2021-2022 Volunteer Resource Guide

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Welcome from PENCIL's President

To Our Volunteers:

Now more than ever, I want to THANK YOU for your commitment to volunteering with PENCIL during the 2021-2022 school year. The challenges students and schools faced throughout the COVID pandemic have made a lasting impact on how schools approach teaching and learning, as well as how students think about the future. As students return to school for the first time in over 18 months, your contributions are more important than ever. Students are looking to you for inspiration and guidance as they look ahead to college, internships, and their careers.

PENCIL's mission relies on our volunteers to provide public schools and students access to the talent and opportunities they so desperately need. Over the last 25 years, PENCIL has connected over 35,000 students to success by building partnerships that bring together business professionals and students across NYC.

In collaboration with tens of thousands of volunteers like you, PENCIL is working to connect another **50,000 students to success by 2023**. Through our innovative programming, we are opening minds, opening eyes, and opening doors for thousands of New York City's underserved youth.

Your contributions will help change lives. We are grateful and excited to have you on the PENCIL team!

We know you will gain as much from this experience as you contribute to our schools and students, and we thank you for your dedication to strengthening the city's public schools and putting students on the path to future success.

From all of us at PENCIL, thank you again!

Best,

Gregg Betheil
President

P.S. – We look forward to hearing about your PENCIL story along the way. Keep in touch!

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Visit our website at pencil.org

About PENCIL

PENCIL is a New York City-based nonprofit making it easy for business professionals, educators and students to work together—in schools and the workplace. Our hands-on programs, including in-school partnerships, mentoring, internships, and immersive experiences like Principal For A Day®, create targeted opportunities to make a real difference in the classroom and beyond. New York City schools are filled with students who have potential and ambition to go far and we envision a city filled with students whose opportunities match their ambitions. Since 1995, PENCIL has played a critical role in bringing together partners, educators, and students to open eyes, open minds, and open doors. By doing so, we connect students to success. Learn more at www.pencil.org.

Core Programs

School Partnership Program: PENCIL connects business and school leaders to leverage their collective energies and foster stronger schools, and to prepare students for college and career success. PENCIL serves as a critical liaison in these partnerships, providing hands-on support in the design, implementation, and evaluation of activities.

Internship Programs: PENCIL, in collaboration with the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, facilitated a diverse array of programming as part of the Ladders for Leaders program. This work included remote and in-person internships, Career Explorers, and a new collaboration with Tech NYC. These programs responded to the unique impacts of COVID 19 and provided nearly 400 high school and college students paid summer internships, work-based learning opportunities, and career readiness and professional skills development training.

Points of Engagement: PENCIL offers single-day, student-centered volunteer events for groups of corporate employees. Each tailored engagement provides a new opportunity to increase college and career readiness skills through activities such as mock interviewing, professional networking, and personal branding.

PENCIL Program Stats 2020-2021 School Year

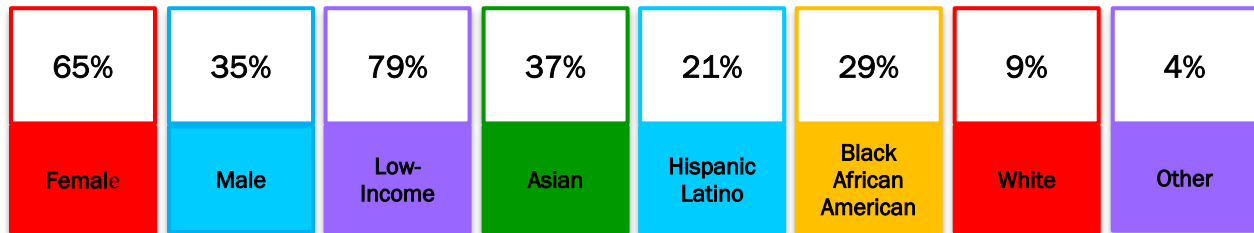| 2,127 students Engaged in Open Source & Partnership Program	892 Students Engaged in Internship Programs	1,098 Volunteers Prepped Students for College & Careers	177 Businesses Partnered with PENCIL

PENCIL's programs reflect a population as diverse as the New York City public schools. Students represented all five boroughs and ranged in age from 7 to 22 with the majority in high school. PENCIL students represented the following demographics:

65%	35%	79%	37%	21%	29%	9%	4%
Female	Male	Low-Income	Asian	Hispanic Latino	Black African American	White	Other

This diverse group of young people experienced significant outcomes from PENCIL's work. One year of PENCIL programming has seen the following outcomes:

- **93%** of students in PENCIL Partnerships reported PENCIL connected me with professionals whom I would not meet otherwise.
- **94%** of students in PENCIL Partnerships reported PENCIL helped me develop the skills essential for my growth and success.
- **96%** of students participating in PENCIL Open Source Sessions reported today's session helped me think about my future aspirations.
- Over **95%** of students participating in PENCIL Internship Training reported sessions helped them understand what to expect in a remote internship and gain confidence in their ability to manage projects this summer.
- Business volunteers report PENCIL helped me feel connected to the community.
  - **100%** report PENCIL connected me with students I would not otherwise meet
  - **98%** report PENCIL created opportunities for me to support the development of skills students needed for success
  - **98%** report PENCIL allowed me to work with colleagues in new and meaningful ways.

Impacts of COVID-19 on Students and Learning

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic and societal effects have had a significant impact on students and their learning. A recent report by McKinsey Associates found the impact of the pandemic on K–12 student learning was significant

- Students are on average five months behind in mathematics and four months behind in reading by the end of the school year.
- The pandemic widened preexisting opportunity and achievement gaps, hitting historically disadvantaged students hardest.
- High schoolers have become more likely to drop out of school, and high school seniors, especially those from low-income families, are less likely to go on to postsecondary education.

Students have felt the impact not just on academics but also their broader health and well-being. More than 35 percent of parents are very or extremely concerned about their children's mental health[1].

PENCIL Principals have shared their concerns around student learning loss and mental well-being, as well as the need to reestablish the routines and norms that structure the school day. As we look to the fall, schools will be focused on helping students reacclimate to the classroom and rediscover the rhythm of the school day. They will also be thinking about how students can find connections with peers an staff, as well as with adults who can inspire them to think about college and their career with renewed hope and confidence that they can achieve their goals.

COVID-19 Precautions in New York City Public Schools

As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, in March of 2020, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) was forced to close all New York City public schools and transition to 100% remote instruction for all students. After 18 months of primarily remote learning, the 2021-2022 began with all students retuning to full time in person learning.

The NYC Department of Education has implemented a number of safety measures to ensure the health and safety of all students and staff. These measures include mandatory masking, weekly testing for unvaccinated students, improved ventilation, and vaccination requirements. The NYC Department of Education has also offered guidance for schools on when to ask students to quarantine and when to institute classroom closures to address COVID-19 cases throughout the year. Volunteers may learn more about the safety protocols implemented by the NYC Department of Education on their website: schools.nyc.gov.

To ensure the safety of our students, school staff, and volunteers, **all PENCIL programming will remain virtual through the Fall**. The PENCIL team will monitor guidance from public health officials and feedback from our school and business partners throughout the Fall to determine if it will be possible to offer in person programs in the spring.

As we prepare for a return to in person programming later this school year, PENCIL will remain in compliance with all health and safety guidelines, as well as orders by the NYC Board of Health.

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[1] https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-education-the-lingering-effects-of-unfinished-learning

PENCIL Partnership Roles and Expectations

Business Volunteer Role and Expectations

Each Team of Business Volunteers is comprised of a Team Lead and additional supporting volunteers. The team lead will work closely with PENCIL and the school to:

1. Coordinate logistics and troubleshoot technology issues including those related to firewalls and other company imposed restrictions.
2. Recruit volunteers and ensure all are properly registered prior to partnership sessions.
3. Support planning and preparation of sessions, including choosing session topics, providing industry specific expertise to adapt materials, and identifying co-facilitators and speakers.
4. Work closely with the PENCIL Program Manager to ensure all volunteers are prepared for each session by:
   o Sharing session times, log-in information, and other logistical information
   o Ensuring all volunteers have received and reviewed all session materials, agendas, and expectations for participation
   o Addressing any issues is volunteer engagement including low turn out or lack of presence in the meeting (camera off, stepping away, taking calls, etc)

School Role and Expectations

Each school has a designated liaison which will work closely with PENCIL and the Business Partner to:

5. Coordinate logistics and troubleshoot technology issues.
6. Manage student behavior and expectations for participation.
7. Attend all sessions and actively participate in the program.
8. Share information about changes impacting the students or school.

PENCIL Program Manager's Roles and Expectations

9. Establishment of structured goals and a plan to guide implementation.
10. Distribution of materials aligned to Partnership goals.
11. Regular monitoring of partnership activities to track progress and proactively address concerns.
12. Provide volunteer recruitment, orientation, and training support.
13. Facilitate all planning and preparation activities throughout implementation.

By embracing these expectations, PENCIL Business Volunteers, School Partners, and students can come together to create learning experiences that benefit all participants and connect students to success.

Supporting Effective Partnerships in Remote Learning

10 Best Practices for a Strong Partnerships

1. **Consistency :** Your attendance is very important. Students' commitment will increase as they build relationships with you. Even though the students will enjoy the activities and content, you are often one of the key reasons that they will consistently attend and retain information from the program.

2. **Clear Expectations:** Set guidelines and discuss whole group expectations for virtual partnership work. Just like in-person learning, a predictable structure can do wonders for building community and makes all participants feel stable and less anxious.

3. **Schedule:** Students are used to a regular schedule of learning. Meeting on a regular basis, at the same time, will both create stability and encourage student buy-in and engaged participation.

4. **Preparation:** Prior to each session, volunteers should check their tech capabilities and review materials to understand their role and prepare relevant examples to share.

5. **Tools:** Zoom offers a number of tools to communicate with students when not speaking on camera. Volunteers are encouraged to take advantage of the chat and the reaction features throughout their sessions to keep the environment engaging for students and help build the interpersonal connections that lead to stronger outcomes. Partnerships may utilize additional tools for communication and/or collaboration to connect and deepen relationships at a distance. However, supplemental tools should be complimentary and used consistently.

6. **Engagement:** Students may feel disengaged and disconnected after a prolonged period of remote learning. Volunteers can help build connections with students by turning their camera on, actively listening, and enthusiastically participating during the sessions. Students will often look to you to set the tone and to start the conversation. Lead by example.

7. **Limit Distractions**: Avoid checking your email and working on things not related to the session. Mute yourself and/or turn off your camera if you need to handle an urgent situation. Students notice if you are distracted and will likely follow your lead.

8. **Be Open:** Share your personal story and find relevant connections to the students. Be honest when sharing your own experiences but also be cognizant of where the students are coming from. Adopt an open and supportive mindset and practice empathy as you get to know the students.

9. **Engage and Heed Student Voice:** Prioritize time for students to reflect on their feelings as participants in the partnership and to lead the conversation whenever possible.

10. **Embrace Diversity:** PENCIL students represent the spectrum of races, ethnicities, genders, abilities, backgrounds, and experiences that make New York City schools so unique. Come to sessions ready to meet students as individuals, and to learn from them as they learn from you.

Tools for Student Engagement in the Remote Environment

In the remote environment, many students may choose to keep their camera off. Unless the school requires cameras to be on, PENCIL allows students to decide if and when they use their camera. The loss of the nonverbal cues we typically rely upon – smiles, nods, quizzical looks – can feel a bit strange. It is also much easier for students to become distracted or not fully participate in partnership sessions. To re-establish some of that communication, PENCIL utilizes the following tools:

- **Polls:** PENCIL uses polls throughout our sessions to create opportunities for students to share their preference, to give feedback, or to test their knowledge. Students can see how peers responded to the same question and discuss surprising results.

- **Respond with Emojis/Characters:** Post a multiple-choice question on the screen and designate each answer with an emoji or character. Ask students to reply with the emoji/character in the chat.

- **Be All In for Icebreakers:** Students are dealing with competing priorities; volunteers who are active and engaged is fun and a great way to build a positive connection from a distance.

- **Sweat the Small Talk:** Engage students in conversation, tell them what you have done, or will do that day. Be sure to be an active listener and encourage the student(s) to share too.

- **Flood the Chat:** Ask students a question and set a timer. Ask them to enter their answer only after the timer has sounded. This will create a "flood" of responses in the chat at once.

- **Virtual Turn & Talk:** Depending on your meeting platform and what it supports, you can create fun conditions for students to message peers with an answer to a question. For example, you can have students message the student above/below them on the participant lists or to the left/right on the grid view of screens..

PENCIL's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

PENCIL was established with the belief that business leaders have a responsibility and privilege to support public education and help create a system where all students have access to opportunities. For 25 years, PENCIL has served students in the NYC public school system who today are overwhelmingly working-class or low-income and identify as Black and Brown. Every day, we see how systemic racism has severely limited access to opportunities for these students. PENCIL's mission is to connect students to success and close this opportunity gap. We do this by building partnerships that bring together business professionals and students from across NYC. In doing so, our work is designed to Open Eyes, Open Minds, and Open Doors for both the students and the business community—two groups that do not often share the same economic, cultural, or societal experiences. Together, we must stand in unity, raise our voice, and do our part to fight for a more just and equitable world.

Tips to Foster Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Classroom

PENCIL is committed to creating a learning environment where all individuals regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and or socio-economic status are welcomed. It is the responsibility of PENCIL staff, our school partners, and our business volunteers to deliver programing that is responsive to students needs and reflective and respectful of students' lived experiences. To ensure you are supporting and promoting the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion when working with students:

Self-awareness: It is critical that each of us recognizes the how the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, and being able-bodied impact us individually and gives us privilege in certain spaces. We must remain open to actively listening to those who experience life differently because of their social groupings. We must acknowledge our personal biases and seek to understand people with different experiences

Identify commonalities: Finding a point of shared interests or experiences can create a strong point of connection with students and act as a starting point to develop a deeper and more authentic relationship.

Get to know students as individuals: Avoid embracing your assumptions about student interests or experiences. Curiosity about the student experience and insight can truly open a path of understanding.

Be willing to address inequality: While these conversations may feel uncomfortable, they are part of students' lived experiences and will impact them as they move forward in college and their careers. Discussing these issues, gives students a variety of perspectives, validates their experiences, and helps them to develop tools to address inequity in the future.

Be thoughtful about language. Focus on language that promotes positivity and doesn't reinforce existing stereotypes. Use asset-focused language and shut down discrimination whenever you hear it.

Diversity in volunteers. Representation matters. When recruiting your volunteer group, be thoughtful about representation across race, gender, and sexual orientation. Also give consideration to diversity in roles, career pathway, and educational background.

Guidelines for Achieving Bias-Free Communication[2]

1. Be aware of words, images and situations that suggest that all/most members of a group are the same.

Stereotypes often lead to assumptions that are unsupportable and offensive. [*Example:* The writer who describes Mexican children as "well-dressed" may be unconsciously portraying this as an exception to a mental image of a "poor" or "unkempt" Mexican.]

2. Avoid qualifiers that reinforce stereotypes.

A qualifier is added information that suggests what is being said is an exception to what is expected. [*Examples:* "A group of intelligent black students were guests as part of the orientation program." A helpful test is to consider whether a member of the majority population is likely to be described in the same way; i.e. "the intelligent white students."]

3. Identify people by identity characteristics only when relevant.

Very few situations require such identification. [*Example:* If this identification is inappropriate, "Michael Bloomberg, noted heterosexual mayor of New York," is this phrasing any different: "twenty-two House Democrats, led by gay Democratic Representative Barney Frank . . .?"]

4. Be aware of language that, to some people, has questionable racial or ethnic connotations.

While a word or phrase may not be personally offensive to you, it may be to others. [*Examples:* Culturally deprived or culturally disadvantaged. These terms imply superiority of one culture over another. People so labeled are often bicultural and bilingual. Non-white – this word implies that white is the standard. In North American language, similar phrases such as "non-black" or "non-yellow" do not exist. Minority—this word is accurate in North America; however, its use ignores the fact that people of color comprise the majority of the world's population (and may comprise the majority of one's immediate locale).]

5. Be aware of the possible negative implications of color symbolic words.

Choose language and usage that do not offend people or reinforce bias. In some instances, black and yellow have become associated with the undesirable or negative. [*Examples:* "black reputation" and "yellow coward"]

6. Avoid patronizing language and tokenism toward any racial or ethnic group.

[*Example:* Once-a-year articles or special editions about a particular group may be interpreted as cultural tokenism, especially when such a group constitutes a large part of your community. This approach may suggest that that racial or ethnic group is out of the mainstream.]

7. Substitute substantive information for ethnic clichés.

Don't let ethnic clichés substitute for in-depth information. [*Example:* A person of Spanish heritage might prefer to be asked about family history or political experiences than about fiestas.]

8. Review media to see if all groups are fairly represented.

[*Examples:* Are persons portrayed in positions of authority almost invariably white? Does your media provide racial and ethnic role models?

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How should I prepare for a session?

A: Your PENCIL Program Manager will share all materials and any specific instructions before each session. In addition, you may want to:

- Test your technology, follow the log-in instructions, and make sure you can log onto the proper platform. See the Ring Central User Guide if you will be utilizing Ring Central for your session. Notify your PENCIL Program Manager if there are any major issues.

- Create a professional setting. Students look to you to set an example. Check that your background is professional, and you are able to participate in the session without any major distractions.

- Understand your role. Review any materials the volunteer lead/Program Manager shares with you, send PENCIL any requested information, and know your responsibilities during the session.

Q: What should I expect during a typical session?

A: The typical structure of a Partnership session is as follows:

- Introduction – Participants are welcomed and re-introduced, session norms are set, and the session topic is presented.
- Energize – Participants participate in an engaging activity that previews the session topic.
- Share – Facilitator introduces new material and volunteers share relevant examples.
- Engage – Students practice new skills and receive volunteer coaching.
- Reflect – Facilitator leads conversation to conclude the conversation.
- Close – Next steps are shared.

Q: What if I am experiencing technology issues before or during a session?

A: Please contact your PENCIL Program Manager and volunteer lead immediately. Other common solutions:

- Company firewalls block certain platforms - you may need to connect with your company IT team to check your company's security restrictions or use a personal device to log onto the session.
- You can also refer to the Zoom User Guide.
- When in doubt - log off the platform and on again to reestablish connection.

Q: What if a student shares information or asks for advice on a topic I am uncomfortable with?

A: When in doubt, always notify PENCIL and/or school staff right away. Please use discretion and protect the student's privacy if the information seems confidential/alarming in nature. In the moment, you can say to a student *"Thank you for sharing with me. I appreciate your opinion/point of view/story. However, I don't feel qualified/comfortable answering that question. Perhaps SCHOOL STAFF can help you"*.

Q: The students are really quiet during sessions. How can I get them talking?

A: Students will talk more as they get to know you and build a trusting relationship. To support that process

- Attend sessions consistently to create a strong foundation with students.
- Introduce yourself and initiate small talk. Sports, books, tv shows, or shared experiences like their interests/hobbies in quarantine are all appropriate topics.
- Ask students about their college and career interests and make connections to your own experience.
- For additional ideas, review the Best Practices for Working with Students section.

Q: Should I be talking more or should the students?

A: Sharing your experiences and being an active listener are both necessary to help students make meaningful connections. To optimize your active listening:

- Avoid lecturing. Build-in questions to encourage student participation. It is okay to ask specific students to share ideas or feedback.
- Acknowledge students' responses. Thank them for sharing, identify places of agreement or new ideas. Ask if other students had a similar opinion or thought otherwise.
- Allow time for students to process and respond to questions. Remote learning can cause lags in connection and slower response times. You can put questions in the chat a few minutes before you will ask for a response to allow students time to prepare.

Q: What if a student seems unmotivated, shy, or disengaged?

A: Students are experiencing higher degrees of stress as they cope with the difficulties of remote learning. It is difficult to open up to strangers using unfamiliar technology, so be mindful of their situations and maintain a kind and positive attitude. To encourage student participation:

- Give compliments often and encourage students to push themselves.
- Engage heavily in small talk. In a virtual setting, it takes more time to build a connection.
- Smile, remain upbeat, and exercise patience as you wait for students to respond.

PENCIL Policies

PENCIL Participant Conduct Expectations: To ensure the safety of all students, school staff and business volunteers engaged in PENCIL program activities including the Partnership Program, Points of Engagement, Internship trainings and all other volunteer events, participants are asked to adhere to the policies described below:

- Business Volunteers must maintain the confidentiality of all personal or proprietary information to which they are exposed as a volunteer, regardless of the subject matter of such information. This includes, but is not limited to, the names, locations, or images of students they encounter through their work with PENCIL.

- Business Volunteers may never be alone with a student or engage in any unsupervised contact with students, including in person, phone, video or other electronic communications.

- PENCIL and/or school staff will be included on all authorized exchanges between Business Volunteers and students.

- Business Volunteers are prohibited from engaging with students outside of PENCIL Programmatic activities without PENCIL or school supervision. This includes times directly surrounding an activity.

- Business Volunteers are expected to serve in a respectful, professional, and cooperative manner. While working with PENCIL, school staff and Business Volunteers must not engage in the following:

  o Discriminatory, derogatory, racist, or homophobic statements or behaviors.

  o Sexual harassment, for example, jokes, innuendos, insults, sexist remarks, the display of derogatory or pornographic pictures, leering, touching, or kissing.

  o The use of any alcohol or illegal drugs.

  o Any unlawful or inappropriate activity.

- In order to ensure the safety of students in PENCIL programs, PENCIL will conduct an annual search of the New York State Public Registry of Sex Offenders for all Business Volunteers. Therefore, PENCIL asks Business Volunteers to furnish certain participant information (e.g., name, zip code) before they engage in volunteer activities. PENCIL will use that information to conduct a search of the New York State Public Registry of Sex Offenders. If you are a volunteer and have questions or concerns, please contact Gregg Betheil at gbetheil@pencil.org for more information.

- Business Volunteers may not use their participation in PENCIL program activities to promote partisan politics, religious matters, or other affiliations.

PENCIL takes all complaints of misconduct seriously and will take steps to investigate any student or volunteer allegations. Should PENCIL receive a complaint from a student, volunteer, or school staff:

- Volunteers and/or students involved in allegations of misconduct are subject to immediate suspension and possible dismissal from the program

- PENCIL will inform appropriate school staff and the appropriate Company contact of any allegations.

- PENCIL will comply with existing Department of Education policies and procedures for addressing inappropriate behavior or misconduct.

- PENCIL staff will document all conversations and retain emails throughout this process.

Your PENCIL Team

Program Manager – Maia Krivoruk
As your designated program manager, Maia is the liaison between the school and business. She will schedule, plan, and facilitate sessions and is your primary resource for any questions. Maia was a Team Leader with AmeriCorps and, prior to joining PENCIL, was a Residential Counselor at a group home for first generation Latino high school males in Phoenix, Arizona.

✉ mkrivoruk@pencil.org   ☏ 646.638.6429

Program Manager – Clair Oblamski
As your designated program manager, Clair is the liaison between the school and business. She will schedule, plan, and facilitate sessions and is your primary resource for any questions. Prior to joining PENCIL, Clair worked for the City Parks Foundation in their education department as the program manager of a STEM-based afterschool program.

✉ coblamski@pencil.org   ☏ 646.638.6422

Program Manager – Hannah Chan
As your designated program manager, Hannah is the liaison between the school and business. She will schedule, plan, and facilitate sessions and is your primary resource for any questions. Hannah brings her experience teaching English abroad and as an elementary school teacher specializing in ESL at a bilingual school in New Jersey

✉ hchan@pencil.org   ☏ 212.524.2395

Program Manager – Rashida Thomas
As your designated program manager, Rashida is the liaison between the school and business. She will schedule, plan, and facilitate sessions and is your primary resource for any questions. Rashida brings her passion for experiential education, and connecting youth and the under-served to opportunities.

✉ rthomas@pencil.org   ☏ 646.638.6427

Associate Director Of Programs – Devaughn Fowlkes
As Associate Director of Programs, Devaughn oversees implementation of all PENCIL Partnerships, and works closely with Program managers to ensure the work is beneficial for schools and businesses, and sessions are impactful for students. Devaughn is available to address any issues that may arise. Devaughn has led successful college and career readiness programs at Harlem CHildrens Zone and breakthrough New York.

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Senior Program Officer – Katje King

Katje is a veteran at PENCIL. As a product of NYC Public Schools, she has dedicated her career to serving the city's youth in various capacities and positions. In her current role, she is responsible for overseeing all college and career initiatives including the partnership and internship programs.

✉ kking@pencil.org ☏ 212.524.2382

Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer – Jessica Bynoe

As a native New Yorker, Jessica has served her city in various executive leadership roles for youth non-profits. She is internationally recognized for her expertise on youth development, civic engagement, and strategic philanthropy. As the chief strategy officer at PENCIL, Jessica oversees PENCIL's portfolio of innovative and impactful models of ongoing collaboration between business and public schools.

✉ jbynoe@pencil.org ☏ 646.638.6426

President – Gregg Betheil

Gregg Betheil brings over 20 years of experience working at the intersection of school needs and business. As president of PENCIL, Gregg brings together the best ideas, talent, and resources across sectors to improve public school performance and enhance workforce pathways.

✉ gbetheil@pencil.org ☏ 212.524.2389

Thank you again for volunteering with us!

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Additional Resources and Programs

PENCIL Theory of Change

PENCIL brings together business partners and educators to develop strategies that disrupt current college and career readiness outcomes. Through relationship management, curriculum resources, volunteer engagement, program facilitation, evaluation, and refinement, PENCIL makes it easy for businesses to work with schools to connect students to success. Click here to see PENCIL's Theory of Change.

Programs to Support Partnership Work

Partnership sessions will take place on Zoom, Google Meets, Teams or other platforms as recommended by the school. Your partnership may explore incorporating other resources that can bring new options for creativity, collaboration, and connection in the remote environment.

- **Offline Challenges:** Dependent on the topic, challenge the student to take an extra step (i.e. read and summarize two content-related articles). This practice will deepen the learning. Volunteers, be sure to check in with students about the challenge at the next session.

- **Furnish the Fun:** FlipGrid is a tool to aid in keeping the magic alive in a distance learning classroom. Dependent on the needs of your partnership it's possible to: create fun, creative discussion or task prompts, create and share videos accessible to your partnership to model the behaviors/ topics discussed in a session, and allow students to record clips to show what they learned, as well as to give feedback through the tool.

- **Chat on another level:** Padlet is a virtual chart where students and volunteers can add sticky notes, graphics, videos, hyperlinks, drawings, and even voice recordings.

- **Get Creative:** Collaborating on or showing off a creative digital learning project provides an opportunity for students and volunteers to connect by showing off personalities and creations together through digital platforms. Find an editable template here FREE and editable Creativity Choice Board.

- **Podcast Pals:** Spark or deepen a shared interest by listening to podcasts. A list of student-friendly productions and many reasons why students and volunteers should tune in can be found at https://buildingbooklove.com/podcastsintheclassroom

Anti-Bias Education: The Power of Social-Emotional Learning

How is social and emotional learning (SEL)...connected with anti-bias education? If we want to help young people understand bias and work on social justice, what does SEL bring to the table?

According to Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), social and emotional learning is "the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions."

Read More

Becoming an Active Listener[3]

There are five key active listening techniques you can use to help you become a more effective listener:

1. Pay Attention: Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message. Recognize that non-verbal communication also "speaks" loudly.

- Look at the speaker directly.
- Put aside distracting thoughts.
- Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal!
- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors. For example, side conversations.
- "Listen" to the speaker's body language .

2. Show That You're Listening: Use your own body language and gestures to show that you are engaged.

- Nod occasionally.
- Smile and use other facial expressions.
- Make sure that your posture is open and interested.
- Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes, and "uh huh."

3. Provide Feedback: Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect on what is being said and to ask questions.

- Reflect on what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is... ," and "Sounds like you are saying... ," are great ways to reflect back.
- Ask questions to clarify certain points. "What do you mean when you say... ." "Is this what you mean?"
- Summarize the speaker's comments periodically.

4. Defer Judgment: Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.

- Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions.
- Don't interrupt with counter arguments.

5. Respond Appropriately: Active listening is designed to encourage respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective and add nothing by attacking the speaker or putting them down.

- Be candid, open and honest in your response.
- Assert your opinions respectfully.
- Treat the other person in a way that you think they would want to be treated.

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[3] https://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm