanDe, Diana, Tarek, Cait, and Elizabeth

PASSPartners: Gooroo, Stuyvesant Student Union, Bronx Science Student Organization, Hunter College High School, and Young Eisner Scholars Program

Founder's Foreword

Growing up in New York City, I was constantly surrounded by amazing people always willing to help. I had the great privilege to attend Hunter College for eighteen years—from nursery school through college. Hunter provided a supportive environment that empowered me to learn who I am. I'm still close with a great number of the friends that helped along the way. So, I like to say everything I am is due to my family, my friends, and Hunter.

To give back, I wanted to share my network with students and families more talented and deserving than me, and make it easier to gain access to the opportunities I took for granted. Together with some of my closest friends, I founded PASSNYC (Promoting Access to Specialized Schools in New York City). Our mission is to increase the diversity of students sitting for the Specialized High School Admission Test (SHSAT)—the only way to gain entry to the country's best public schools. We can't create lasting, widespread, social change alone. As a Collective Impact Action Tank, PASSNYC uses underlying altruism and boot camps to help our partners work together toward shared goals. At our first summit, we asked 44 organizations to help us create new outreach strategies for District 5 in Central Harlem.

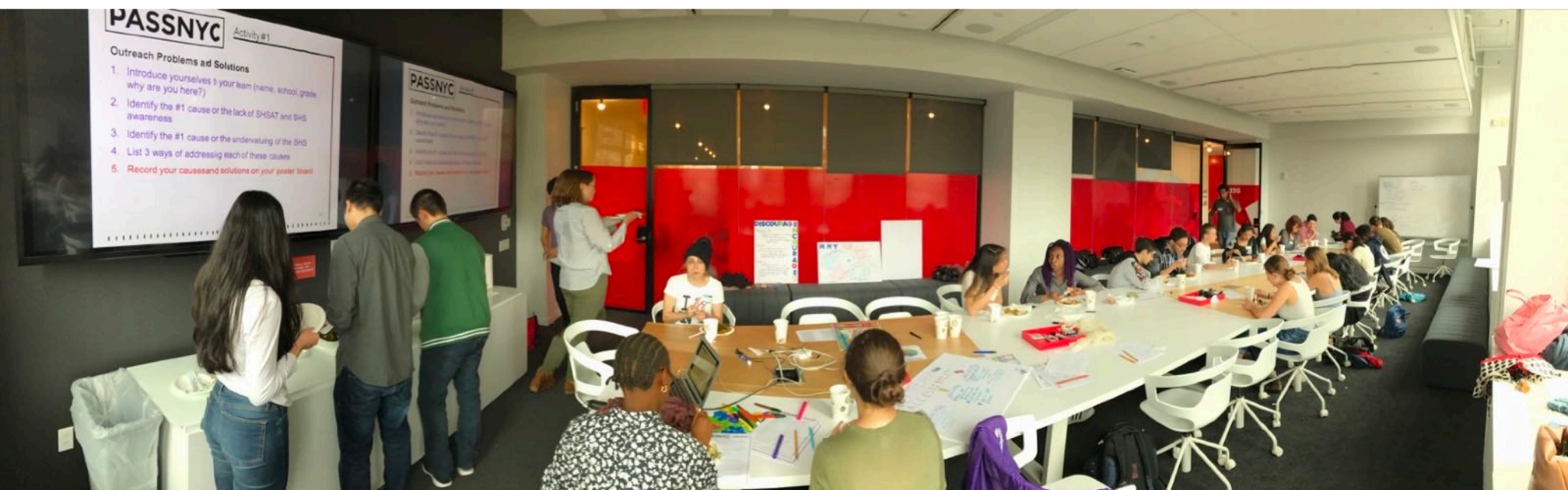
Inspired by two Stuyvesant High School girls at our second forum, we organized our first student summit to get help from a more important perspective. PASSNYC Strategist and Board Secretary Diana McKeage, helped convene 20 students from 7 schools, including Hunter College High School, Columbia Secondary School, Stuyvesant, and Bronx Science—and designed a challenging curriculum for the day (see pg 5).

The best part of the summit was seeing firsthand that our theory of change—the Win-Win-Win—works with motivated students just the same as it does with decades-old organizations. We had a lot of fun, learned a great deal, identified Student Ambassadors for the Department of Education's specialized high school diversity initiatives, and recruited three of the student participants as PASSNYC interns!

We hope you enjoy reading this report and take to heart the need to give students a voice and to empower students to affect change within their communities. Please let us know if you'd like to get involved with amazing students like those that contributed to this report. We'd love your help,



Ryan J. S. Baxter
Founder & Chairman, PASSNYC



The PASSNYC Student Summit

The first PASSNYC Student Summit took place at BuzzFeed Headquarters on May 13, 2017—with over 20 high school and middle school students gathered to brainstorm ideas on how to increase student awareness of the SHSAT. Students participated in a group discussion to share their personal experiences with the SHSAT and the HCHS entrance exam and their insights on the top reasons why fellow students do not sign up for the SHSAT. They then broke into smaller groups to complete the Outreach Material Design Challenge, and produce outreach materials (posters and “call to action” videos) inspired by the discussion! After the Summit, students were asked to fill out a survey for homework asking them to vote for a favorite student video and to provide ideas on how to better the climate in high schools surrounding the SHSAT.

The Student Perspective

Even adults working in the education space, who are among the most prepared to address the systemic issues in our school systems, lack a critical piece of insight: What is it like to be a middle school student today? With the advent of technology and access to information that few of us had as middle school students, we look to today’s youth to tell us the barriers they face in accessing educational opportunities and how we can best communicate information in a compelling way.

Students can truly provide an accurate perspective of how the people and institutions in their lives affect their attitudes toward the SHSAT and HCHS entrance



What is Collective Impact?

Collective impact is an approach based on the premise that no single organization can create large-scale, lasting social change alone. It’s about tackling systemic problems by collaborating with a group of organizations. In education reform, the strategy has proved successful, boosting the number of children adequately prepared for kindergarten, reading and math scores, and high school graduation rates.

exams. Students can also provide valuable insights into how we can design effective exam prep, what resources are needed, and what their peers' attitudes about the exam are—so that we can design and produce effective outreach materials. Finally, students can tell us the most important things they take into account when considering a high school; and what factors would stop them from applying.

What We Heard

While the students focused on a diverse range of issues, one of the leading areas of improvement is how schools can better communicate with students. Many of them shared stories of how guidance counselors are left in the dark about the SHSAT, and therefore cannot pass on the information to their students. If students don't hear about the test, they don't go out of their way to find out about the exam, or the schools.

Students considered the best way to reach out to parents and students alike, taking into consideration that sometimes students have to take the initiative to tell their parents about the exam. Some students shared stories of being first generation children and how, because of their parents' language barriers or even their immigration status, a lot of information about the SHSAT is miscommunicated.

To address the communication challenge, some students recommended taking a digital approach to education, by sending out links to PASSNYC's website and to other websites that contain information about the SHSAT, to parents and students. Others considered holding workshops or student-led fairs that families could attend in person

Collective Impact Boot Camp: Outreach Material Design Challenge

Student groups were directed to create three outputs, to encourage more students to sit for the SHSAT and to enroll at the specialized high schools:

Approach

- On a poster board, describe the approach (who, what, where, how, when) you would use to perform outreach regarding the specialized high schools and the SHSAT
- List the most important pieces of information to convey in SHS and SHSAT outreach

Infographic

- Design an outreach graphic to convey SHS and SHSAT information
- Describe your target audience
- Describe how you would present your SHS and SHSAT outreach graphic

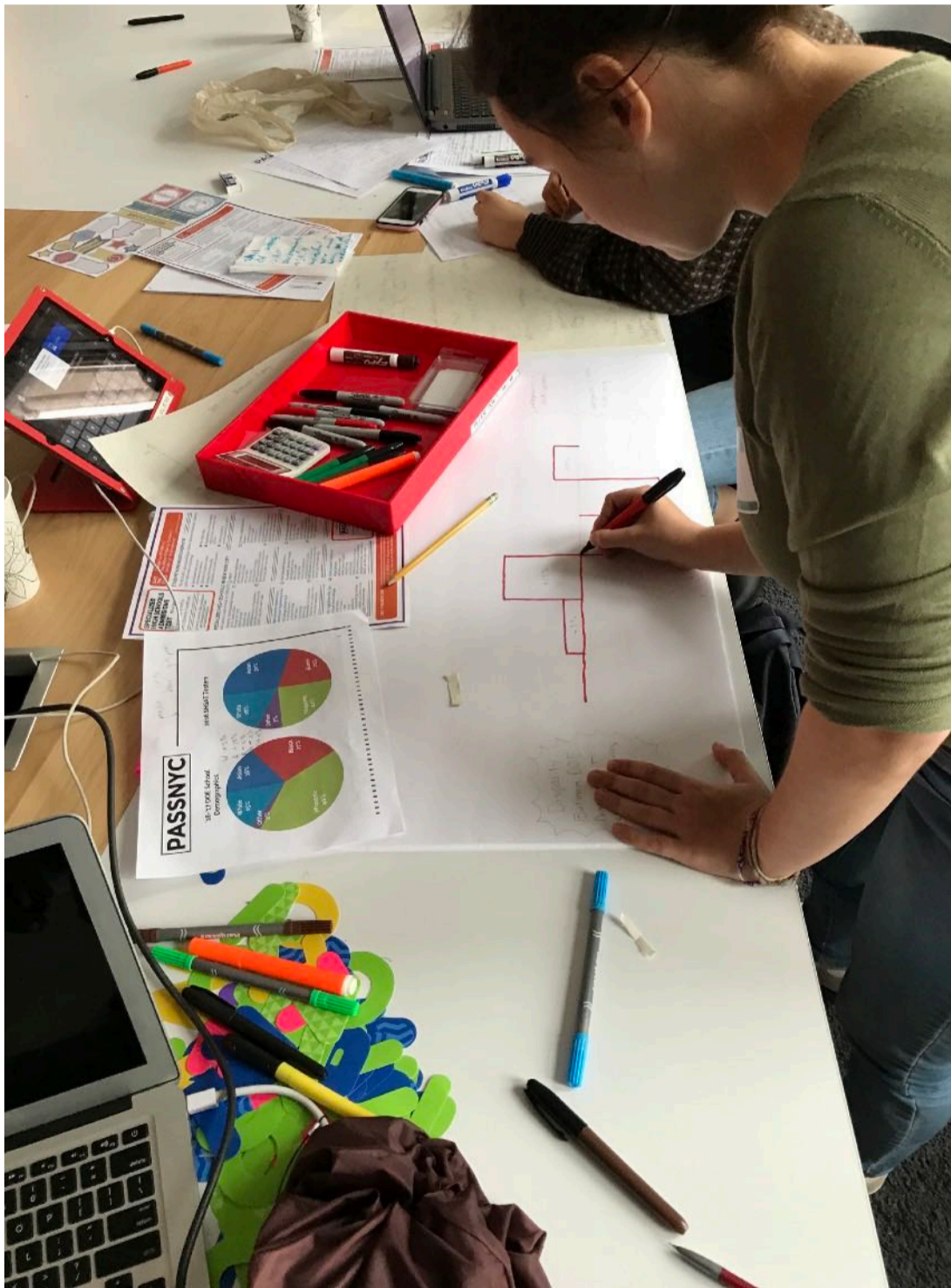
Call to Action Video

- Write a script for a 30 second Call to Action video that inspires kids to pursue the SHS and ends by presenting your outreach graphic
- Rehearse your 30 second Call to Action video
- Film call to action videos



to receive information about the SHSAT. Others still considered utilizing guidance counselors as a resource to educate families, but expressed concern that schools with large populations of underrepresented students are often understaffed.

Beyond communication, students also focused on how we can change the general negative feeling toward the SHSAT. Many issues stem from the views of the students themselves; if they are scared to fail or worried their friends would make fun of them, kids are unlikely to take the SHSAT or HCHS entrance exam. Schools can make the exam less intimidating by making preparatory resources easier to access so students feel more confident--and both schools and parents need to make it clear that not getting into a specialized high school isn't the end of the world!!



What We Heard: How would you make the specialized high schools more welcoming for all students?

Hire a more diverse faculty

"I would hire more teachers of color beyond just the foreign language department. There are currently **only two black teachers at Bronx Science** and I think that's unacceptable on a teaching faculty of over 120 people."

Make it easier and more transparent to prepare for the exam, with free test prep materials

"School sponsored test prep materials and outreach would be very helpful! I remember when I was thinking about applying for Hunter that they were very vague about what would be on the exam, and only offered a single sample test on their website. **This made me and my friends feel like on some level, Hunter wasn't really looking for students who couldn't afford getting prep materials...** I still wish that free, school sponsored materials were strongly promoted and widely available."

"There can also be a **tutoring system** where students from specialized high schools reach out to middle school students and give them first-hand tips for the SHSAT."

Give students a voice

"**Have students do the talking** and advocacy instead of administrators."

"As for students already in the schools, I think administration/student/parent communication is key. **Giving marginalized students a platform to speak not only to the administration, but also to other students** would be really helpful. Hunter does this by giving efficacy clubs, such as GSA (Gender and Sexuality Alliance), AACCS (African American Cultural Society), Project Diversity, and Feminist Future opportunities to hold assemblies and workshops for both teachers and students."

Connect students of color to alumni and each other, to provide better community support

“From an outsider perspective, these specialized high schools seem like Times-Square 42nd: **Thousands of people within 100 feet of you, but not a single person you can stop and become friends with**, without expending too much time and energy.”

“Helping students develop a network of current students and **alumni facing similar challenges** is invaluable. Facilitating the growth of clubs rooted in this and sponsoring networking events by communicating with alumni associations could be good techniques.”

“I think Diversity Open Houses are very helpful, but within the schools themselves, affinity groups for students of color can provide **spaces to discuss the challenges faced by underrepresented groups** within the school.”

Improve access for students with limitations, through more flexible scheduling and adding specialized schools throughout the City

“To make specialized High Schools more welcoming for all, I would try to **improve/increase the availability of transportation options or scheduling options** (such as a later schedule in which students start/end school 1 period later for the purpose of travel time).”

“**Extending the specialized label to more high schools** to encompass a larger number of locations and interests.”



Outreach Material Design Challenge: Student SHSAT Awareness Materials

See Summit highlights and all the student videos at <http://bit.ly/2q1m4QX>



Want to hear a secret?

...ask the students in our winning group. “There’s a school in New York City with over 20 PSAL sports!” “And another with a planetarium and an award-winning robotics team!” They sell the benefits of applying from a student perspective—emphasizing the diverse extracurricular activities. And to seal the deal, they show a “cheat sheet” of test dates and schools, showing that it’s not that hard to apply: “One day, one test, 8 schools!”



Why not take the test?

“We want you to take the SHSAT!” says our next group. They appeal to a wide range of student interests “from Latin to marine biology” and tell you exactly how to get more information--at the PASSNYC or DOE websites. “Success is different for everybody,” but why not take the test to see if the specialized schools are right for you?



What's so special about... the specialized high schools?

This group not only mentions the long list of activities and things you can do and learn at a specialized high school, but also the opportunities they'll open up later in life. Specialized high schools provide helpful college counseling and help you intern at interesting places like BuzzFeed. The bottom line is: "Specialized high schools are looking for special people like you!"



Guess who went to a specialized high school?

Do you know Lin-Manuel Miranda or Nicki Minaj? They both went to NYC's specialized high schools! Don't doubt yourself--Lin-Manuel and Nicki made it, so why shouldn't you take the test? The students in this group lay out the who, what, where, when, why, and how of taking the SHSAT, and close by saying "you risk nothing by taking the SHSAT... taking the test can only help you!"



What's our equation for success?

A stressed out student is studying for the SHSAT. A fellow student from Stuyvesant pops up and helps. As the two students get to work, two more appear with their equation for success: assembly + parents + guidance = success!



What students learned at the Summit:

After the conclusion of the Summit, we asked the students what they thought. Here's what they told us:

On the issues surrounding the SHSAT:

- "I was not the only one who had difficulties concerning the SHSAT and that there are an absurd number of barriers students face before they even learn about it. The system is inherently biased and that should and needs to change."

"Not all students feel prepared for the SHSAT they are left to fend for themselves."

"I learned a great deal about what the city is currently doing to combat this issue. The appointment of new officials to increase enrollment in minority neighborhoods, though commendable, seems like a band-aid solution to a much larger problem."

On Collective Impact:

- "I learned a lot about how to effectively coordinate community action!"
- "I learned the different perspectives and views of each student. WE all understand that a certain stigma comes from the guidance program in regards to specialized schools. All of us were able to deliver our ideas and build upon each others ideas effectively."

The students walked away with a novel understanding of the challenges their peers face when it comes to making their way through the complicated New York City school system, and the motivation to use collective impact techniques to help!



Appendix I: Student Materials - SHSAT Problems and Strategies

DISCOURAGE ENCOURAGE

PROBLEM #1
Active Discouragement of minority Students by school counselors
Solution: Opt out system for registration instead of opt in

Problem #2
Lack of general info: open houses, fairs, test dates, contacts, and location.
Solution: PassNYC flier "Cheat sheet" compact info on test dates, affordable prep, and open house events -> Info sessions

Problem #3
2 dimensional perception of schools
Solution: Student Reps from schools speaking w/ students/giving presentations for middle schoolers. Giving contact info to translators. Dissemination of resource material in multiple lang uages.

TEAM ONE

Sammie Paul, Adan Shaham, Lily Goldberg, Ilan Rodriguez

Team 3

Problems

- Wasn't prepared enough
- Didn't Have a chance
- Academic Resources
- Guidance didn't help
- Fear of starting at a new school
- Where friends are going
- Negative connotation (stress, too much work)
- Focus on "honor" students
- Lack of minorities (mostly asian & white)
- Parental support
- Peer support
- self Image

Address the Problem

1. Guidance counselors need to help individuals. Don't keep students in the dark.
2. School offer test prep; not just materials. Schools should look to partner.
3. NHS tutoring. Tutoring/mentorship from real students.
4. Parents need to be aware of schools, go to open houses, learn with the students

Group 3

THE J-CREW

OUR EXPERIENCES

Joselyn: flier in the mail, Schools are not providing information or preparation for the test!
 *had to do well on the state test
 ↳ issue that schools / students can not pass the first requirement to take tests
 *test prep, drive to succeed

Julien: parents -> dream program + practice book, dedication to studying ; great support, family went to Btech
Jody: 2nd generation, parents went to BxSci -> ms did not give info but studied on own

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? Brainstorm

1. LACK OF AWARENESS -> lack of info or help
 ↳ The schools do not properly equip the students to take the tests
 ↳ Parents do not know to help support their kids
2. Difficult to travel to specialized H.S
3. Motivation to study for the test
 ↳ difficult to dedicate yourself to study
4. THE TEST -> only based on one test
 ↳ still be merit based!
 ↳ Information is available in multiple languages
5. Information is available in multiple languages
6. Community, culture, outreach, priorities
 ↳ word of mouth, Prestige of the school
 ↳ education is a way to succeed in life (American Dream)
 ↳ if it suits the individual

1 CAUSE: Lack of Outreach/Awareness
 ↳ Middle schools do not provide information
 ↳ must find information by yourself, up to you to be proactive!

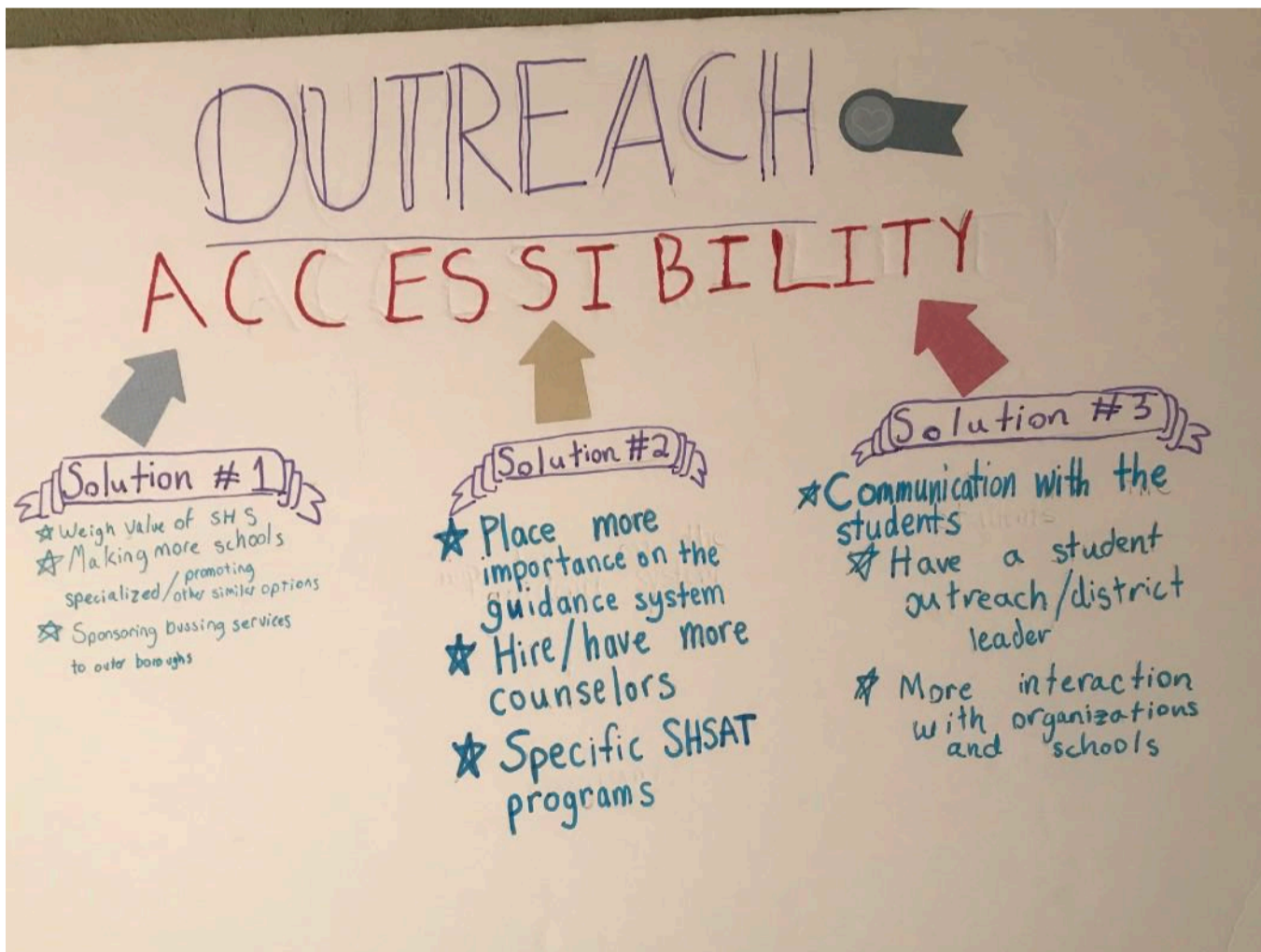
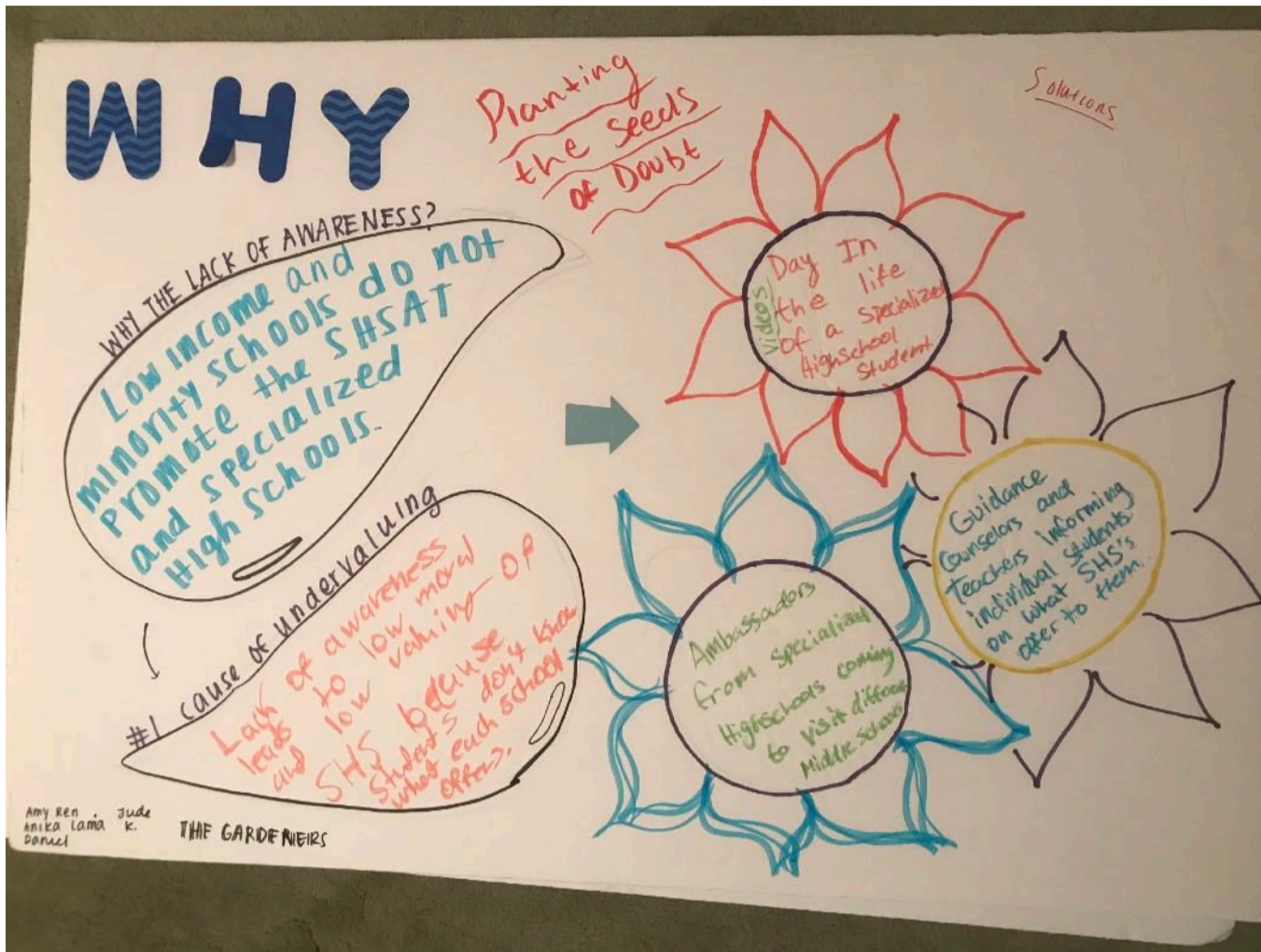
SOLUTIONS

1. Early preparation
2. Parents + students are involved in becoming educated
3. Students are motivated to want to take the tests - understand importance

→ STRATEGIES

1. Day in the life video of a specialized HS student.
 ↳ OR visuals/videos in general for info
 ↳ humanizes the SHS students
 ↳ "311" website about schools -> videos
 ↳ Day in life / school tour
 ↳ school opportunities
 ↳ SHSAT process to ease burden
2. SHS Ambassadors
 ↳ students from current SHS part of a program that returns to their local middle schools to promote SHS.
 ↳ school expos where reps from each specialized HS explains their HS
3. Teacher and guidance counselor workshops
 ↳ SHSAT info provided as part of the curriculum.
 ↳ city funded seminars to teach
 ↳ "Faculty Academy"

Appendix I: Student Materials - SHSAT Problems and Strategies



Appendix I: Student Materials - SHSAT "Cheat Sheets"

SHSAT CHEAT SHEET

What is the SHSAT?

- The SHSAT is

Are open houses & fairs important?

- Yes!

How Do I sign up?

- Guidance counselor etc.
- Reiterate Dates

Important Dates!

- Citywide H.S. Fair date
- Borough Fair Date
- Deadline to sign up

FAQ!

- Why is this worth it?
- Specialized vs. Zone
- How can I learn more?
- College Prep?

How Do I Prepare?

- Affordable Prep

Stuy H.S. - Manhattan

- Address
- at Aps
- Free or sparse
- Edges or SHSAT
- middle school
- open house
- Debs
- Picture of school
- Map to location

Brooklyn Latin - Brooklyn

- see here

Brooklyn Tech H.S. - Brooklyn

- see here

Bronx H.S. of Science - Bronx

- see here

H.S. of American Studies at Lehman - Bronx

- see here

Queens H.S. for the Sciences - Queens

- see here

Staten Island Tech H.S. - Staten Island

- see here

LAG - Manhattan

Who? What? When? Where? Why?

- Who?** Lower income students, minorities and their school officials
- What?** School of socials identifying students who have the potential to benefit from the SHS program
- When?** End of Elementary School / Beginning of Middle School
- Where?** Lower income neighborhoods
- Why?** To increase diversity in SHS so that other minority students know that they can get in

HOW?

- Afterschool programs geared towards SHSAT prep.
- Workshops and tutorials for parents and teachers
- Pamphlets and booklets to send students home with.
- Guidance counselors can attend workshops to learn how to help kids who can benefit from taking the test.

Disparity Between DOE Demographics + SHSAT Test Takers ('16-'17)

SHSAT GUIDELINES

"Equality through Knowledge"

THE ISSUE

"New York City children tend to go to school in one of the country's most radically segregated systems." - Elizabeth Harris, NYT

- Many communities are not equipped to take the SHSAT. But why?
- Lack of awareness and opportunities to know about Specialized High Schools and the process.

THE SOLUTION

Standard guidelines that are given to every middle school to ensure that everyone is receiving the same information and support.

Assembly	Infographic	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Info given to 7th graders in the winter Parents are informed through flyers @ meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistics from middle schools when did they learn about the test how they prepared + for how long pie chart + pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the test? What is in the test? Practice tests Strategies Advantages Anecdotes

Additional Outreach:

Students from Specialized high schools visit middle schools to discuss the process, help students taking the test and address any concerns.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW: SPECIALIZED HIGH SCHOOLS NYC

STUYVESANT	HSMSE: HIGH SCHOOL OF MATH, SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCALATOR Pool and 4 Gyms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specializes in 3 specific fields Math Research at Mt. Sinai Engineering
BROOKLYN TECHNICAL	BROOKLYN LATIN
view example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a specialized classical education (Study of Greek and Latin) Provide a foundation for an understanding with our society
BRONX SCIENCE	HS OF AMERICAN STUDIES AT LEHMAN COLLEGE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students have access to Lehman Colleges facilities Offers free college courses at Lehman college starting in 11th grade Strong college advisory
QUEENS HS FOR THE SCIENCES AT YORK COLLEGE	STATEN ISLAND TECHNICAL HS
view ex.	view ex.
LAGUARDIA HS OF ARTS	CRASH COURSE SHSAT EDITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specializes in teaching music, art and the performing arts Does not use SHSAT scores for admission; applicants must participate in a separate audition at the school. Offers gender neutral bathrooms 	<p>SHSAT 2017 TEST DATE: _____</p> <p>REGISTRATION DATES: _____</p> <p>where do I register? _____</p> <p>how can I prepare? _____</p> <p>WEBSITE: _____</p>