Entrepreneurship & Enterprise:
A Collaborative Learning Experience for High School Students

The INCubatoredu program offers students an authentic entrepreneurship experience. In this program, students have the opportunity to create and fully develop their own product or service. Real entrepreneurs and business experts serve as volunteer coaches and mentors guiding student teams through the Lean Startup processes of developing hypotheses about a business concept, testing those hypotheses, adapting, and further iteration. The program also includes foundational business topics such as marketing and finance.

INCubatoredu’s key points of distinction include:

- Blend of Lean Startup process with foundational business topics
- Authentic, real-world learning
- Hands-on problem solving
- Team teaching with classroom teacher, coaches, and mentors
- Ongoing professional development for classroom teachers and volunteers

Learn by Doing
Over the course of the two semesters, students work in teams and learn by doing. They develop a business model canvas, gain market input on a minimum viable product, and iterate all elements to improve their business plan. A charitable group, such as an Educational Foundation, may consider providing small grants (<$1,000/team) to the students so that business concepts may be introduced at the “Minimum Viable Product” stage (midyear) and students may gain in-market experience. The program culminates with a “Pitch” to investors. Student teams pitch their ideas to actual investors for funding to turn their business plans into reality during the summer and following school year.

Students are taught by a team: volunteer coaches, mentors, and the classroom teacher. Coaches provide authentic business expertise in a specific area. They come into the classroom for a short period of time (2-4 days) to provide all students with a real-world context for a specific curricular area. The coach and classroom teacher plan and present together. The coach’s focus is on curricular content, not war stories. Mentors are assigned to one team and follow them through the entire process providing students with feedback and encouragement. The classroom teacher is a certified teacher that manages the class and volunteers as well as provides continuity.

Program Elements:
- Online Learning Management System – the “evergreen” curriculum is delivered via Canvas, an online learning management system.
- Curriculum – Eight units that span the entrepreneurship process from Ideation to Finance to Execution. Within the units are modules/lesson plans. The lesson plans include PowerPoint presentations, student activities, videos, and other teaching/learning resources.
- Coach/mentor recruitment – How/where to find skilled volunteer resources
- Professional development
  - Summer training sessions are offered for classroom teachers, coaches, and mentors. Up to 10 adults are welcome from each member school.
• Quarterly webinars for classroom teachers provide support for upcoming milestones, e.g. Back to school, MVP stage, financial models, and Pitch preparation. Importantly, the webinars offer INCubatoredu teachers an opportunity to exchange ideas, ask questions, and develop their own learning community.

• Facility design and resource references
• LLC templates for Educational Foundation
• Annual program updates – we are continually learning and renewing the curriculum. Each year’s release will incorporate new understandings.

Not all INCubatoredu member schools offer real funding for the “Pitch.” Those students will pitch to a volunteer group and still gain experience. In the future, INCubatoredu aims to offer student teams from member schools the opportunity to compete for funding.

Press
Others are talking about INCubatoredu’s inaugural entrepreneurship program at Barrington High School:

“To say that the Business Incubator program at Barrington High School had a successful first year would be putting it lightly.” --The Daily Herald

“New High School Incubator Funds Teen Entrepreneurs” --Forbes.com
Read about the inaugural Pitch Night at Barrington High School and see video from the event.

“A school and community effort encourages entrepreneurs” -- Marcus LeShock, WGN
http://morningnews.wgntv.com/2014/03/13/business-incubator-helps-encourage-entrepreneurs-at-barrington-hs

“School's "Business Incubator" Teaches Young Entrepreneurs” --Vince Gerasole, CBS 2

Link to Illinois Association of School Administrators Newsletter featuring the entrepreneur program at Barrington High School
https://publ.com/gnSA7Pe#4

To view the video encouraging Barrington High School students to include “Business Incubator Startup” in their courses
http://www.barrington220.org/Page/12115

To see reactions from “Business Incubator Startup” students
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_ZpdtterNSQ#t=51