IMPACT REPORT

Encounter Your Potential
Business Leadership &
Entrepreneurship Experience

Spring Semester 2026
February 13 - June 26, 2026

Thomas J. McCann Intermediate School (IS 125Q)
46-02 47th Avenue, Woodside, NY 11377



Encounter
YOUR POTENTIAL

www.EncounterYourPotential.com
Sandra@EncounterYourPotential.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From February 13 through June 26, 2026, Encounter Your Potential (EYP) partnered with IS 125Q to deliver the **EYP Business Leadership and Entrepreneurship Experience**: one high-energy kickoff assembly and five tailored workshop learning experiences. Each session was custom designed, prepared, and facilitated for the IS 125Q community, connecting entrepreneurship directly to students' own interests and to the Woodside and Queens neighborhoods they know.

Over the semester, students moved from identifying everyday problems to building, pricing, and pitching real solutions for their own school. They finished the program by presenting team business proposals in a live, Shark Tank style pitch event. **Along the way, the program's central goals stayed constant: boosting confidence, getting students to speak up and participate, and strengthening creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, and a future-focused mindset.**

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The experience opened with The Blueprint: Designing the Future, Starting with You, a kickoff built around a simple idea: every great business begins with someone who looks at a problem and thinks *"I could fix that."* Students learned to see their own interests, from gaming and beauty to music and social justice, as unmet markets and marketable skills.



Student voices shaped the program itself**. At the end of the kickoff, students voted on the topics for the remaining sessions, choosing their top picks from a menu of options.**

The sessions they chose became the curriculum:

#	Title	Focus
1	**The Blueprint: Designing the Future, Starting with You**	Turning interests into opportunity; personal branding; "Annoyance = Opportunity"; identifying real problems in school and community
2	**The Power Up: Your Unstoppable Voice**	Public speaking and executive presence; body language, vocal variety, and eye contact; live practice rounds
3	**Money Moves: The Language of Value**	Value beyond the dollar sign; pricing strategy (cost-plus, competitor, and value-based); scarcity, convenience, and demand
4	**The Dream Team: The Power of Collaboration**	Moving from individual idea to collaborative execution; team roles; networking and peer recognition
5	**Shark Tank Live: The Grand Pitch**	Team pitch presentations of student-built proposals; problem, solution, implementation, and the ask

Each workshop included tailored design, preparation, customization, and planning, along with facilitation on site.

HOW THE SESSIONS WERE DESIGNED

Several intentional practices ran through every session, each rooted in the program's confidence-building mission:

Student voice and choice: Students voted on the session topics, so the curriculum they experienced was the one they chose. Voting, polling, and "cheer-meter" feedback kept students in the decision-maker seat throughout.

Terminology sheets: Students received a terminology sheet at each session with business terms tied to that day's topic, and were encouraged to capture new terms that surfaced in discussion, building a working business vocabulary across the semester.

Mic time: A microphone was used during sessions so students could get comfortable holding a mic and speaking into it, a deliberate confidence-building practice that prepared them for the final live pitch.

Hands-on practice: Timed brainstorms, 30-second speaking challenges, role-play, peer "Silent Recommendation" exercises, and structured presentation rehearsals kept every student actively participating.

Local relevance: Prompts were grounded in students' real world: their school, Woodside, and Queens, making entrepreneurship feel immediate and personal rather than abstract and corporate.

WHAT STUDENTS BUILT

The program's throughline was real problem solving. Students identified problems in their own school, organized into two teams, and developed two proposals that they refined session over session and presented at Shark Tank Live:



Team 1: Reimagining School Dining

This team tackled cafeteria and dining experience improvements. Their proposal included menu inclusivity (vegetarian and Halal options), cultural variety reflecting the diversity of the student body, student menu voting through Google Forms, quality control through weekly student taste testers, fresher ingredients, self-service stations, microwave access, a school garden initiative, and upgraded water fountains.

Team 2: The Democratic Soundtrack

This team proposed student-curated music for hallway transitions: school-wide voting on "Music for Passing," a genre rotation across periods, curated clean playlists, cultural celebration features (such as Black History Month), advisory-period integration, and equipment upgrades. Their pitch framed the plan as "shovel-ready," complete with a voting system and implementation path.

Both proposals followed a professional pitch structure: the problem, the solution, implementation, and the ask. Students divided speaking roles, practiced delivery techniques from The Power Up session, and supported one another as presenting teams.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

The most significant outcomes of the semester were in how students showed up:

Confidence and voice: Students progressed from hesitant volunteers to teams of presenters holding a mic in front of their peers, using trained techniques for stance, projection, pausing, and eye contact.

Creative and critical thinking: Students learned to reframe annoyances as opportunities, evaluate ideas against implementation realities, and defend their reasoning under questioning.

Effective communication: Structured pitch practice and persuasive framing gave students transferable communication skills for high school, interviews, and beyond.

Collaboration: Team formation, role assignment, and peer recognition exercises showed students that great ideas grow through teams, networks, and shared execution.

Business literacy: Students can now speak the language of value: pricing frameworks, branding, market demand, team roles, and the fundamentals of building something from nothing.

Future-focused mindset: The semester closed with students seeing themselves as founders and leaders, anchored by the program mindset: "I Can & I Will."

A program highlight video accompanies this report and captures the energy and student participation across the experience.



LOOKING AHEAD: 2026-2027

The momentum from this semester creates a natural foundation for next school year. EYP welcomes the opportunity to continue the partnership and proposes exploring the following:

A returning program: A new cohort experience for incoming students, refined with lessons learned from this semester.

An advanced track: A next-level experience for returning students who completed this year's program, moving from pitching ideas to launching them.

Bringing student proposals to life: Supporting the school in implementing elements of the dining and music proposals, giving students the powerful experience of seeing their ideas become real.

A culminating showcase: A family and community experience that celebrates student work and strengthens school-community connection.





Sandra Garcia Green
Founder, Encounter Your Potential
Sandra@EncounterYourPotential.com | www.EncounterYourPotential.com