

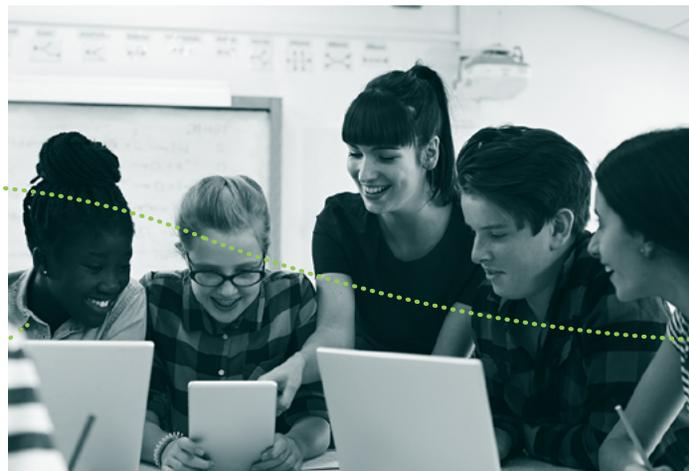
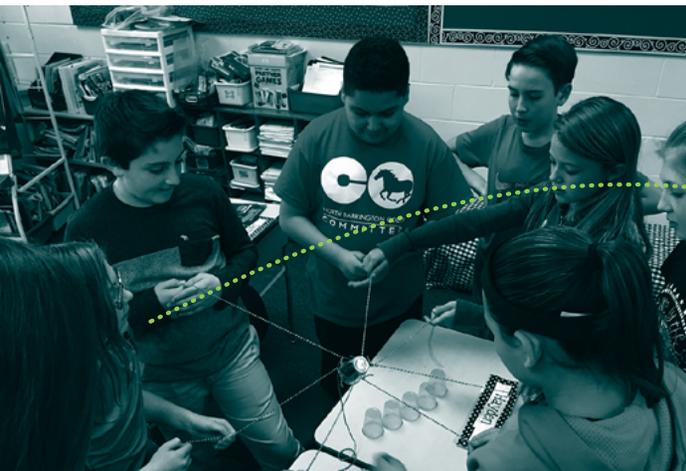


uncharted learning



# Transforming the Student Experience Through Entrepreneurship

The Story of Uncharted Learning and Our Mission to  
Bring Entrepreneurship to Classrooms Across the Country



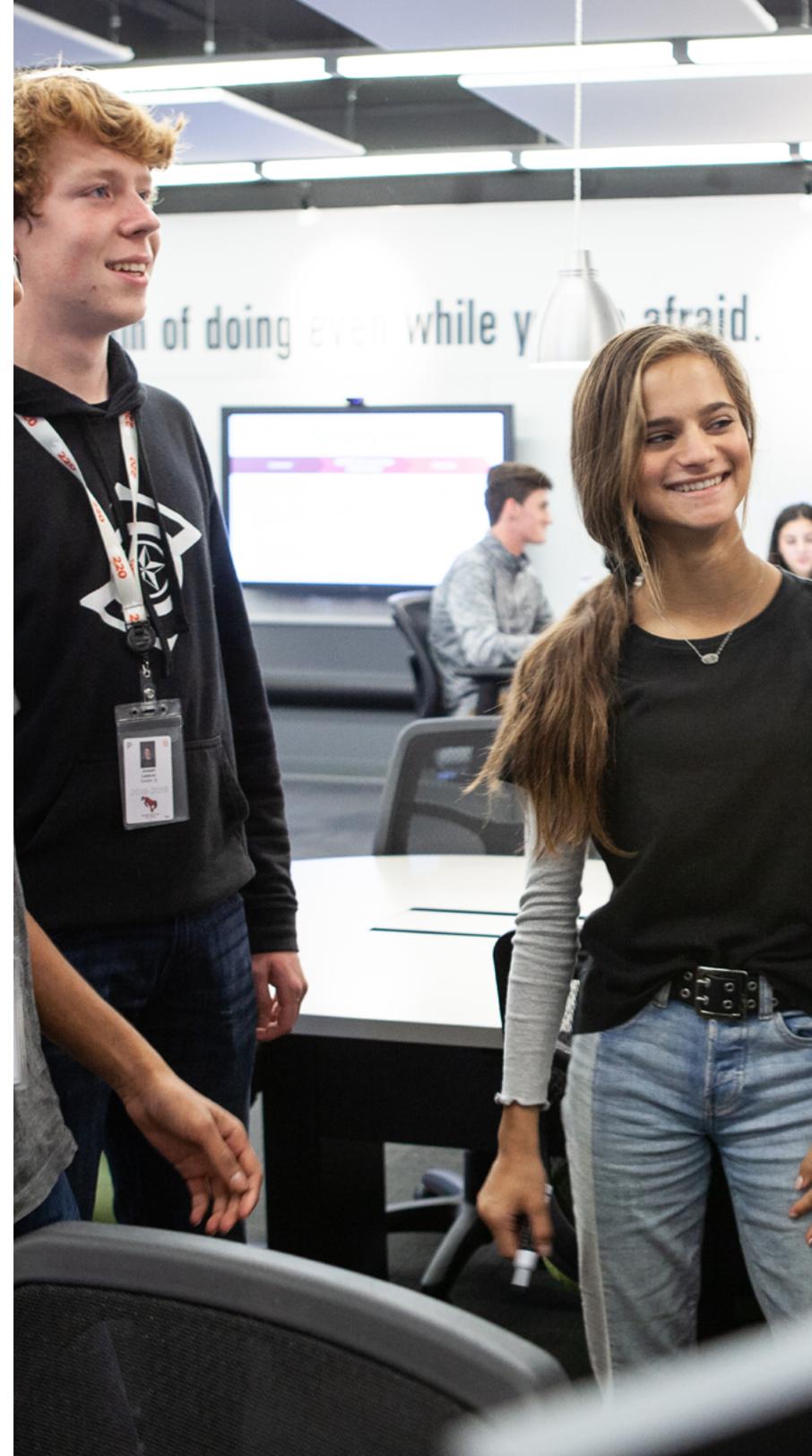
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## Introduction

“Schools don’t have to behave as they have for the past 30 years — or the past 100 years, for that matter. The world is different, and education, in general, must reflect that. We can change things.”

This sentiment, and others like it — voiced by Barrington High School Principal **Steve McWilliams** and his colleagues — sparked a movement throughout the halls a few years back. Fueled by innovative teachers and administrators eager to offer something outside of the norm for their students, Barrington High School revamped its approach to business education and introduced the entrepreneurship program **INCubatoredu** in 2013.





## The Growing Need for Entrepreneurship Education

Residents of Barrington, Illinois, recognized a growing need for young professionals with innovative ideas and skill sets who are ready to make things happen in an unpredictable job climate. They were curious as to why so many students and young adults still live in their parents' basements, despite being smart, hard-working, with degrees in hand.

Entrepreneur **Michael Miles** and Intrapreneur **Karl Fruecht** of Uncharted Learning wanted to know, *"What's the deal here?"* They wondered:

**Is something happening within education that perhaps is not connecting the dots as well as it could — in terms of how a student makes the transition from student life to a launched life — earning an income in whatever way they choose to?**

It's questions like this that eventually led to the birth of Uncharted Learning — but let's not get ahead of ourselves. In this eBook, we're sharing our inception story to give you a better idea of who we are, where we come from, and where we hope to go next. It's the story of passionate educators recognizing a need within the education system and taking action to meet that need, simultaneously transforming the modern classroom along the way.

At Uncharted Learning, we see the benefits of strong entrepreneurial education, and we invite community members, teachers, administrators, and students at your school to learn about the benefits, too. And what better way than with a firsthand account of how entrepreneurship changed the student experience at Barrington High School and beyond?

In this eBook, we cover:

- **Barrington Before Entrepreneurship** — and how the economic recession of 2008 led us to create the first rendition of our **INCubatoredu program**
- **Bringing Entrepreneurship to Barrington & Beyond** — how educators brought this game-changing entrepreneurship education program to life
- **Creating (and Scaling) Authentic Classroom Experiences** — the path toward offering INCubatoredu and our other programs to students and teachers everywhere
- **Student Success Stories** — tangible proof that early entrepreneurship education leads to lifelong success (*If you're not convinced, these student **success stories** will change your mind!*)
- **Additional Resources** — to assist you in jumpstarting entrepreneurship education at your school (*including the **Uncharted Learning blog** + so much more*)

[Learn More About Us at Uncharted Learning](#)

# CHAPTER 1

## Barrington Before Entrepreneurship

At the high school level, leaders often think business education classes should be reserved exclusively for students who've expressed interest in business. But why should students who haven't expressed interest in business be left out of the equation? Just like their peers, they'll also go on to get a job and begin contributing to the economy after high school.

Research suggests that students from the **Millennial and "Z" Generations** will cycle through **15 to 20 different careers** before they retire. Students need skills to support this journey — skills like problem-solving, resiliency, and collaboration.

Entrepreneurship education empowers students with these skills, regardless of their career path. When you consider that high school students' values, goals, and interests are still changing throughout their time in the classroom, it becomes even more important to foster those values, goals, and interests in a creative and engaging way.



# 15-20

The number of different careers  
the average Millennial will hold  
in their lifetime





## A Dip in the Economy → A Boost in Entrepreneurship

Back in 2013, **Margarita Geleske** was serving as Chairperson of the Barrington 220 Educational Foundation, a nonprofit organization responsible for enhancing the teaching and learning experiences for the Barrington School District, which is precisely why she took such an active role in developing what would later become INCubatoredu.

The Educational Foundation saw the timely potential of INCubatoredu teaching students to create their own jobs. In an economy still recovering from the 2008 Recession, Geleske and her colleagues recognized how the dynamic had shifted for business.

“That kind of economic hiccup threw a lot of people off their employment path,” Geleske says. “People were resilient and resourceful and looked inward to discover they still had talent and skills to offer the world’s economy.”

Instead of “Which company can best use my skills?”, the questions become, “Can I be my own company? Can I find a customer base that

**One of the biggest drivers behind INCubatoredu and Uncharted Learning as a whole is the desire to encourage students of all ages to utilize the strengths they already have to find lifelong professional success.**

has a need for the skills and experience I have to offer?” In the early 2010s, many folks who previously never considered going at it alone suddenly found themselves asking these questions, recognizing the need to create their own businesses and sign their own paychecks.

These individuals had to become entrepreneurial due to the economic dynamics of the time. When faced with demotions, layoffs, and a crippling economy, they had to dig deep to find resilience and press on.



## Teaching the Entrepreneurial Mindset

“The program we developed teaches an entrepreneurial mindset, so that the next generation is better equipped to navigate the ambiguities of the economy,” says Geleske. “The path will curve. We support instilling critical thinking, resilience, and other skills in students, so they can manage those curves.” But before INCubatoredu was a regular part of Barrington High School, Geleske and her colleagues had to navigate the appropriate channels and convince the appropriate people of its worth to get started.

The more the economy fluxed and flowed, the more Geleske and her colleagues wanted to set students up for success despite constant economic ambiguity. So they brought the idea to the District Superintendent, **Dr. Tom Leonard**. Lucky for Barrington High School, Leonard was on board with the idea right away. “I like everything we’re talking about,” he said. “If we only accomplish half of what we’re talking about, our students are going to be so much further

than we’re able to get them right now — particularly in the world of business.

**“The path will curve. We are instilling critical thinking and other skills in students, so they can manage those curves.”**

— *Margarita Geleske, Chief Evangelist, Uncharted Learning*

**Why teach entrepreneurship in high school?**

[Read the Blog Post](#)

## CHAPTER 2

### Bringing Entrepreneurship to Barrington & Beyond

What if we taught the discipline of entrepreneurship in high school? What if the teacher was still an important part of the teaching team, but just like in real start-ups and real business practices, we introduce subject matter experts and call them classroom coaches? What if student teams could work with mentors? What if these students could learn about business by creating their own business? These questions fueled the staff at Barrington High School and District 220 as they began to develop the first rendition of the INCubatoredu framework.

**“We saw an opportunity to make what was being taught about business relevant for this century,”** says Geleske. She recounts an early-morning discussion about the entrepreneurship program idea with Leonard. He was already on board with the idea, but he said, “Although I like it, I don’t matter.” Teachers and Administrators stared back at him in confusion. “We have a very bright and talented team of curriculum developers and leaders in the area of education. That educational talent, combined with the entrepreneurial experience, skills, and contribution of business leaders, make for a dynamic team.”



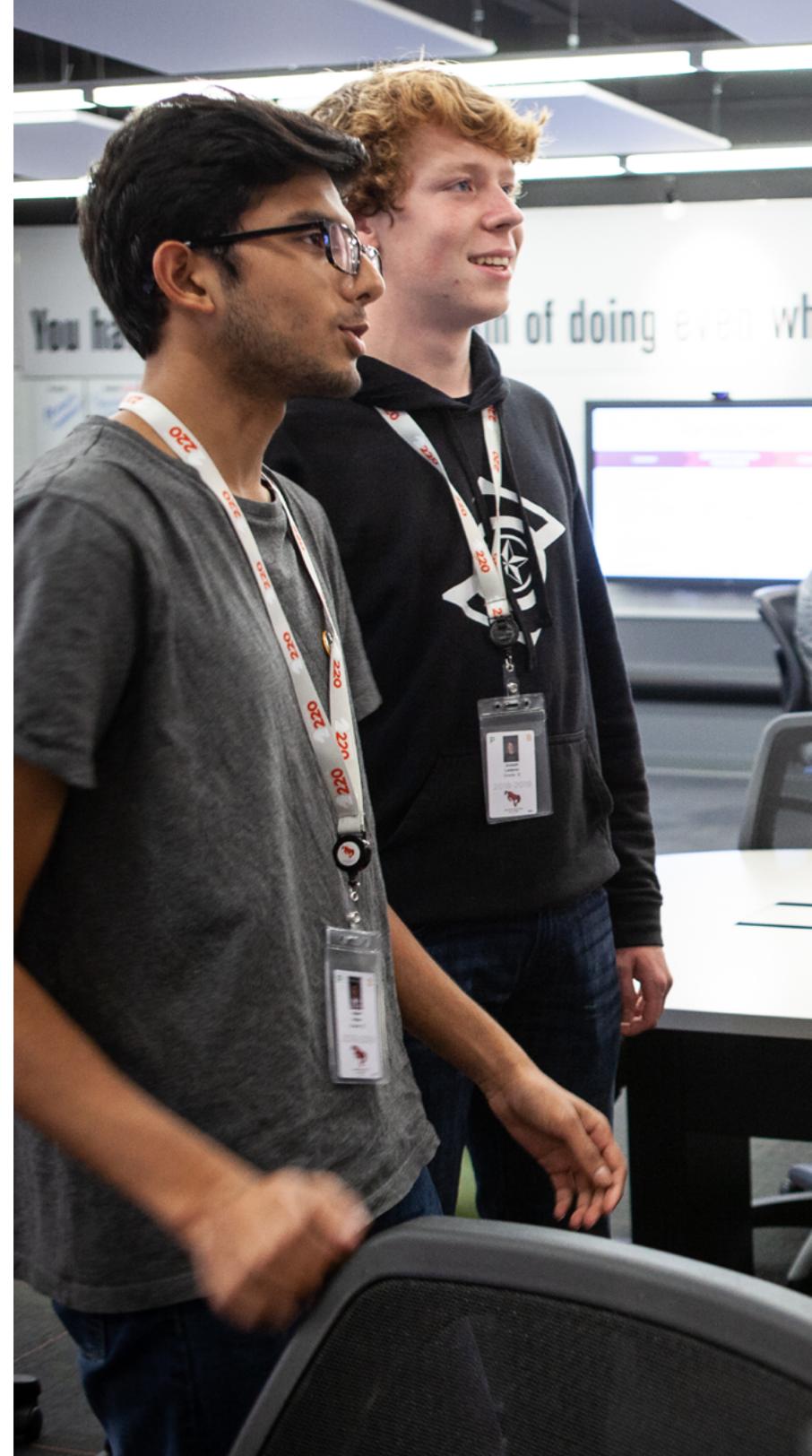
**It’s that same team—the curious, passionate, hard-working educators and business people at the forefront of entrepreneurship education—who now support the growth of Uncharted Learning.**

## It Takes a Village

“I’ll tell you what,” Leonard said during that fateful, 6:30 a.m. meeting. “As the Superintendent, I can do one thing. I can ask people to come to a meeting. So, why don’t we do that?”

Two days later, Leonard introduced the concept of a non-traditional, interactive entrepreneurship program to a room of Barrington District 220 stakeholders. Before leaving the room to let folks chat and create a list of pros and cons, he shared, “I’m for it. I think it’s got the potential to really evolve what we offer from a business ed perspective — but also a broader perspective — to teach in a manner that’s different than what we’re used to.”

Within a matter of minutes, Barrington High School Principal Steve McWilliams turned around and said, “We’re in! Let’s develop something that will really make our students want to sit up, take notice, and do this.” The team knew right away that they wanted to create a space in which students immediately think, “this is different.”



## Community Participation

Barrington got the green light from the Educational Foundation, supportive of the push behind innovative teaching and learning, noting that the program would be a “terrific experience for students.” With approval secured, Geleske and her colleagues moved full-steam ahead, developing various components of the program and rallying volunteers to join the community as classroom coaches and team mentors.

“We worked through what-if scenarios, we researched X, Y, and Z — we literally met in the Superintendent’s office every two weeks for an entire summer just hashing out issues,” Geleske says. Alongside her, Executive Director **Christy Scott**, Co-Founders Michael Miles and Karl Fruecht, community members, and a talented group of educators and administrators from Barrington District 220 developed curriculum for the new program.



## Aim to Transform

What's possible for Uncharted Learning today would never have been possible without the support from leadership at Barrington High School during INCubatoredu's inception. And because of that early work, we strive to be collaborative and supportive to ensure our program development and a school's implementation of INCubatoredu is a joint effort among educators, business professionals, and all of our stakeholders.



**"It's not so much about checking the boxes.  
Frankly, we're not that type of program."**

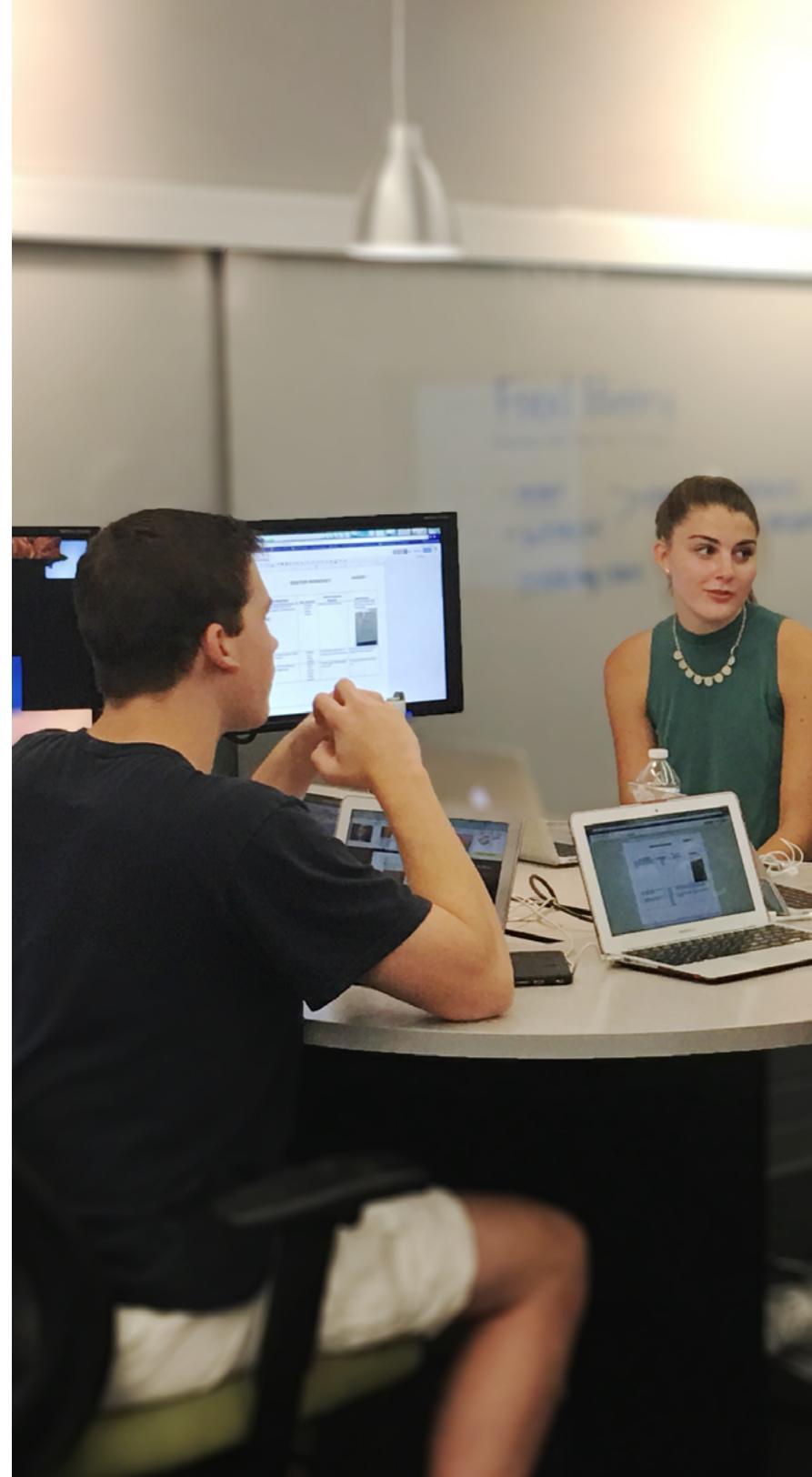
*—Margarita Geleske, Chief Evangelist, Uncharted Learning*



# CHAPTER 3

## Creating (and Scaling) Authentic Classroom Experiences

With the program up and running, the team at Barrington High School could begin assessing its success and working out any kinks that arose. The goal was, and still is, to create an authentic classroom experience for students who are interested in business, entrepreneurship, and more. As the program matures, and others develop, educators share insight about what works and what doesn't and we iterate year over year in the spirit of continuous improvement.





## Problem-Solving For Real Life

You wouldn't expect your high school football team to win very many games if you only taught them how to play football in a classroom. And you wouldn't expect your fine arts department to put on an outstanding production if they only learned how to act while sitting at a desk. So, how can we expect students to be prepared to solve modern business problems if we don't give them any practice time?

"This class closes that gap," says Miles, of INCubatoredu. "It's for students to play or perform the business equivalent of a game or play."

Over the past several years, we've learned that by giving students the space to create their own businesses, we give them the agency to drive their own learning. Rather than assigning them a certain business or asking them to act out mock experiences, we put students in the driver's seat — facilitating their experience as they guide their own learning and develop a passion for solving real-life business problems.

Without this real-life application, classroom experiences are simulated experiences. Everything is simply an academic exercise. That may work when solving math problems, but if you want your students to work with more depth, you need to grant them greater autonomy over their work from elementary school, **middle school**, high school, and beyond.

**"In business, a lot of progress is made by getting things wrong, fixing what you got wrong, and improving what you got right. It's about continuous improvement."**

*—Michael Miles, Co-Founder, Uncharted Learning*

## Elements of Entrepreneurship Education

Eighty-five percent of **jobs that will exist in 2030 haven't been invented yet**. As technology advances and our world becomes more and more globalized, entrepreneurship skills help students of all ages prepare for jobs that don't yet exist, teaching them how to develop business ideas, creatively solve complex problems, and artfully navigate ambiguity.

Over the past few years, we've fine-tuned our programs and we're learning continually what works ... and what doesn't. Here's what sets our entrepreneurship education programs apart:



## Exemplar Teachers & Teacher Training

Professional Development is at the forefront of what we do. We provide training for teachers of any discipline to lead these courses. Teachers often share back how their professional lives have been enriched through their experiences with these programs. What they take away often infuses and ignites how they go about instruction in general. Teachers of our program have to be comfortable with being uncomfortable — or at least become comfortable with a little uncertainty. Ultimately, we're trying to facilitate a journey in classrooms that equips students with the tools they need to face life's ambiguity.

Three traits set teachers apart in the field and make them great entrepreneurship educators:

- **They have Growth Mindsets.** Stellar educators believe in never-ending growth — in their students and in themselves.
- **They Facilitate Learning.** Great teachers bring content to life through project-based learning, where students apply the course content in a broader venture.
- **They Model Learning through Failure.** Good teachers not only challenge themselves by trying new instructional strategies, but when something doesn't go perfectly, they reflect and learn from the experience.

**We train educators to teach INCubatoredu at your school.  
See an overview of the training and year-long support.**

[Download the 'Teacher Training Guide'](#)

## Assessments That Map to the Real World

New approaches to business education require new assessment methods to gauge and analyze student competency and skill mastery. Students' expression of skills can be captured in many different ways, expanding well beyond traditional test scores. Traditional scoring can help keep students accountable to their mastery of skills and drive their own learning, but more progressive assessments exist today.

### **Can you demonstrate something you've learned and communicate its importance?**

Our programs provide students with opportunities to do — and to share their creations with the world. Instead of multiple-choice exams and mid-term papers, we ask students, “Can you demonstrate something you've learned and communicate its importance?”

Instead of the traditional model in which grades are determined by whether or not a student completed all homework assignments or read the appropriate chapters from a textbook, this assessment model measures a student's demonstrated growth and learning outcomes around **mindset, skills, and content knowledge**. Throughout the year, entrepreneurial student growth is assessed in a variety of ways, including student presentations of artifacts, self- and peer-evaluations, shareback presentations, and final pitch presentations.

#### **An inside look...**

**What Can Competitions, Certifications & Badges Mean for Students?** Unlike content-based skills like coding, working in a spreadsheet, or editing a video, mindsets cannot be measured from a standardized test. When students and teachers are exposed to **the entrepreneurial mindset**, they're equipped to apply their growth mindset to connect with people and solve problems.

[Read the Blog Post](#)

## Building & Supporting Soft Skills

Educators recognize the value of soft skills (or SEL skills) for students today. Our courses provide authentic experiences for students to build and demonstrate the soft skills they're learning in the classroom. These skills can and should be fostered in K-8 settings.

At the encouragement of our member districts, Uncharted Learning has developed programs for students at all levels:



**elementary school entrepreneurship education**



**middle school entrepreneurship education**

Each of these programs encourage dialogue around students' individual strengths, capabilities, and interests. How might students use these inherent qualities to collaborate with partners and collectively create something new? How might these qualities spark future pursuits? At this level, we know that ultimately, foundational skills are being built.

### Teaching Social Awareness & Decision-Making Skills

At one middle school implementing **mxINCedu**, the program geared toward grades six through eight, students take a semester of just SEL — a class in which they learn how to manage their own behavior, social awareness, and decision-making skills. In theory, students learn SEL skills in other classes, too, but they don't always have the opportunity to put the skills into practice.

When real-life comes knocking, using the skills can feel awkward, forced, or inauthentic. With our help, the K-8 teachers using our program can provide students with more authentic learning experiences applied to these specific SEL skills.

## Engaged with Business Leaders

There's your average high school business class ... then there's INCubatoredu. INCubatoredu students learn about business by creating their own. It's that simple. "Very plainly put, **INCubatoredu** teachers are not Sage-on-the-Stage lecturers asking students to memorize and spit information back out in an exam," says Geleske. "There's a time and place for that, but business – in our opinion – isn't one of those places. Especially not entrepreneurship."

We work closely with business leaders to develop the content for our programs. Curriculum developers help craft and shape INCubatoredu, so that even teachers without a business background can teach our programs. Our teachers are supported by volunteer coaches and mentors who bring 'real' experience to the classroom.





## Not Just For Barrington

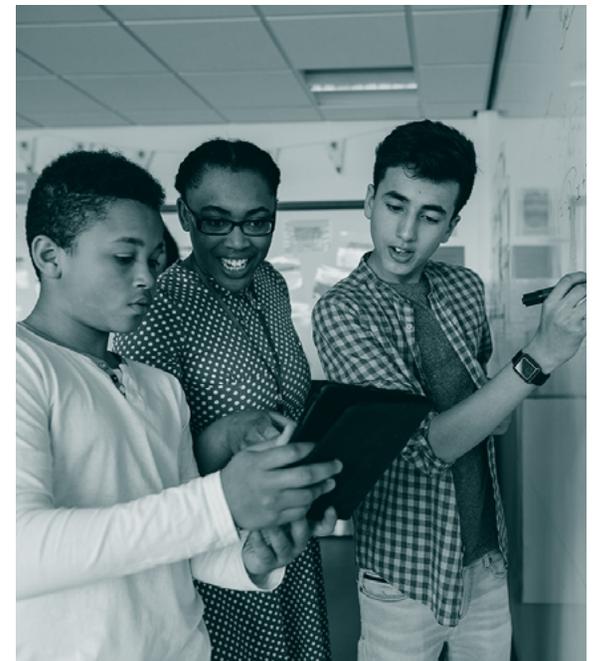
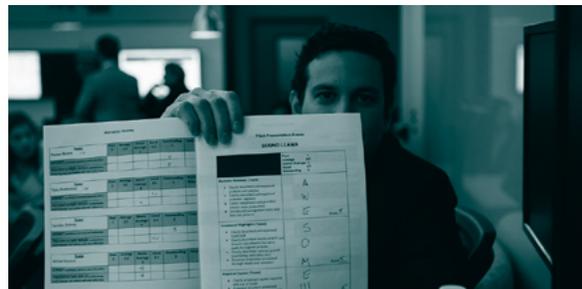
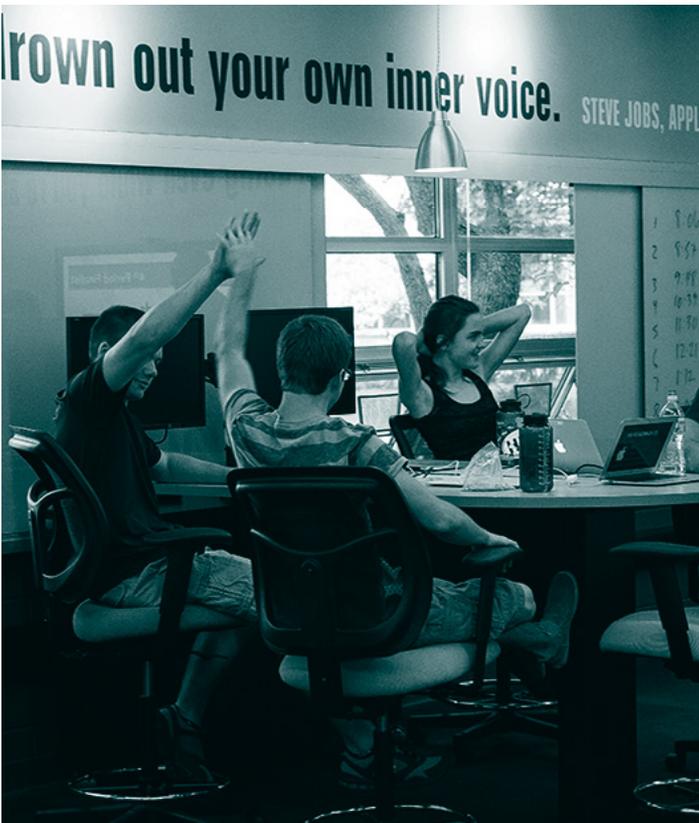
**“This is exactly what I want! Something real, something kids can get their hands dirty in, something that involves the community as well as the teacher.”** — *Chad Freshly, Business Education Teacher, Elk Grove High School*

Within just a few months of launching INCubatoredu, Barrington High School’s neighboring districts and education leaders started to take note. “They saw this program filling a gap – as a unique solution to problems they also had,” says Executive Director Christy Scott.

Within the early stages of the program, an associate superintendent from a neighboring school district approached Geleske and said, “I want this program. I want to offer this to students in my school. Let me be the first one outside of Barrington. Let me be your customer!” The enthusiasm and passion the Barrington team felt from the community and surrounding school districts motivated them to

find a way to extend the program to others. In the early days of Uncharted Learning, we created a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization and developed well-articulated curriculum and comprehensive professional development to help schools successfully implement INCubatoredu.

“Watching students re-engage with their education inspired us to bring this to as many students as possible,” says Scott. Working with business partners and other schools led the team to recognize that the mindset, skills, and behaviors they seek to teach can expand well beyond a single class experience — and will continue to expand into the future.



## CASE STUDY: Wheeling High School Students Thrive In INCubatoredu

“People want leaders — and leadership can be achieved through a similar skill set that entrepreneurship fosters,” says Laz Lopez, Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, D214. Like many others, he also recognized the growing need for an entrepreneurial mindset in the business world.

Lopez worked hard to get teachers, administrators, and stakeholders at Wheeling High School to recognize the same need and introduce INCubatoredu as a solution.

“Once we said yes, our immediate challenge was recruiting. We needed external partners to coach and mentor our students. We needed to arm five to six schools,” Lopez says. “It wasn’t teachers we were looking for, and it wasn’t admin.”

“We needed business people who shared our vision for a different, exciting, and innovative approach to education,” Lopez continues. “Then, the people we recruited needed to learn how to mentor and coach kids — something a lot of them had no experience in. It was about blending business background and coaching.”

The community and business members could see how INCubatoredu would prepare students in a real and direct way, using problem-based solutions and inquiry — the critical thinking skills necessary for the next generation of leaders, movers, and doers. When tasked with creating a **minimum viable product**, Wheeling High School students rose to the challenge — concepting, creating, and developing prototypes, validating their ideas, and eventually pitching to compete for funding.

In 2018, an INCubatoredu team from that inaugural year at Wheeling High School, **SnapClips**, was selected to be on ABC’s Shark Tank.



“Opposite ends of the school came together to create the product together. It was pretty incredible,” says Lopez, of the Shark Tank worthy idea. The connection with community and student engagement has been so successful that Wheeling School District 214 was inspired to use this model in other pathways.

## Future Pathways: Supporting Student Readiness

Since the inception of INCubatoredu, Uncharted Learning has grown into new avenues with no plans of slowing down. Inspired and encouraged by our member schools, we continue to explore new pathways to tap into changing student interests and evolving workplace demand — like coding and 21st-century marketing.

Our **INCubatoredu** + **MobileMakersEdu** programs are both terrific for developing hard skills — like business and coding — as well as soft skills to ensure career-readiness. We added elementary and middle school programs that foster the skills, behaviors, and mindsets of the entrepreneurial spirit, and we aim to chart new territory and support schools and students every step of the way.

**INCubatoredu isn't all we offer...**

**uncharted learning** 

[See the Full Entrepreneurial Suite](#)

**incubatoredu.**

BY UNCHARTED LEARNING

**offering students relevant, useful, and meaningful skills that transcend the high school classroom**

**mobilemakersedu.**

BY UNCHARTED LEARNING

**students learn coding and design skills to bring mobile app ideas to life and acquire career-ready and soft skills**

**mxincedu.**

BY UNCHARTED LEARNING

**empowers middle school students with the tools and mindset to explore what it takes to be an entrepreneur**

**freshincedu.**

BY UNCHARTED LEARNING

**everything you need to provide elementary school students with a positive entrepreneurial experience**

# CHAPTER 4

## Student Success Stories

For a long time, the emphasis in education has been given to external and ambiguous rewards, like grades. Students have been asked to memorize and play back information rather than try, and sometimes fail, to solve a particular, real-life problem.

Uncharted Learning is changing that. Student by student, school by school, we're bringing real-life entrepreneurship education into elementary, middle, and high school classrooms to transform the student experience and set them up for long-term success.

"I don't think students always recognize how much effort goes into starting a new business, and how keyed-in they have to be," says McWilliams. "Students in INCubatoredu know they need to be committed. It isn't going to be a traditional class experience where they can be passive in class. They need to be on cue and ready to go every day."



**“I don’t think students always recognize how much effort goes into starting a new business, and how keyed-in they have to be. Students in INCubatoredu know they need to be committed.”**

— *Steve McWilliams, Principal, Barrington High School*

The curriculum milestone for INCubatoredu is **Pitch Night** — an end-of-the-school-year Shark Tank-type event, where students compete against other teams from their school or district. We encourage participation in pitch events outside of our programs, too.

We’ve seen INCubatoredu students win the **SXSWedu Student Startup Pitch** competition, place at national, regional, and collegiate entrepreneurship competitions like **CHS Innovators** and the Future Founders Pitch Competition, and even appear on ABC’s *Shark Tank*.

**25,000+**

Number of student entrepreneurs  
who have developed businesses

**6,000+**

Number of apps student  
entrepreneurs have  
developed in iOS

**110+**

Number of districts in the U.S.  
that have implemented Uncharted  
Learning programs in their  
schools (plus Japan + Mexico)

### **Barrington Athletes Win Business Contest By Solving Cooler Conundrum**

Five Barrington High School athletes, frustrated by the amount of inaccessible liquid left over from coolers used at sporting events, started a company called Tilt Factor as part of their junior INCubatoredu course. The students developed a stand that holds a five-gallon cooler and automatically tilts the container when only a few quarts of liquid are left. Over the course of a year, their product can save one user more than 186 gallons of water. Tilt Factor won a \$16,000 prize at Barrington's Pitch Night to further implement their design.

[Read the Story](#)

### **Innovative Barrington High Business Program Spreading Nationwide**

After its 2013 debut, our INCubatoredu program spread like wildfire. Within the next year, it was adopted by nine new school districts. The following year, dozens more districts implemented the program, including some as far away as California, Pennsylvania, and Florida. The movement of teaching entrepreneurial and coding education in high school, middle school, and even elementary school is spreading across the nation.

[Read the Story](#)

### **New High School Business Incubator Funds Teen Entrepreneurs**

INCubatoredu, launched by entrepreneurs Michael Miles and Karl Fruecht, was the first of its kind on high school campuses. At its inaugural Pitch Night, INCubatoredu high school sophomores and juniors, who'd generated more than 31 startup ideas, presented their ideas for the chance to win start-up funding.

[Read the Story](#)

## Read More INCubatoredu Stories



Rochester Public Schools INCubatoredu Program Recruits Volunteer Mentors



Student Startups Win Seed Money at Dist. 303 Pitch Night



Students Win National Contest and Help Break Down Gender Barriers in Business

## Conclusion

What started as a trial — maybe even a risk — for Barrington High School educators and administrators quickly grew into a nationwide success story. Innovative educators wanted more for their students and worked hard to make it happen. INCubatoredu has the potential to solve problems and fill common gaps in existing approaches to business education.

### **So ... what are you waiting for?**

Learn how entrepreneurship education changes students' lives.

**Contact Uncharted Learning to Get Started**

65%

of high school students want more  
demanding and interesting coursework

*National Governors Association*

72%

of Gen Z high school students want  
to start a business someday

*Millennial Branding & Insights*

85%

of jobs that will exist in 2030 don't exist yet

*Institute for the Future 2017*



## Additional Resources

At Uncharted Learning, we're in the business of ... well, learning! We've put together a variety of resources for educators, administrators, parents, and students to learn more about our entrepreneurship programs. Check out the resources below to dive in:

[Community Stories](#)

[Industry Features & Press Releases](#)

[Uncharted Learning Blog](#)

**uncharted learning** ™

