

My 2019 Summer Design Job: CPS Digital & Creative Services Intern

By Alexandra Holland



This summer, I worked as a design intern at the Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) Information, Communication and Technology Services (ICTS) Department. The title given to my position by the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP) was "Digital and Creative Services". The office I went to every day was actually inside the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. The ICTS Department basically manages every single computer and network system in the Cambridge Public School District and any related offices. They repair computers and network connections, write code, create student and faculty email addresses, monitor the content and function of the Aspen system, manage a database of student attendance for the entire district, evaluate and install software, design district websites, and much more. My supervisor, Lisa, is responsible for continuously updating the content and visuals of several CPSD websites.

Projects I was assigned to work on included icons for the CPS mobile app and website banners. I had never worked on app icons before, so I was eager to accept the challenge of creating simple designs to represent somewhat complicated concepts. Organization was crucial if I wanted to find anything ever again. I learned that the hard way when I accidentally made two copies of the same website banner, finished one of them after three days, and had a near heart attack when I opened the wrong one that I had barely started (It is *very* important to clean your desktop! Make lots of folders! Do not rely on the search tool!)

The job I had required knowledge of Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and Indesign, making it unique in MSYEP because very few jobs offered in the program actually have any prior qualifications. I did not mind the shorter hours or slight decrease in pay, because I knew that I was doing a job that I was genuinely interested in that would be a valuable addition to my resume for the future. It is also important to know that every job has its downtime, where you might feel like you are doing busywork. Just remember that it is always good to like what you do as a whole.

CRLS Students are eligible to participate in MSYEP up to and including the summer after graduating high school, which means this is my last year participating in the program. I am extremely grateful to have been involved with the program for four summers since turning 14, and I am glad I can carry skills of accountability, communication, and networking forward into the professional world. I hope to continue design work well into the future as I go on to pursue a BFA at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.