

## Experiential Learning Program

In the senior year at LPS, all students participate in the Experiential Learning Program (ELP). The ELP integrates functional academics, independent/community living components, and a work based experience into each student's schedule. Students alternate academics and ELP bi-weekly. The goal of ELP is to help students generalize their learned skills into various settings so they are better prepared for life after Learning Prep.

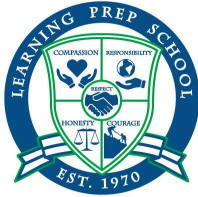
Students are assigned to *ELP Week 1* or *ELP Week 2*. Work placements, community-based outings, and classroom activities are assigned based on students' current abilities and independence levels, which enables curriculum development to more effectively meet individual needs.

On Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, students leave for their jobs/internships after first period and return at various times, depending on their work site (lunch, period 8, or period 9). On Thursdays, students attend JobLab at the Spaulding Hospital in Cambridge, where they participate in Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services), for the first half of the year. On Thursdays during the second half of the year, students may visit JobLab to continue practicing and reinforcing their skills, while other weeks they may participate in community-based or classroom-based activities designed to develop their independent living skills. On Fridays, students go out into the community to engage in real life experiences, such as: touring college/transition/trade school programs, a tax workshop, a banking lesson, budgeting for shopping, using public transportation, navigation, participating in community service, etc. Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapy staff often coordinate with Transition Department staff to work with students during the work week in some of the functional academic classes. Occupational Therapy will also periodically observe students at job sites throughout the school year.

The following is a breakdown of the topics covered:

### ***Work Experience***

All students participate in a work experience as part of their senior year curriculum. The purpose of this is for students to continue to develop skills needed to become independent, self-sufficient, and successful future employees. Job/internship sites are chosen with students' independence levels and abilities in mind. Students participate in all aspects of acquiring their job/internship including the application and interview process. Some examples of job sites include but are not limited to: Newton-Wellesley Hospital, Boston College, Babson College, Star Market, Dana Hall, and Roche Bros. All students have a job coach to provide a continuum of support based on individual needs. The level of support provided by the job coach tends to



decrease over time as students become more confident and comfortable in their positions. Job coaches meet with students regularly to develop and manage progress and goals, and to provide feedback and support around challenging situations. With the support of teachers and job coaches, students will manage approximately 12-15 hours of employment each work week. Transportation to and from work typically includes school vans, but may include public transportation or walking in certain instances.

### ***Assistive Technology***

Students meet with Learning Prep's Assistive Technology Specialist once per ELP week. Students are provided with time to get work done and have the opportunity to ask the assistive technology specialist for help using AT tools in the moment, while completing work.

### ***Financial Literacy***

Financial Literacy meets two times during ELP week. Students learn and practice functional math skills related to personal finance. Using mock currency, they practice bookkeeping and budgeting, as well as filling out forms related to bank accounts and loans. Students discover real costs related to housing, food, and transportation, and they set financial goals for the future. Students learn which tools, assistive technology, and other resources they find most useful for solving problems related to money.

### ***Soft Skills***

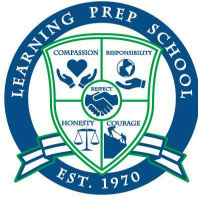
Soft Skills instruction happens three times per ELP week in the classroom and includes interpersonal skills necessary to have throughout a workplace. The focus includes topics such as communication skills, teamwork abilities, flexibility, adaptability, conflict resolution skills, managing stress, leadership skills, listening skills, emotional awareness, and empathy. This may also include social skills instruction, including understanding how to interact with various people (friends vs teachers vs co-worker vs supervisor), reflecting on social interactions at work, or building upon social skills through specific conversations topics and interactive games.

### ***Community-Based Life Skills***

Once an ELP week, students go on a community outing, where students practice their classroom based life skills in the community. This is an opportunity for students to generalize their learned skills outside of the familiar LPS setting. Outings include using public transportation, ordering food/drinks, navigating college campuses or other public buildings/campuses, visiting community agencies and resources, etc.

### ***Reading and Writing***

Reading and Writing instruction happens two periods per ELP week and includes topics such as reading job descriptions, completing personal information and emergency contact forms, following step-by-step directions to various manuals, and reading for pleasure.



### ***Executive Functioning Support***

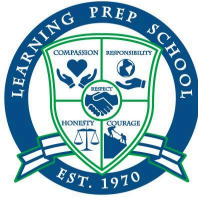
Two periods per ELP week, students receive executive functioning support, where they have an opportunity to fill in their planners, organize their Google Calendar, plan out their work packets for their academic classes, and receive check-ins on their progress towards work packet completion.

### ***JobLab***

On Thursdays of their ELP weeks for the first half of the year, students go to JobLab, which provides Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services). They participate in a variety of tasks, including completing tasks in a mock employment settings (CVS, hospital room, office), interacting with customers, developing their resumes, participating in mock interviews or performance reviews, etc. In the second half of the year, students may periodically return to Job Lab to refresh and reinforce their skills.

### ***Independent Project***

All students participate in this self-exploration project. The project provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their journey of personal and professional growth as a result of participating in the Experiential Learning Program. Students write reflections following each work week to stimulate contemplative and insightful thinking about their experiences. Reflections include topics such as work related highlights, work site challenges, how they solved certain challenges, what they learned, and a personal goal for the following week. The weekly reflections are intended to help students create a timeline of growth through the year. At the end of the school year they use these reflections to complete a final project where they write about their journey throughout the ELP. Students are encouraged to talk about areas of personal and professional achievement and relate this to their future personal and professional aspirations. Students may have an opportunity to present this project to their peers, teachers, job coaches, and parents at the end of the year.



\*Sample ELP Week Schedule

This represents what a student's schedule might look like during the ELP week:

|          |                               |                  |                               |   |   |
|----------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Period 1 | Executive functioning support | Soft skills      | Reading / Writing             | Soft Skills   | Goals/ Independent Project  |
| Period 2 | Work sites                    | Work sites       | Work sites                    | Snack/ Outing preview   | Snack/ Outing Preview   |
| Period 3 | ↓                             | ↓                | ↓                             | Pre-ETS at Job Lab (1st half of the year)<br>Community or classroom based activity (2nd half of the year) | Community based (travel training, post-secondary program visits, financial literacy skills training, etc) |
| Period 4 | ↓                             | ↓                | ↓                             | ↓   | ↓   |
| Period 5 | ↓                             | ↓                | ↓                             | ↓   | ↓   |
| Period 6 | ↓                             | ↓                | ↓                             | ↓   | ↓   |
| Period 7 | ↓                             | ↓                | ↓                             | ↓   | Lunch   |
| Period 8 | ↓                             | ↓                | ↓                             | Reflection/ extension activity  | Assistive Technology  |
| Period 9 | Soft Skills                   | Reading/ writing | Executive Functioning Support | Financial Literacy  | Financial Literacy  |



\*Please be advised of the following: work week jobs are subject to change; class schedules can vary; and outings can change depending on venue availability.