MICROSOCIETY

MicroSociety, Inc.

The *MicroSociety* model provides students with real-life learning opportunities through the creation and operation of miniature societies within the school.

Scan QR code with your phone's camera to access this content online.

OVERVIEW

The *MicroSociety* model is an interdisciplinary, project-based model that empowers students to develop into leaders, entrepreneurs, creative forces, and confident citizens. Students create their own world inside school and assume a wide variety of leadership and citizenship roles.

Students self-select societal jobs in for-profit ventures, government agencies, or nonprofit organizations and are encouraged to design and manufacture products and create services, sell them in their own marketplace of ideas, write and enforce their own laws, and along the way grapple with the moral and ethical challenges that arise. Through *MicroSociety*, young citizens learn the value and utility of their academic knowledge and skills while making sense of their world.

MicroSociety offers an innovative learning laboratory in which students take ownership of their learning, experimenting with content-area skills, ways of thinking, and habits of mind that present themselves in increasing degrees of complexity and sophistication to match the students' developmental needs.

Schools interested in *MicroSociety* can join a network of 100+ schools in 5 countries and 20 U.S. states. MicroSociety Inc. (MSI) offers adopting schools curriculum and professional learning to support implementation of the model. ▶The Story of MicroSociety 📄Micro Brochure 2024

What Makes This Model Innovative?

Relevance

MicroSociety students apply skills and knowledge learned in the classroom and on the job; seeing the relevance of classroom lessons increases their investment in learning.

Active Self-Direction

MicroSociety students run organizations, choose jobs, earn and invest school currency, and settle disputes. With practice, they gain competence and confidence.

Social Responsibility & Action

MicroSociety students explore, think about, and contribute to their society as a whole, identifying societal issues and seeking solutions to them.

DESIGN

Goals

MicroSociety motivates children to learn and succeed by engaging them in a world that makes classroom lessons relevant and connects them to their communities, real life, and the future.

Voice & Choice	Students take charge and become producers, creators, contributors, and decision-makers with authentic opportunities to do meaningful work, make wise choices, and advocate for themselves and what they believe.
Entrepreneurial Thinking	Students launch businesses and nonprofits and learn skills needed to thrive in career and life.
Civic Engagement	Students learn the value of effective leadership, empathy, respect for others, and the importance of being a responsible citizen. *MicroSociety* gives them a community and a place to belong where they are valued for what they each contribute.
Academic Growth & Achievement	Students apply what they're learning in content classes to authentic, real-world experiences, thus internalizing that knowledge.

Experience

In the *MicroSociety* model, students create a microcosm of the macro world inside their school for one period a day. They create goods and services, elect officials, establish laws, and arbitrate disputes. All citizens earn wages in the school's currency, invest in product ideas, deposit and borrow money from "micro" banks, and pay taxes, tuition, and rent.

MicroSociety's real-world experiences provide a meaningful rationale for classroom learning. During core classes, each *MicroSociety* citizen builds content-area knowledge and develops soft and hard skills, and habits of mind needed to thrive in their mini-society. ▸MicroSociety Overview

Learning in a *MicroSociety* school occurs in two phases: Pre-Micro and MicroTime.

Pre-Micro: Establishing a Society

At the beginning of the year, students spend approximately six weeks engaged in "Pre-Micro" lessons and activities to help them envision a society of their own and assemble the building blocks of a community. During this time, they explore the values and responsibilities required of them as citizens in order to realize the society they envision. Citizenship contracts define the behaviors, characteristics, and qualities that guide the citizens in the society and are written using input gathered from all students. Students write a ruling document (a constitution) that governs the society.

While some students choose to run for or hold government positions, others may choose to start a business or nonprofit organization. Owners and managers then begin hiring employees during a Job Fair, where students submit resumes and cover letters and interview for positions of their choosing. In this way, students self-select societal jobs in for-profit ventures, government agencies, or nonprofit organizations. These groups may be anywhere from 15 to 50 students in size, depending on the type of work, the facilitator's skill in managing students, and the student interest.

Ventures are the core of the economy. Examples of ventures include an art gallery, environmental engineers, a public relations firm, a STEM museum, a greeting card company, and a TV station.

Agencies provide governance and legislation to the *MicroSociety* and ensure its safety. This system also facilitates the flow of capital, goods, services, and labor. Examples of agencies include a government, a bank, Peacekeepers, the IRS, a quality control board, and the Bureau of Census and Statistics.

Nonprofits in *MicroSociety* enable service learning, facilitate character building, and give student citizens opportunities to learn how to build strong and kind communities. Examples of nonprofits include gardens, theaters, recycling initiatives, and museums.

Within ventures, agencies, and nonprofits are departments, including management and human resources; production and services; fundraising and partner and donor relations; research and evaluation; and communications and customer services.

Common
Government Agency
Departments:

- Management & Human Resources
- Citizen & Community Service
- Research & Development
- Quality Control
- Communications & Education
- Production & Services

Common
Nonprofit Organization
Departments:

- Management & Human Resources
- Fundraising & Partner and Donor Relations
- Production & Services
- Research & Evaluation
- Communications & Customer Service

Common
For-Profit Venture
Departments:

- Management & Human Resources
- Marketing & Sales
- Customer & Community Service
- Research & Development
- Production & Services

MicroTime

MicroTime is when students move from theory to application. For one period a day, students create and manage their own student-driven society. Together, citizens face real challenges, problem-solve how to address them, take risks, fail, and try again. MicroTime is a dedicated time, typically the first or last hour of the day, when the whole school is actively participating in the actual *MicroSociety*.

MicroTime is broken into three different types of days: Planning Days, Action Days, and Reflection Days.

Planning Days typically fall on Mondays. At the start of the week, all ventures, nonprofits, and agencies are closed to the public to deal with matters internal to the organization. Led by the student manager and teacher facilitators, employees meet as a whole group to celebrate achievements, share news, monitor progress, explore what is and what is not working, and finalize their action plans for the week. Then, employees have department meetings, led by the student department heads, to work on their specific plans. Department heads then share with the whole group for further discussion and to align their work so they can improve venture, nonprofit, and agency outcomes and benefit the larger *MicroSociety* community.

Action Days typically fall on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. All organizations are open for business. Agencies carry out their functions, and the buying and selling of products and services from ventures and nonprofits takes place. Department heads continue to direct the work of their departments, and employees take care of their responsibilities. A fraction of employees in each department takes a consumer break to shop, pay bills, and engage in other activities as citizens at their designated time.

Action Days may include Community Partner Time in which students learn from community partners as advisors, brokers, consumers, mentors, consultants, and "adjunct faculty," who impart critical and authentic from-the-field knowledge, skills, and habits of mind. For example, student bankers begin with basic checking and savings accounts, but with community bankers' support, the students might advance to credit and debit cards, loans, and online banking.

Reflection Days typically fall on Fridays. At the end of the week, organizations are closed and students take a step back with their organizations to think about and discuss their society as a whole and the problems they are facing, not just the place where they are employed. Using Reflection Day prompts, teacher facilitators (with assistance from managers and others as needed) lead Reflection Day by asking probing questions for small-group

discussions or individual journaling. This is when learning is processed, big societal challenges are identified, and solutions are sought. On Reflection Days, citizens also reflect on their own values and accomplishments and further their own skills, working on personal financial matters like creating their own budget, setting personal goals, and updating resumes and portfolios, and participating in small-group or individual lessons. Facilitators work with each student to build autonomy and to link areas of academic learning to the school-based society.

While students engage in job training upon selecting their role, citizens who choose to sharpen their skills and advance further attend cross-age MicroUniversity (MicroU) classes, which may be completed virtually from the job site or in person at MicroU during MicroTime. MicroU lessons typically occur over two to six weeks and cover topics like management, finance, and leadership. Teachers, students, and adjunct faculty may offer other courses on topics of interest to the community or provide specialized training. Course content is approved by MicroU employees and is reflective of global issues and demands.

Supporting Structures

Implementing the *MicroSociety* model requires shifts to curriculum, schedule, and adult roles. MicroSociety Inc. (MSI) provides schools access to training, curricular resources, and a technology platform to support implementation of the *MicroSociety* model.

Schools leverage MSI's customizable, interdisciplinary library of curriculum materials to connect learning to core content.

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, & ASSESSMENT

Educators utilize curriculum and instructional materials such as lesson plans, guidebooks, and job-training resources to facilitate *MicroSociety*. Lessons and problem-based learning tasks cover topics like "What is a society?" and "How do we determine market demand?" Lesson plans are aligned to national standards, ensuring a structured and effective curriculum that covers the essential subject-matter content. Individual students are assessed as employees using employee assessments.

During core classroom time, students also access a wide range of classroom job opportunities that help them grow and discover work that is meaningful to them. In this way, the burden of work shifts from teachers to students. [Sample Jobs by Grade Level](#) In addition, during regular core classes, teachers make connections between subject-matter content and the real-world content of *MicroSociety* to help students see how the skills equip them to make decisions, collect data, and function in their work.

Student empowerment and promoting shared citizenship values across the school community are critical to *MicroSociety*.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY & CULTURE

While student achievement is the ultimate goal, *MicroSociety* focuses on student voice and choice, learning by doing, entrepreneurial spirit, real-world experiences, teachers as facilitators, shared responsibility and authority, and partners as contributors as guiding principles for the program. [Guiding Principles Rubric](#) *MicroSociety* practitioners describe a culture of trust between students and teachers as an important outcome of community building during MicroTime.

MicroSociety impacts school-wide culture, not just during MicroTime—from setting school-wide rules for behavior to promoting core values. For example, the *MicroSociety* legislature not only sets rules that impact the MicroTime economy (e.g., tax rates, minimum wage) but also sets school rules for behavior in hallways, appropriate attire, etc. Discipline issues during the rest of the day are often addressed through citations to MicroTime courts or through processes of mediation set up by MicroTime ventures and agencies. The HEART Council ensures that citizens are adhering to the Core Values voted on at the beginning of the year and memorialized in the Citizenship Contract.

Schools must assemble Shared Leadership Teams and identify a *MicroSociety* coordinator to oversee implementation of the model.

Strong instructional leadership is needed to translate *MicroSociety* concepts into a rigorous, well-integrated curriculum. Schools adopting the *MicroSociety* model must establish a planning and decision-making structure of adults called Shared Leadership Teams. Modeling voice and choice, these teams advance teacher capacity and advise the principal on issues related to school operations—from curriculum and instruction to evaluation and assessment.

ADULT ROLES, HIRING, & LEARNING

Schools also need a *MicroSociety* coordinator to organize partnerships and liaison with the MSI consultant. The coordinator requires high trust and strong organizational skills to plan, direct, and coordinate implementation activities. This leader, ideally devoted to *MicroSociety* responsibilities full-time for schools with more than 300 students, should be a member of the school's leadership team (but not the principal). [MicroSociety Coordinator Job Description](#)

The school principal's role is to ensure that student voice and choice, shared leadership, effective facilitation, and *MicroSociety*–core curriculum connections are occurring all day. When making decisions like staff hiring, the principal should welcome the input of Shared Leadership Teams as well as students.

In order to be properly trained, schools typically receive five 2-day visits from an MSI consultant each year for three consecutive school years. Consultants are also available for mentoring between visits as well as for ongoing professional development.

Schools must dedicate one period a day for the whole school to engage in cross-age, hands-on, real-world learning inside their *MicroSociety*.

SCHEDULE & USE OF TIME

The *MicroSociety* model requires all students to have MicroTime simultaneously. A 45–60-minute period for three to five days a week allows for organizations meeting in multi-grade-level groupings, students conducting business synchronously, and students learning from each other while functioning in the society.

Sample Weekly Schedule

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
Hours of operation	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED
What's Going On	Business Meeting (run by student manager) ● Discuss Issues ● Balance Checkbook ● Pay Bills ● Set Up Week Full Legislature in Session	Open for Business Full Legislature in Session	Open for Business Legislature in Committee	Open for Business Legislature in Committee	Reflection Meeting (run by facilitator and/or manager*) ● Individual Reflection ● Group Reflection ● Mini-Lesson ● Messy Problem Chamber of Commerce Meeting Monthly Town Meeting

*Assistant manager will assist the facilitator if the manager is at Chamber of Commerce Meetings

Schools must engage professionals from the community to participate in *MicroSociety* and provide content-specific mentorship to students.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Community partners play a critical role in the school-based society. They serve as advisors, contributors, and mentors imparting critical from-the-field knowledge, skills, and habits of mind to students in their ventures, agencies, and nonprofits, ensuring authentic workplace experiences for students and high engagement. Through these relationships, students not only develop aspirations for their future but also learn and begin to practice the steps and effort involved to realize those aspirations. Ideally, each venture, agency, and nonprofit has its own mentor to support and instruct students. MSI trains partners and provides a partnership manual to support and tailor their work to the needs of the school. The relationship between *MicroSociety* schools and the local community is further strengthened by a reciprocal engagement, with students reaching out to support their local community.

Pathful Connect provides virtual mentors (for a fee) as a supplement to community-based mentors and when they cannot be identified. 🖥Pathful Connect

The physical layout of classrooms and hallways must ensure that ventures can meet and do the business of *MicroSociety* efficiently and effectively.

SPACE & FACILITIES

MicroSociety spaces are designed, often with the input of students, to encourage group work, facilitate access to materials, and provide visual reminders and prompts. Classrooms and hallways host storefronts, community gathering spaces, and a government center. Because ventures vary in size, between 15 and 75 students, spaces should be allocated with

an eye toward the actual work the venture is doing, while also providing multiple opportunities for student independence and leadership.

Schools can leverage *MicroSociety* 2.0, a Google-based platform that combines a student-customizable web portal and an online financial system.

TECHNOLOGY & INFRASTRUCTURE

MicroSociety 2.0 includes a Google Sites-based web portal that provides a home for student business ventures, government agencies, and nonprofits. Its custom financial system enables digital banking, e-commerce, and e-government. It makes remote learning possible and prepares students to thrive in high-tech, high-skill future workplaces by giving them opportunities to use technology in meaningful ways.

With this online platform, students are able to experience technology jobs like web developer, blogger, digital designer, online banker, and data scientist. They expand their entrepreneurial know-how, learn new skills, and get ready for success in a tech-driven society.

BUDGET & OPERATIONS

Implementing the *MicroSociety* model requires a three-year commitment and up-front cost.

Schools who partner with MSI to implement the model receive on-site, customized professional development throughout the first three years of implementation to train and support all adults. While support is customized to the needs of each school, it typically includes five 2-day visits per year.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

School teams evaluate ventures, agencies, and nonprofits based on SMART goals twice a year and hold focus groups.

Ventures, agencies, and nonprofits are evaluated across the following categories: profitability or savings and being mission driven; community service impact; customer satisfaction; employee/employer investment; innovation; and demonstration of academic standards. The Shared Leadership Teams evaluate ventures, agencies, and nonprofits, and hold focus groups with students and community partners to get feedback.

Agencies, ventures, and nonprofits are assessed based on goals they set at the start of the year. The Shared Leadership Team, which is composed of staff of varying roles, evaluates organizations and holds focus groups with students and community partners to get feedback. Organization managers then choose two to three points of improvement to focus on until the next evaluation. Evaluations occur once in the fall and once in the spring. Overall

annual progress is shared with the school community during an end-of-year Town Hall Meeting.

Members of the Shared Leadership Team work with representatives from the student Bureau of Census and Statistics to develop and implement a survey of student learning activities and satisfaction during MicroTime. Each year, *MicroSociety* school staff, students, and parents collaborate to identify a common focus (e.g., improving mathematics learning; reducing bullying), and the Shared Leadership Team develops specific plans to address the common focus. The heads of each team share progress during monthly whole staff meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION

Support Offered

[MicroSociety Inc. (MSI)](#) offers the following support to help schools implement their approach:

Partnership and Implementation Support
Cost Associated

MSI requires a multi-year partnership (three-year commitment) to become a *MicroSociety* school. MSI provides regular on-site customized professional development throughout the first three years of implementation (five visits per year, two days each visit). Services include:

- Readiness assessment
- Planning, training, and targeted technical assistance
- Handbooks, guidebooks, and training manuals
- Activity assessments and observation tools

Express Interest

Reach

100+	450,000	20	57%
Schools	Students	States	Low-income Students

Demonstration Sites

The following sites are examples of learning communities that have successfully implemented the model.

Jersey City Global Charter School	**Penn Hills Charter School of Entrepreneurship**	**North Heights Community School**
Jersey City, NJ	Pittsburgh, PA	Texarkana, AR
K-8	K–8	K–5
Charter	Charter	Traditional Public

Impact

MSI has multiple evaluations dating back to 1993. Below are the most recent studies of *MicroSociety's* impact. 📓MicroSociety Impact Documentation

Jersey City Global Charter School's achievement results with *MicroSociety* have been consistently higher than statewide averages and higher than the average for demographically similar schools. The percentage of students scoring at "proficient" on the PARCC exam has increased consistently since 2015. 📓Micro Brochure
- In English-language arts, students grew from 48% proficient in 2015 to 98% proficient in 2019 on the PARCC 3rd grade test.
- In mathematics, students grew from 48% proficient in 2015 to 92% proficient in 2019 on the PARCC 3rd grade test.

An analysis of Eugenio Maria de Hostos *MicroSociety* School found that English language learners and low-income immigrant students outperformed comparison schools in the district and state over an eight-year period. 📓Eight-Year Analysis

The *MicroSociety* model has a positive impact on students at *MicroSociety* Academy Charter School. Students outperformed on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium exams in reading and mathematics in 2016 and 2017, with more scoring at Level 3 or 4 than students at demographically similar schools. 📓Micro Brochure 📓Case Study
- On 5th grade reading SBAC tests, students scored 99% proficient compared to a state average of 70% and comparable schools at 63%.
- On 5th grade mathematics SBAC tests, students scored 74% proficient compared to a state average of 53% and comparable schools at 47%.

Contact

Chris Bozzone
Director of School Partnerships
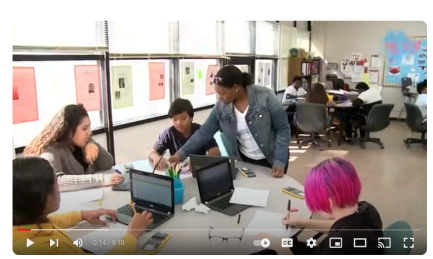cbozzone@microsociety.org

RESOURCES

[The Story of MicroSociety](#)
An animated overview of the origin story of *MicroSociety*.
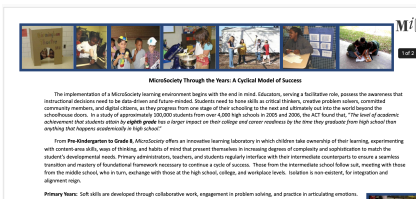

[Micro Brochure 2024](#)
An overview of *MicroSociety*'s program and recent results data.

[MicroSociety Overview](#)
Video interviews of students and teachers about the different roles and responsibilities in *MicroSociety*.

[Sample Jobs by Grade Level](#)
Descriptions of student jobs and responsibilities at each grade band.
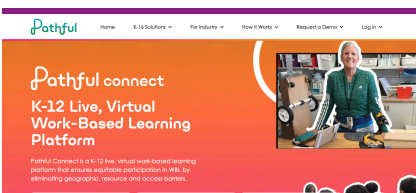

[Guiding Principles Rubric](#)
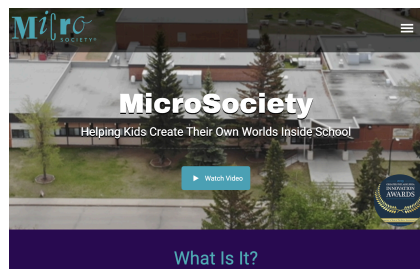A one-pager detailing evaluation categories for the overall program.

[MicroSociety Coordinator Job Description](#)
Responsibilities and skills for the coordinator position.

[Pathful Connect](#)
A virtual, work-based platform through which to secure mentors.

[MicroSociety Website](#)
The MicroSociety, LLC website.

[MicroSociety Impact Documentation](#)
Research studies on the *MicroSociety* model.

Steve Kramer, 21st Century Partnership for STEM Education, Eight Year Analysis of Eugenio Maria de Hostos

School serving English language learners and *immigrants* of poverty outperformed comparison schools in district and state in reading and math over eight year period

Analysis of Mathematics and ELA Test Scores at the Eugenio Maria de Hostos Microsociety School

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The Eugenio Maria de Hostos Microsociety School is viewed as an exemplary MicroSociety school. It serves low-income students with a large immigrant population and large number of Limited English Proficient students. At MicroSociety's 2014 annual conference the building principal, Elda Perez-Mejia, received MicroSociety's George Award, recognizing her as an outstanding administrator, reflecting the high fidelity implementation of MicroSociety at her school.

But is this high fidelity implementation associated with high-caliber academic results? This report looks narrowly at one measure that can address the question: student achievement on standardized Mathematics and English/Language Arts (ELA) tests administered by the state of New York.

The data reported below indicate that in mathematics achievement Hostos MicroSociety students outperform their peers from other schools. This is true for Limited English Proficiency students and even more strongly true for English-Proficient students. The pattern of relatively high mathematics achievement is not new with the current principal. Instead, it has been consistent since 2006, the first year data is available for comparing the MicroSociety school at Hostos to other schools. The pattern of superior performance is true for mathematics only. Hostos students' achievement on state administered ELA tests is similar to that of their peers from other schools.

The analysis reported below does not address all the intended outcomes of the MicroSociety program at Hostos. For example, The New York State Department of Education accepts Hostos' MicroSociety as a Title III approved program for children of immigrants and English Language learners. Although this report analyzes mathematics and ELA achievement of English Language Learners, it does not investigate MicroSociety's effects on students' learning to speak English, nor does it investigate the program's effects, if any, on socializing recent immigrants into U.S.

Eight-Year Analysis

A longitudinal study on the effects of the *MicroSociety* model.

Evaluation of Smarter Balanced Test Results at MicroSociety Academy Charter School

Steven L. Kramer, PhD

Summary

In the fall of 2015 *MicroSociety*© Academy Charter School (MACS) opened as a *MicroSociety* school serving grades K-5. In the fall of 2016, the school added sixth graders, and MACS plans eventually to serve students in grades K-8.

In the spring of 2016, MACS students in Grades 3-5 completed New Hampshire's Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium exams in reading and mathematics. In the spring of 2017, MACS students in Grades 3-6 completed the Smarter Balanced exams. MACS school personnel compared test performance at their school to test performance state-wide and district-wide in Nashua, New Hampshire—reporting wide differences favoring MicroSociety Academy students in most grades and subjects tested(MACS, 2016; Lowell Sun, 2018).

This report was commissioned by MicroSociety, Inc. with two goals: to have an independent analyst confirm the positive results reported by school personnel; and to provide additional context for interpreting testing results at MACS.

Case Study

Research evaluating the model's effects on Smarter Balanced test results.