

Alabama Charter Application for a 2021 Opening

New Charter Application #000568

Breakthrough Charter School

Submitted To:

Alabama Public Charter School Commission
Alabama Charter School Commission
50 North Ripley St.
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone: 334-694-4908

Submitted By:

Darren Ramalho

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GENERAL

A. School Information

Open Date: August 1, 2021
Proposed Name: Breakthrough Charter School
School Type: Elementary / Middle / High
Grade Levels: [PK, K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]
School District: Perry County
Neighborhood / Community: Marion, Alabama
Organization Type: Non-profit Corporation
Sponsoring Entity: Non-profit Organization
Address: 1101 Washington Street Marion, Alabama 36756
Phone: (559) 696-4461
Fax:
Web Site: www.breakthroughcharterschool.org
Calendar Type: Standard - 180 instructional days
Educational Service Provider: (None)

B. Primary Contact Person

Name: Darren Ramalho
Mailing Address:
Mobile Phone: 5596964461
Alternate Phone:
Email: darrenramalho@gmail.com
Current Employer: Perry County Schools

C. Attendance Projections

Grade Level	2021-22 Enrollment		2022-23 Enrollment		2023-24 Enrollment		2024-25 Enrollment		2025-26 Enrollment		At Capacity 2025-26	
	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
PK	18	36	18	36	18	36	18	36	18	36	18	36
K	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30
1	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30
2	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30
3	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30
4	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30
5	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30
6	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30
7	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30
8	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30

9			20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30
10					20	30	20	30	20	30	20	30
11							20	30	20	30	20	30
12									20	30	20	30
Total	198	306	218	336	238	366	258	396	278	426	278	426

D. Board Members

Name	Title	Contact Information	Current Employer
Clachar, Larissa	Parent Representative	P: M: E: lclachar@judson.edu	Judson College
Crawford, Brittany	Board Treasurer	P: M: E: bcrawford@marionmilitary.edu	Marion Military Institute
Crews, Wendell	Parent Representative	P: M: E: wcrews@marionmilitary.edu	Marion Military Institute
Early, Kalen	Community Liaison	P: M: E: kearly@marionmilitary.edu	Marion Military Institute
Leavall, Laura	Board Member	P: M: E: lleavell14@gmail.com	Attorney
Ramalho, Darren	Board Chairperson	P: M: 15596964461 E: darrenramalho@gmail.com	Perry County Schools
Stevenson, Susan	Board Vice Chairperson	P: M: E: sstevenson@marionmilitary.edu	Marion Military Institute (Retired)
Vasquez-Painter, Eva	Board Secretary	P: M: E: epainter@marionmilitary.edu	Marion Military Institute

E. Start-up Team Members

Name	Title	Contact Information	Current Employer
Ramalho, Darren	Proposed Principal Candidate	P: M: 15596964461 E: darrenramalho@gmail.com	Perry County Schools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Executive Summary

Breakthrough Charter School and its community partners seek to leverage the City of Marion's unique assets to provide the innovative school Perry County desperately needs to improve student achievement and break the cycle of poverty.

The Breakthrough Charter School application represents the collective product of a network of partners, each committing powerful resources to create a new, break-the-mold school as a solution to the litany of challenges facing Perry County today. By partnering with Marion Military Institute, Judson College, and Main Street Marion, among others, Breakthrough Charter School will open with a diverse and experienced governing board, high-caliber leadership, community roots, and a multitude of amenities, including shared resources, teacher preparation partnerships, and student enrichment opportunities. Additionally, with support from expert external partners such as New Schools for Alabama, New Schools Venture Fund, and Citizens of the World Charter Schools, Breakthrough will open with strong operational structures and a deep commitment from local and national philanthropy. Moreover, the founding leader of Breakthrough will have access to world-class training opportunities through New Schools for Alabama's School Founders Program and through a year-long administrative residency with Citizens of the World.

With deep expertise in fields such as school development, instruction leadership, financial management, community relations, foreign language, and adolescent leadership development, our applicant team is well-equipped to deliver on the mission and vision of the school.

Mission and Vision

The mission of Breakthrough Charter School is to prepare students in Perry County for success as citizens and leaders by providing a rigorous, service-oriented, and project-based public school that supports the social-emotional development of each individual child.

Our vision is to become the leading educational option for students in Perry County and to produce a citizenry that is empowered to achieve their personal ambitions, break the cycle of poverty, and give back to their community. As a school rooted in robust community partnerships and extensive support systems from leading experts, we aim to be a powerful complement to Perry County Schools, sharing best practices and resources wherever possible. We will leverage our unique and robust partnerships to create rigorous academic experiences and profound opportunities for personal development, and we will honor Perry County's rich history by emphasizing service-oriented projects that improve the community and respect its past.

Our core values of Scholarship, Diversity, Leadership, and Community align with our mission and vision and drive our academic model.

Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population

Perry County desperately needs an innovative, high-quality public school that will prepare its students for college and career. By launching Breakthrough Charter School, the partners to this application hope to establish the excellent, tuition-free public school that must exist in order to prevent families from fleeing Perry County. And for the many who reside within Perry County but may have opted to home school their children or to send them to private schools, we hope to attract them back.

Since 2010, Perry County has suffered a 14% population loss. Perry County Schools has experienced a commensurate decline in enrollment, falling from 1,475 students in the 2015-16 school year to 1,142 students in 2019-20.

Yet, despite the loss in population and district enrollment, current data also show that there are many school-aged children living in Perry County who do not attend the local system. In 2019, there were roughly 1,938 school-aged residents in Perry County.

Accordingly, there are approximately 796 school-aged children living in Perry County who are not enrolled in the district. Breakthrough hopes to inspire many of those students to enroll or re-enroll in a public option, ensuring that they have access to the free, safe, nurturing, and academically rigorous environment they deserve.

By providing an excellent public school of choice, we hope to produce students who are equipped for success in college and career and will use that success to contribute to a thriving, renewed Perry County. Today, Perry County is the 4th poorest in Alabama. We have a 35% poverty rate and a median household income of \$23,561. In the 2019 Alabama Kids Count Data Book, Perry County was ranked the 5th worst of all 67 counties for child well-being, using indicators that include child poverty and food insecurity, among others. Compounding the cycle of poverty, only 15% of our adult population holds a 2- or 4-year degree (despite a high school graduation rate of 94.5%).

Today, there are two schools in the Perry County Schools system. The schools have been on the state's failing schools list for 5 of the last 6 years, and more strikingly, fewer than 1 in 4 students read or do math on grade level—the proficiency rates are 24% and 23% respectively, compared with 45% and 47% statewide. The district is similarly behind on state indicators such as chronic absenteeism. Simply put, we must provide better circumstances and better supports for our children. The Breakthrough model is designed to do just that.

Educational Plan/School Design

The Breakthrough model is rooted in 5 essential components:

1. Project-Based Learning.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is at the core of our model. Adapting the Citizens of the World Charter Schools model, Breakthrough teachers will design project-based units to align with Alabama standards. Teams of teachers will develop project-based units drawing cross-curricular content together into integrated units. To strengthen our capacity, we have partnered with Citizens of the World, which is one of the highest-performing PBL schools in the nation. Breakthrough's founding leader was selected to participate in the School Leaders Institute at Citizens of the World, wherein he will benefit from world-class guidance on best practices in launching and leading a PBL school.

2. Service Learning.

Students at Breakthrough will complete 2-4 content-embedded service learning projects with assistance from our community partners each year and will have protected time in the school's weekly schedule to do so. The scope of the service learning will vary based upon the grade level of students, with early grade levels doing service learning projects exclusively on campus and later grade levels gradually shifting to community-wide service projects.

3. Leadership Development.

Breakthrough will leverage its partnership with MMI to deliver students ongoing leadership development experiences via embedded lessons, leadership seminars at MMI, access to MMI's leader development obstacle courses, and access to support from the MMI Honor Guard.

4. Data-Driven Instruction.

Teachers and students will be taught how to read and analyze data effectively, and student growth analyzed through data will be celebrated at Breakthrough, in alignment with our core value of Scholarship. Breakthrough teachers will meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities on early release Wednesday to review data from the past week. This data may be formative or summative. During this time, teachers are able to identify student performance gaps in core academic content.

5. Foreign Language Infusion.

Breakthrough will use its schedule to allow for protected instructional time during which K-8 students will learn Spanish using virtual platforms and in-person instruction. Additionally, high school students at Breakthrough will be required to successfully complete at

least two Spanish courses with an emphasis on speaking, listening, reading, and writing. To ensure students are learning age-appropriate Spanish materials, Breakthrough will partner with Spanish professors at Judson College.

These represent only the core tenets of our model. Underlying the entire academic will be a rigorous, standards-aligned, high-quality curriculum that will allow us to enhance the content with culturally responsive texts, materials, and activities. For more on our curriculum, see the Curriculum & Instruction section.

Community Engagement

Breakthrough is the product of several community organizations that are supporting the school's development. Specifically, MMI, Judson College, and Main Street Marion are three organizations that have deep roots in the community. Each entity has offered support and resources to ensure the schools' success.

Additionally, we have partnered with Black Alabamians for Education to host numerous community meetings and focus groups to assess the needs and wishes of parents. Parents, community members, educators, and business owners all attended. Meetings were held throughout Perry County to encourage attendance and ensure each community had some agency in the development of the school. Ultimately, such efforts led to dozens of attendees showing up to our public hearings in support, with many speaking in favor of the school and none speaking in opposition. While the need and demand are apparent, we will continue to engage on an ongoing basis with the assistance of our partners to ensure that community members and parents have a consistent voice. For more information, see Section 12 of this application.

Leadership and Governance

Breakthrough's proposed Head of School, Darren Ramalho, is pursuing a graduate degree in Public School Building Leadership at Columbia Teachers College. He was selected as one of two fellows in the competitive School Founders Program at New Schools for Alabama, and he is completing an administrative residency with Citizens of the World Charter Schools. He is also an alumnus of Teach For America, having taught 6 years at R.C. Hatch High School in Perry County Schools. Finally, he completed a fellowship in TFA's Rural School Leadership Academy and was a member of the ALSDE State Superintendent Teacher Cabinet.

See Attachment 1 and the Educational Program Capacity section for more information.

Enrollment Summary

In year 1, Breakthrough will enroll a maximum of 306 students spanning grades PK-8, enrolling 20-30 students per class with a 1:13 student:teacher ratio and 1:11 student:staff ratio. Our target enrollment is 24 students per class. At maximum capacity, enrollment is at 426 students. The enrollment model is designed to ensure financial sustainability while the staffing model ensures smaller student:teacher ratios, which best suits our academic model.

Attachments

Section 1: Executive Summary

1.1	Attachment 1- Leadership and Governance	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:34 AM	PDF / 565.306 KB
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EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND CAPACITY

1. Program Overview

Breakthrough Charter School is the result of numerous partners in our community collaboratively recognizing an urgent need to improve our students' educational experiences and developing a community-based solution to address that need. Because we are the beneficiary of several partners, including MMI, Judson College, and Main Street Marion, we are able to capitalize on the unique, powerful assets that each can offer to support student needs.

Essential Design Elements

As noted in the Executive Summary, to serve our mission and vision, Breakthrough Charter School will foster a rigorous learning environment that prepares our students for success and contributes to our efforts to break the cycle of poverty, thereby improving Perry County students' lives and strengthening our community. Accordingly, our model will have the following essential design elements:

1. Project-Based Learning;
2. Service-Learning;
3. Leadership Development;
4. Data-Driven Instruction; and
5. Foreign Language Infusion.

1. Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning (PBL) at its core connects theory and content to applicable, hands-on learning. Research has repeatedly shown that PBL can not only enhance student engagement due to its hands-on nature, but can also significantly increase student retention (Strobel & Van Barneveld, 2009; Walker & Leary, 2009). Moreover, when PBL is consistently, effectively implemented, students achieve significantly higher percentages across reading and math, particularly among students of color (Cervantes, Hemmer & Kouzekanani, 2015). Hence, PBL strongly supports our core value of Scholarship.

While some traditional teachers may incorporate projects into their pedagogical practices, these projects are typically on a standalone or ad hoc basis and not implemented consistently and continuously schoolwide. Conversely, at Breakthrough Charter School, PBL is one of the foundational elements of our model. Rather than learning all content in isolated timeframes, students at Breakthrough will learn across disciplines on a daily basis, integrating discipline theory and application into meaningful projects around engaging topics.

Breakthrough teachers will design project-based units to align with Alabama State standards in a meaningful way. Grade-band teams of teachers will develop project-based units in which the science and social studies thematic elements draw cross-curricular content together into integrated units.

To strengthen our capacity to implement a high-quality PBL program, we have partnered with Citizens of the World Charter Schools, which is one of the highest-performing PBL schools in the nation. Breakthrough's founding leader was selected among a competitive field to participate in the School Leaders Institute at Citizens of the World, wherein he will benefit from world-class guidance on best practices in launching and leading a PBL school.

2. Service-Learning

Service-learning integrates community service with curriculum. Several research studies associate student engagement through service-learning with positive outcomes in five areas: attitude toward self, attitude toward school and learning, civic engagement, social skills, and academic achievement (Celio, Durlak & Dymnicki, 2011). Service-learning will directly tie to content standards and will include a period of reflection or analysis of the activities in which students discuss, write about, or create presentations about what they have learned and what impact their service has made on the community.

Students at Breakthrough will complete 2-4 content-embedded service learning projects each year and will have protected time in the school's weekly schedule to do so. The scope of the service learning will vary based upon the grade level of students. Service-learning will begin in the classroom for students in grades K-2, will then focus on service projects for the school in grades 3-5, and will then extend to the larger community for students in grades 6-8. Students in grades 9-12 will have the opportunity to practice service-learning across Perry County and in neighboring Black Belt counties. Students will also have the opportunity to learn more about the local context, better understanding the racial and socioeconomic dynamics that exist in Alabama's Black Belt.

Breakthrough will partner with community stakeholders to identify possible service-learning opportunities. Stakeholders that have already committed their support include Main Street Marion and Marion Military Institute. The practice of engaging students using such a hands-on, unique learning approach aligns with our core values of Leadership and Community and directly supports the project-based learning foundation of our academic program.

3. Leadership Development

Research shows that student leadership training programs can significantly increase personal, academic, and wellbeing outcomes for students and can be "a further means of enhancing socioeconomic benefits" (Hallinger, 2003; Marsh, 2012).

Due to our robust partnership with MMI, students at Breakthrough will have access to gold standard leadership development opportunities, including participating in trainings at MMI's leader-reaction and obstacle courses, civic mentoring programs with the MMI Honor Guard, age-appropriate dilemma discussions facilitated by MMI, and inclusion during MMI Guest Speaker programs. Such opportunities will not only impact students on an academic and social-emotional level, but they will also expose students to meaningful postsecondary opportunities.

4. Data-Driven Instruction

Data-driven instruction relies on data analysis to inform teaching and learning. Research demonstrates that using data in instructional decision-making can lead to improved student performance (Lewis, Madison-Harris, Muoneke & Times, 2011). Data-driven instruction will ensure the needs of all students are being met through careful, intentional planning. Teachers and students will be taught how to read and analyze data effectively, and student growth analyzed through data will be celebrated at Breakthrough, in alignment with our core value of Scholarship.

Breakthrough teachers will meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities on early release Wednesday to review data from the past week. This data may be formative or summative. During this time, teachers are able to identify student performance gaps in core academic content.

In addition to meeting the needs of all students through daily differentiation of instruction, Breakthrough's scheduling design allows protected time for RTI and Enrichment. During this time, teachers will have the autonomy to create centers and student learning opportunities aimed at creating appropriate, rigorous scaffolds to help students attain mastery of core content. Students will also learn to track data at Breakthrough in an effort to help students understand their content mastery. This will allow students to look at their own data and gives teachers, parents, and students opportunities to set learning goals collectively.

5. Foreign Language Infusion

A 2017 Census survey estimated that over 40 million Americans speak Spanish and that the number of people in the workforce that speak two languages will continue to rise in the coming years. Beginning foreign language infusion at an early age has proven to help students improve problem-solving and creativity. Additionally, being bilingual has been proven to enhance future career

opportunities (Rafferty, E.A., 1986). Consistent student exposure to Spanish at Breakthrough will improve academic performance, build language fluency, and teach students to connect with other cultures. Connecting students through learning about other cultures cultivates empathy, which will directly tie into social emotional learning and mindfulness practices we plan to embody as part of our school culture.

Spanish infusion also aligns with our core values of scholarship and Diversity. Breakthrough's schedule again allows for protected instructional time during which students will learn Spanish. Additionally, high school students at Breakthrough will be required to successfully complete at least two Spanish courses with an emphasis on speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

Breakthrough will partner with Spanish professors at Judson College and Marion Military Institute to ensure students are learning age-appropriate Spanish materials. Dr. Larissa Clachar heads the Spanish Department at Judson College and serves on Breakthrough's founding board.

Instructional Strategies

With PBL at the root of our academic model, Breakthrough embraces the world renowned and research-based strategies developed by the Buck Institute, which is perhaps the foremost resource center and professional development provider for project-based learning in the nation. The Buck Institute framework features the following Seven Teaching Practices of Project-Based Learning (Boss & Larmer, 2018):



1. Design and plan. Intentional design of the learning experience sets the stage for students and teachers to capitalize on the full potential of PBL. Essential Project Design Elements provide a blueprint for the project, including planning for both formative and summative assessment. Teacher decisions at the design stage include curating resources and, potentially, connecting with experts or community partners. Project Based Learning plans allow room for student voice and choice but keep the project from becoming unwieldy.
2. Align to standards. By aligning projects to meaningful learning goals, teachers ensure that PBL is academically rigorous and has an emphasis on priority standards and higher-order thinking. What's more, students understand why they're learning what they're learning and how PBL relates to the world beyond the classroom.
3. Build the culture. Classroom culture conveys an ethic of care, an emphasis on excellence, and a sense of shared intention. The right culture builds students' independence, fosters collaboration, encourages a growth mindset, supports risk taking, encourages high-quality work, and builds inclusiveness and equity. In many ways, culture is the fuel for student voice and choice, sustained inquiry, and persistence. Positive culture doesn't get built with a one-day team builder. It's an ongoing effort to create an inclusive community of learners.
4. Manage activities. A well-managed PBL experience enables students to get to deep learning and develop the teamwork

and self-management skills that will serve them in life. Project management strategies focus on productivity and efficiency, but PBL is not about following a recipe. A well-managed project allows for sometimes "messy" learning.

5. Scaffold student learning. Scaffolding creates conditions so every student can succeed with the project and master learning goals. In an equitable classroom, students' prior learning experiences, language fluency, or reading levels are not barriers to success.
6. Assess student learning. Assessment ensures that students work toward mastery. It's not about "gotchas" or sorting but about growth. PBL requires a balance of formative and summative assessment, including both team and individual feedback. Feedback comes from multiple sources, including peers, experts, and audiences along with the teacher. Students have time to improve and refine their work based on comprehensive feedback.
7. Engage and coach. Engaging and coaching strategies bring out the best in students. Coaching strategies use questioning, modeling, and reflection to build intrinsic motivation and help students achieve their learning goals. A caring, trusting relationship between teacher and students is the foundation for successful PBL (Boss & Larmer, 2018)

In addition the Seven Teaching Practices of Project-Based Learning, Breakthrough will use the following culturally-responsive instructional strategies for students, all of which are research-based and easily adaptable to meet the cultural needs of our particular student population.

Strategy	Explanation
Discovery/ Inquiry-Based Learning	Inquiry learning is based on constructivist theories of learning, where knowledge is "constructed" from experience and process. It covers a range of approaches, including: field work, case studies, investigations, individual and group projects, and research projects. This strategy provides opportunities for culturally-responsive teaching because students are able to explore specific problems and experiences that reflect their needs and interests and, in many cases, stem from within their own communities.
Learning Centers	Learning centers are areas created within the classroom where students learn through a designated activity and/or play. Play is an active form of learning that involves the whole child. Cognitive development is also enhanced by child-initiated exploration and discovery. In learning centers, students learn to make decisions, cooperate and share with others, and problem-solve. The role of the teacher is to (1) observe, listen, and ask questions; (2) demonstrate, participate, or help as needed; and (3) discuss and make connections.
Modeling	Modeling is an instructional strategy wherein the teacher or another student demonstrates a new concept or skill and students learn by observing and emulating. Modeling is an effective instructional strategy when it allows students to observe thought processes and imitate particular behaviors or steps in a process.
Service- Learning	Service-Learning is curriculum-based community service that integrates service with classroom instruction. Beyond simply performing volunteer acts, service-learning is structured in a way that gives students opportunities to use what they are learning through the academic curriculum. Consistent community partner visits would further ground students in their community – creating a sense of "Why" and building further networking opportunities. Even the youngest students can offer service to their classrooms and schools. Service- learning offers the opportunity to deliver culturally-responsive, community-oriented projects selected collaboratively with the students to reflect their needs and interests.

RTI	Response to Intervention (RTI) is essentially data-informed high-quality instruction to meet the learning needs of all students implemented through a tiered-model of instruction (e.g., Burns, Appleton, & Stehouwer, 2005). All students will receive a universal screener, helping to inform differentiation and intervention. For more on RTI, see the Curriculum & Instruction section.
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Performance Goals

Area	Metric	Goal
Student Achievement	% of students achieving proficiency on state accountability tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% annual increase from baseline proficiency on state accountability tests • Schoolwide proficiency averages above Perry County average for equivalent grade levels
Student Growth	% of students reaching academic growth targets	At or above state average on annual academic growth targets
College and Career Readiness	% of students deemed college and career ready	At or above state college and career readiness average
Graduation	% of students graduating in 4 years	90% of students will graduate within four years
Service Learning	% of students completing service-learning projects	100% of students will complete a service-learning project annually

Attachments

Section 1: Program Overview

– No Attachments –

2. Curriculum and Instructional Design

Our mission is to prepare students in Perry County for success as citizens and leaders by providing a rigorous, service-oriented, and project-based public school that supports the social-emotional development of each individual child. Ultimately, we aim to become the leading educational option for students in Perry County, producing a citizenry that is empowered to achieve their personal ambitions, break the cycle of poverty, and give back to their community.

To accomplish our mission and vision, we need a learning environment that is highly-engaging and relevant to our children's lives and the real world as we know it in Perry County. We need programming that instills strong leadership values in our students and inspires them to get involved in their community. And we need educators who are equipped to make informed decisions about each child's educational and emotional needs so that they can deliver effective, aligned instruction and appropriate interventions.

Each of these needs has fueled the development of our academic model, which has the following essential design elements:

1. Project-Based Learning;
2. Service-Learning;
3. Leadership Development;
4. Data-Driven Instruction; and
5. Foreign Language Infusion.

Using these essential design elements as the bedrock of our model, we have designed a learning environment that will meet the unique needs of our students and reflect our community-based roots.

Basic Learning Environment

Breakthrough Charter School aims to cultivate a learning environment that has not traditionally been seen in Alabama's Black Belt. Breakthrough students will benefit from a culturally-responsive curriculum that emphasizes the importance of student learning through experience, including project-based learning and service-learning.

The School Experience

Students will regularly receive various modalities of instruction, including direct instruction, small group instruction, and 1:1 intervention; however, much of the learning will be energetic and collaborative as students conduct research, engage in hands-on projects, and work in the community.

Students will be organized into small, but somewhat traditional classrooms. However, learning will not take place simply in rowed or clustered seats; learning will be more fluid and will often take place in the form of field studies in the community.

The Approach to Teaching & Learning

We will celebrate our rural context and work to cultivate a diverse school model that reflects the makeup and needs of our community. Breakthrough's leadership team has conducted meticulous research when considering the school's curriculum and instruction. Each component of our curriculum and instruction design intimately aligns with the Alabama Course of Study standards and Common Core standards. Furthermore, our pedagogical approaches recognize that Alabama education policy is currently rewriting state standards across disciplines. Breakthrough's learning model has the flexibility to ensure the needs of our students are met and exceeded at the state and national level.

Breakthrough's learning environment will promote inquiry, creativity, and intellectual development in a safe, diverse space. Breakthrough students will be encouraged to fully engage in opportunities made available and to take ownership of their futures in order to bring about transformative change to our rural community. Each classroom will be led by a highly-qualified teacher, and the teacher is tasked with the responsibility of delivering rigorous English, mathematics, science, and social studies content that meets the needs of students in the classroom. While teachers will be held to high expectations, the school's administrative team will support teachers and staff to meet their professional needs. All PK-2 elementary teachers will work in tandem with a teaching assistant to ensure the academic and social-emotional needs of our students are being met during this foundational period in their educational experience.

Teachers will collaborate with special education teachers and EL teachers to address special student population needs through supplemental small-group instruction and co-teaching.

While teachers will provide tiered instruction in English and mathematics classes daily, students will also have protected time weekly during Enrichment and Intervention. During this time, teachers in grade-band teams will make informed remediation or enrichment decisions based upon data reviewed during weekly PLC meetings on Early Release Wednesdays. Breakthrough plans

to maintain small class sizes across grade levels, as indicated by the chart below.

Class Size

Grade Level	Student:Teacher Ratio	Class Structure
PK-2	24:2 (Teacher and Assistant)	small group, centers, whole group, carpet time, collaborative groups, project- based, service-learning
3-5	24:1	small group, centers, whole group, collaborative groups, project-based, service-learning
6-8	24:1	small group, whole group, collaborative groups, project-based, service-learning
9-12	24:1	small group, whole group, collaborative groups, project-based, service-learning

At Breakthrough, we believe student performance relies on:

- Data Analysis: Identifying student strengths and target growth areas based on testing/other data
- Curriculum Review: Review when and how target standard was taught, determines if the standard can be retaught in a new, more creative manner
- Observation and Assessment: Teachers observe each other; leadership performs formal/informal observations and gives feedback
- Professional Development: Prioritize professional development for faculty and facilitate teacher-led development

Breakthrough provides teachers the space to analyze data in grade band Professional Learning Communities daily during common planning. Teachers will have the opportunity to fine tune lesson plans, analyze formative and summative data, review instructional strategies used in the classroom, and determine the best course of action to address student needs during protected time for remediation and enrichment. Teachers will be able to observe best practices by reviewing recorded lessons during. Furthermore, to ensure faculty remain engaged in up-to-date best practices across disciplines, weekly professional development, led by teachers, the Head of School, or other professional development consultants requested by the Head of School. Breakthrough asserts these regular practices will improve student performance in our context.

All curriculum selections were made after hours of collaboration with CenterPoint Education Solution's Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Bonnie Hain. The information below indicates the proposed curriculum selection by content and the rationale behind each curricular selection.

English-Language Arts

An effective English-Language Arts curriculum exposes students to diverse ideas and cultures through reading multicultural texts, writing in a variety of forms and fashions, and critically thinking about how literature connects to global issues and topics. Currently, the Alabama State Department of Education is drafting a new ELA Course of Study to better address the needs of students in our state. Darren Ramalho, our school founder, currently serves on the Alabama State Department of Education English Language Arts (ELA) Course of Study Committee and Taskforce.

As a result, the curriculum selected for Breakthrough was selected in recognition of this transition in Alabama education policy.

Breakthrough plans to use the EL Curriculum as our ELA curriculum for grades K-8 due to its project-based learning emphasis, culturally-relevant text choices, and leadership development opportunity for teachers. EL's curriculum embodies key principles that

align with Breakthrough's mission, vision, and core values, including "the primacy of self-discovery, diversity and inclusion, service and compassion, and the having of wonderful ideas". We have attached EL's pacing guide, which we plan to reflect in our lesson planning.

Teachers will have the ability to develop project-based units that are socially relevant and aligned to state and national standards. Furthermore, EdReports evaluators awarded the curriculum nearly perfect scores when considering the curriculum's text quality and usability. High school students will use Achievement First ELA curriculum due to its history of success with low-income students and alignment with the Alabama Course of Study (ALCOS). Teachers in grades eight and nine will work together to address any alignment gaps. Furthermore, this base curriculum allows teachers the autonomy to add culturally relevant texts and projects to ensure that the learning reflects Perry County student needs and interests.

Recognizing the passage of the Alabama Literacy Act, the Head of School has begun collaborating with Jean Allen and Ada Catherine van Wyhe from the ALSDE Department of Early Childhood Education to ensure our students receive the support needed to be reading at or above grade level by third grade to prevent retention. Our staffing model also includes a reading specialist to support educators in the K-3 gradeband.

Attachment 2 provides scope and sequence of EL and Achievement First curriculums. Breakthrough plans for faculty to follow this scope and sequence model. We have also attached a sample EL lesson plan and performance to highlight the rigor and intentionality of this curriculum choice. Variations may be made when considering text selection to ensure cultural responsiveness.

Sources:

<https://eleducation.org/who-we-are/our-approach>

<https://www.edreports.org/reports/overview/el-education-k-5-language-arts-2017>

Mathematics

Breakthrough's mathematics curriculum challenges students to master standards through real-world application. Breakthrough believes applying mathematical theories and content to real-world problems and service opportunities will ignite a passion for math at an early age. Again, Breakthrough was intentional when selecting a curriculum that pushes students to see math's applicability in the world. enVision Mathematics curriculum has been selected for grades K-12 because the curriculum merges problem-based learning and visual learning and because it received excellent marks on EdReports.org for its rigor, alignment, and usability.

Lessons start with Problem-Based Learning (PBL), where students must think critically about a real-world math problem, evaluate options, collaborate, and present solutions. This is followed by Visual Learning to solidify the underlying math concepts. Also, EdReports evaluators awarded enVision curriculum nearly perfect scores when considering the curriculum's text quality and usability.

Sources:

<https://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PS37Dc&PMDbSiteId=2781&PMDbSolutionId=>

<https://www.edreports.org/reports/overview/envision-mathematics-common-core-2020>

Science and Social Studies

EL curriculum will cover a number of science and social studies topics during text studies. However, additional key science and social studies standards will be addressed during project-based learning and service-learning units and coordinated with the EL curriculum. All curriculum selected will be aligned with the Alabama Course of Study (ALCOS) and teachers will use resources from Alabama Exchange to create lesson plans that are also project-based and service-learning oriented. Teachers will use Carolina Biological to purchase kits that can be shared among teachers to ensure students engage in hand-on science learning experiences. We will also use STEMScopes. These kits will be selected by grade-bands based on state and national standards.

Sources:

https://www.carolina.com/?s_cid=ppc_gl_Carolina&gclid=EAlalQobChMlxu2-hqG45QIVV9yGC

<https://www.stemscopes.com/about>

<https://alex.state.al.us/browseSS.php>

Instructional Strategies

Breakthrough Charter School recognizes that students need to engage with content through a variety of instruction. Our teachers plan to employ the instructional strategies listed below, incorporating best practices as seen at University Charter School. Furthermore, teachers will be given professional development around differentiating instructional strategies to ensure ALL student needs are being met appropriately. These research-based strategies will meet the needs of students in Perry County, considering parental involvement in curriculum selections and founding board member experiences working the the Perry County Schools system.

Teachers will be expected to work with special education teachers to make appropriate modification and accommodations, which may include shorter texts, choice assignments to master standard, more personalized instruction, and more time to complete tasks.

Instructional Strategy	Description
Adapting to Learning Styles/Multiple Intelligences	The cognitive theory of multiple intelligences posits that students learn, remember, perform, and understand in different ways, including various intelligences, such as musical–rhythmic, visual–spatial, verbal–linguistic, logical–mathematical, bodily–kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. (Armstrong, 2017)
Student Work Analysis	Analysis of student work may be (1) a feature of a lesson conducted by a teacher; (2) individual feedback provided to students from a teacher; (3) a discussion among a small group of students who are providing feedback to one another; (4) a discussion among teachers of the aspects of student work; and/or (5) a mode of formally assessing a skill, such as writing. For any of the foregoing purposes, some protocol describing the attributes and levels of quality for the particular learning task is required as the basis of an analysis.
Student Conferencing	A one-to-one teacher conference with a student about his or her work in progress is prevalent in teaching writing and speaking, but it is also useful in other areas. Preparation (on the part of both the teacher and the student) before the conference, careful listening during the conference, recordkeeping, and follow-up are essential components for a successful outcome.
Cooperative Learning	Students in small heterogeneous groups take roles and learn to share knowledge and tasks with one another through a variety of structures. Common features of effective cooperative learning include team building, positive interdependence, group interaction, structured activity, and individual accountability (Johnson, 1994).
	This instructional approach is structured, sequenced, and led by teachers and/or present academic content through teacher lecture or demonstration. Many components of direct instruction

Direct Instruction	are basic to effective teaching, including identifying learning goals, organizing and sequencing lessons to strengthen understanding, modeling a process ("I Do, We Do, You Do"), providing descriptions and illustrations, checking for understanding, and providing feedback (Eisenhart, 2007).
Discovery/Inquiry-Based Learning	Inquiry learning is based on constructivist theories of learning, where knowledge is "constructed" from experience and process. It covers a range of approaches, including: field work, case studies, investigations, individual and group projects, and research projects. This strategy provides opportunities for culturally-responsive teaching because students are able to explore specific problems and experiences that reflect their needs and interests and, in many cases, stem from within their own communities.
Learning Centers	Learning centers are areas created within the classroom where students learn through a designated activity and/or play. Play is an active form of learning that involves the whole child. Cognitive development is also enhanced by child-initiated exploration and discovery. In learning centers, students learn to make decisions, cooperate and share with others, and problem-solve. The role of the teacher is to (1) observe, listen, and ask questions; (2) demonstrate, participate, or help as needed; and (3) discuss and make connections.
Modeling	Modeling is an instructional strategy wherein the teacher or another student demonstrates a new concept or skill and students learn by observing and emulating. Modeling is an effective instructional strategy when it allows students to observe thought processes and imitate particular behaviors or steps in a process.
Peer Teaching/Collaboration	Collaborative learning is based on the theory that knowledge is a social construct. Collaborative activities are most often based on four principles: (1) the learner or student is the primary focus of instruction; (2) interaction and "doing" are of primary importance; (3) working in groups is an important mode of learning; (4) structured approaches to developing solutions to real-world problems should be incorporated into learning. Collaborative learning can occur peer-to-peer or in larger groups. Peer teaching/learning is a type of collaborative learning that involves students working in pairs or small groups to discuss concepts, or find solutions to problems. It enables learners to take responsibility for reviewing, organizing, and consolidating existing knowledge and material; understanding its basic structure; filling in the gaps; finding additional meanings; and reformulating knowledge into new conceptual frameworks. Learning from peers increases learning both for the students being helped as well as for those giving the help.

<p>Project-Based Learning</p>	<p>Project-based learning will be a fundamental instructional strategy embraced at Breakthrough. Projects tend to be more open-ended than problem-based learning, giving students more choice when it comes to demonstrating what they know. Different from stand-alone projects that are the culmination of a learning unit, PBL projects are the learning unit, meaning that fundamental concepts and skills are learned throughout the project. Projects are typically framed with open-ended questions that drive students to investigate, do research, and/or construct their own solutions. Students use technology tools much as professionals do—to communicate, collaborate, research, analyze, create, and publish their own work. The Program Overview section highlights the research and model Breakthrough intends to embody.</p>
<p>SMART Goal Setting</p>	<p>Teachers who set, define, and communicate learning objectives effectively with students employ research-based findings that say goal setting with students should:</p> <p>(1) encourage student ownership (e.g., creating own goals, personalizing teacher goals, committing to contracts, and providing feedback on their progress in journals, videos, etc.); (2) focus on understanding over accomplishing tasks; and (3) allow students enough time to adapt goals to their own interests, learning styles, and prior knowledge. Setting goals benefits from explicit instruction.</p>
<p>Service-Learning</p>	<p>Service-Learning is curriculum-based community service that integrates service with classroom instruction. Beyond simply performing volunteer acts, service-learning is structured in a way that gives students opportunities to use what they are learning through the academic curriculum. Consistent community partner visits would further ground students in their community – creating a sense of “Why” and building further networking opportunities. Even the youngest students can offer service to their classrooms and schools. Service- learning offers the opportunity to deliver culturally-responsive, community-oriented projects selected collaboratively with the students to reflect their needs and interests.</p>
<p>RTI</p>	<p>Response to Intervention (RTI) is essentially data-informed high-quality instruction to meet the learning needs of all students implemented through a tiered-model of instruction (e.g., Burns, Appleton, & Stehouwer, 2005). All students will receive a universal screener, helping to inform differentiation and intervention. For more on RTI, see the Special Populations and At-Risk Student section.</p>
	<p>Although used in academic dialogue and text, academic vocabulary and language may not necessarily be encountered in conversation. Understanding academic vocabulary and language</p>

Academic Vocabulary and Language	helps students to understand oral directions and classroom instructional dialogue and to comprehend texts across different content areas, including math, science, and social studies/history. Important for all learners, academic vocabulary and language must be taught explicitly, particularly to second language learners.
Independent Work	At times, students will work independently in an effort to demonstrate mastery of certain course material. This will be one strategy used to assess student performance. Assignments completed independently will vary.

Attachments

Section 2: Curriculum and Instructional Design

2.1	Attachment- Sample EL Lesson Plan and Performance Task	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:27 PM	PDF / 2.319 MB
2.2	Attachment 2- EL/Achievement First Curriculum Scope and Sequence Sample	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:36 AM	PDF / 596.554 KB

3. Student Performance Standards

Breakthrough Charter School will work to prepare all students to succeed socially and academically by setting high academic standards that align with our mission, vision, and core values. Student performance standards aim to celebrate academic growth/mastery when considering content and individual growth when considering student leadership, understanding of diverse cultures, and community engagement.

Academics

Breakthrough Charter School will use the Alabama State Department of Education Learning Standards.

	K-5	5-8	9-12
ELA Standards	ALSDE ELA Standards and Common Core Curriculum Guide to the Alabama Course of Study: ELA K-12		
Math Standards	ALSDE Math Standards and Common Core Curriculum Guide to the Alabama Course of Study: Math K-12		
Science Standards	ALSDE Science Standards and Common Core Curriculum Guide to the Alabama Course of Study: Science K-12		
S.S. Standards	ALSDE Social Studies Standards and Common Core Curriculum Guide to the Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies K-12		

Complete learning standards for each grade are found here:

ELA Course of Study: http://web.alsde.edu/general/ALCCS_Alabama_English_Language_Arts_Course_of_Study.pdf

Math Course of Study: www.alsde.edu/sec/sct/COS/2016%20Revised%20Alabama%20Course%20of%20Study%20Ma

Science Course of Study: www.alsde.edu/sec/sct/COS/2015%20FINAL%20Science%20COS%2010-1-15.pdf

Social Studies Course of Study: www.alsde.edu/sec/ses/Curriculum%20Guides/cgsocialstudies.pdf

In all subjects and grade levels, Breakthrough will rely on the Alabama Course of Study (ALCOS) standards as a bar for academic rigor and for the most important learning outcomes to prepare students for Alabama state assessments. Student success will be measured daily and weekly through a variety of means. Attachment 4 highlights sample student learning standards for an elementary, middle, and high school grade by content.

Summative assessments and project-based learning final products will challenge students to learn through experience while also preparing to demonstrate mastery through the Alabama Course of Study. Setting high expectations is critical to student success. As a result, the goal for student mastery of content will be 80% or higher, which is nearly double the current performance of traditional public schools in Perry County.

Beyond Academics

Diversity

Considering the history of racial division in Marion, BCS has inclusion as one of its top goals. There is a mindset of sensitivity and the expectation is that all students will work together regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status. Our model is culturally responsive; it has substantial parent and family involvement, and emphasizes hands-on engagement through project-based learning. By working together students learn to respect, trust and appreciate one another. They can learn from each other and their families as they become more and more involved in school culture. Through implementation of our curriculum and culture plans, students will be able to work with peers and stakeholders of various backgrounds, bringing much-needed progress towards unification, cross-cultural understanding, and restorative healing.

Leadership

BCS prepares its graduates to succeed in their future endeavors by empowering them to do whatever they set out to do. It is important for students to take pride in their own success; the role of the school will be to guide them as they lead their own initiatives. We want to help students develop into self-aware individuals who will be civically responsible and global minded who can look at the big picture and determine what they need to do and are able to do within their context. Students will be able to leave Breakthrough Charter School with the skillsets needed to identify problems and work with others to develop innovative solutions.

Community

Being a small town in the heart of the Black Belt, community is fundamental in Marion. It is important for our students to learn to recognize the needs of their community and take action. By being in an inclusive setting, students will gain sensitivity to the needs of the community through communication and exposure. Students will participate in community service regularly through partnerships with Main Street Marion and other local organizations. By doing so, students will be able to become compassionate leaders and will learn to care for and advocate for marginalized populations.

Promotion Criteria

In an effort to ensure students are prepared to be successful in grade level, we have established the promotion criteria below based on best practices seen in the only other rural charter school in the state of Alabama, University Charter School. The Head of School also reviewed these promotion criterias with Teachers College, Columbia University faculty to further support the notion that

these promotion strategies are best practice aligned with education research.

In grades PK-2, to be promoted to the next grade level, students must score proficient (on grade level) in reading and writing on the End-of-Year Progress Report or show significant progress (documented by literacy assessments and work samples) toward meeting current grade level skills. Students also must score proficient on the quarterly math assessments or show significant progress (documented by objective assessments and work samples) toward meeting current grade level skills.

In grades 3-5, to be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades 4-5 should demonstrate grade level proficiency and make adequate academic growth for the year in reading and mathematics. b) In addition, students must pass language arts and mathematics and one other core subject (science or social studies).

In grades 6-8, to be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades 6-8 should demonstrate grade level proficiency and make adequate academic growth for the year in reading and mathematics. b) In addition, students must pass language arts and mathematics and one other core subject (science or social studies).

In grades 9-12, Breakthrough will expect the following:

9th grade promotion: To be promoted from 9th to 10th grade, students must pass at least four of their core subject courses during both semesters and must have successfully completed a minimum of 6 units of credit.

10th grade promotion: To be promoted from 10th to 11th grade, students must pass at least four of their core subject courses during both semesters and must have successfully completed a minimum of 12 units of 29 credit. All 10th grade students must have completed at least 20 hours of community service learning in order to be promoted to the 11th grade.

11th grade promotion: To be promoted from 11th to 12th grade, students must have successfully completed a minimum of 18 units of credit.

Breakthrough students will need to meet all graduation requirements as outlined in the High School Graduation Requirements section. We have attached the Alabama High School Graduation Requirements as Attachment 5.

Retention

If a student needs to be retained based on the school's determination of the student's academic performance and/or other factors, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of that student shall be informed as early in the school year as possible. In all cases, the decision of whether a student should be promoted or retained shall be made on the basis of which grade placement provides the student a better chance of progressing in his/her educational development. Families whose children are at-risk for not being promoted to the next grade level will be sent written notice requesting an in-person meeting focused on action planning from all angles to better support the academic success of the student. Prior to a student being retained in a grade level, three such meetings must take place and be documented with family signatures.

Communication to Parents

Breakthrough will use culturally-responsive means to ensure that parents have adequate, timely, access to information concerning grading, promotion, and graduation policies. Such policies will be communicated in both English and Spanish at the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the year in parent-teacher meetings. Similarly, such information will be provided in English and Spanish in the Parent/Student Handbook, and on the school website. Upon request, Breakthrough will provide translation services.

Grades will be communicated with students on at least a weekly basis and parents on at least a monthly basis. Likewise, parents will have access to student performance data using our learning management system, which will be identified following the proper state procurement and regulations.

Attachments

Section 3: Student Performance Standards

3.1	Attachment 5- Alabama High School Graduation Requirements	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:41 AM	PDF / 159.233 KB
3.2	Attachment 4- Sample Grade Learning Standards (Elementary, Middle, High)	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:41 AM	PDF / 355.963 KB

4. High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only)

High school students at Breakthrough Charter School will be required to satisfy all graduation requirements as outlined by the state of Alabama. Final grades will be calculated using a traditional 4.0 scale. All high school courses, including dual enrollment course information, will be included on transcripts. We will also include the total number of community service hours completed on student transcripts. We plan to offer students access to a myriad of elective courses, including art, music, and physical education. Students' opportunity to holisitcally engage in core academic subjects with a project-based, service-oriented lens will properly equip students to be successful in the college and/or career of their choice.

To truly embrace our core values, Breakthrough Charter School plans to require high school students to fulfill the following additional requirements:

- 1. Students will be required to complete a minimum of 25 community service hours each year, completing a total of 100 community service hours.** These community service hours can be completed and signed off by a local nonprofit organization. This will supplement the service-learning component of our school model and emphasize the importance of community beyond the classroom.
- 2. Students will be required to complete two foreign language credits.** Students will be able to complete these classes at Marion Military Institute. Students will have prior foreign language knowledge due to our school model. Additionally, students will enter the workforce or postsecondary education option with a foundational understanding of a foreign language, making Breakthrough graduates competitive applicants. This will reinforce our school's commitment to diversity.
- 3. Students will be required to complete a life skills credit during their senior year.** This course will teach students to learn fundamental skills that are not commonly taught, including skills like how to build a strong credit score, how to change a flat tire, how interest rates work, how to cook, and more. Community experts will be invited to teach seminars throughout the course's duration. This will prepare our students with immediately applicable skills that can be merged with theoretical content. This will further emphasize our school's commitment to community.

Dropout Prevention:

To ensure high school students are prepared to graduate, Breakthrough Charter School will implement a number of systems of structures aimed at supporting student needs and including all stakeholders in conversations. Here are some of our proposed approaches:

- 1. Consistent communication with students' guardians and the creation of stakeholder conference teams:** If a student is failing a high school course when progress reports are distributed, the teacher is required to plan a stakeholder conference with the student and guardian. This will enable the conference team to identify the root cause of the failing grade and determine an action

plan that will propel the student towards success. Note: If the student is failing more than one class, the Head of School or guidance counselor will also attend a stakeholder conference to determine an action plan that will propel the student towards success.

2. Targeted intervention: Breakthrough’s weekly schedule includes protected time for targeted enrichment and remediation. During this time, high school teachers will have the opportunity to work directly with struggling students to ensure content and skill mastery. Teachers will identify failing or at-risk students during weekly Professional Learning Communities.

3. Before and After School Student Support: Students will have the opportunity to receive tutoring before or after school at the discretion of the teacher. If tutoring is deemed an appropriate step by the stakeholder conference team, the student and teacher will be responsible for arranging meeting times.

Attachments

Section 4: High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only)

– No Attachments –

5. School Calendar and Schedule

Our school calendar aims to optimize instructional time while simultaneously providing students, faculty, and staff appropriate breaks and holidays to ensure personal wellness. At the end of each nine week grading period, teachers are given full professional development days to review data and organize stakeholder conferences. Protecting time for teachers to engage with stakeholders is critical in fostering positive relationships with parents and guardians. Teachers will also have ample time to engage in professional development, with eight protected professional development days throughout the academic year. It is also important to note that this academic calendar meets state requirements for the number of calendar days in an academic school year. State assessment dates will be noted on the calendar once Breakthrough receives guidance from the Alabama State Department of Education as to when the testing window opens and closes.

Our daily and weekly schedule at Breakthrough sets our school apart from a number of schools in the state of Alabama. Our daily schedule reflects many aspects of Citizens of the World Charter Schools' model and was developed in partnership with CenterPoint Education Solutions' chief academic officer, Dr. Bonnie Hain. Our students will have protected time each week to engage in project-based learning and service-learning, aligning these units with science and social studies curriculum. Students will have early release each Wednesday, providing faculty and staff the opportunity to engage in regular professional development, which might include turnaround professional development sessions, staff meetings, and grade-band/content-specific Professional Learning Communities. Our schedule also allots protected time for social emotional learning, a critical aspect of developing the whole child.

Our annual and daily schedule seek to reflect our mission, vision, and core values.

Attachments

Section 5: School Calendar and Schedule

5.1	Attachment 7- Sample Student Schedule	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:44 AM	PDF / 180.209 KB
5.2	Attachment 6- School Calendar	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:44 AM	PDF / 110.335 KB

6. School Culture

The mission of Breakthrough Charter School is to prepare students for success as contributing citizens and leaders in the community and the world by instilling the values of scholarship, leadership, community, and diversity. It is imperative that in order to successfully accomplish our mission, we must implement a school culture that is inclusive for each and every one of our students. Such inclusiveness shall be accomplished by students, teachers, and community stakeholders working together to support a unified vision that aligns with instructional goals.

Realizing that students from different backgrounds learn best through many different methods, Breakthrough's project-based, culturally-relevant model will facilitate equitable learning for all students.

BCS promotes a positive and innovative academic atmosphere by relying on PBIS and restorative justice practices while also promoting social-emotional learning. As students matriculate between grade levels, Breakthrough's policies and procedures adapt to provide age appropriate support with the goal of our students graduating with life skills they will leverage as future leaders in the community and the world.

Highlights of our Student Culture Plan:

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): This is a three-tiered framework for improving and integrating all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. It is a way to support everyone – especially students with disabilities – to create the kinds of schools where all students are successful. PBIS isn't a curriculum that is purchased or something that is learned during a one-day professional development training. It is a commitment to addressing student behavior through systems change. When it's implemented well, students achieve improved social and academic outcomes, schools experience reduced exclusionary discipline practices, and school personnel feel more effective.

Source: <https://www.pbis.org/pbis/tiered-framework>

Restorative Justice Practices: These practices were pioneered by Ted Wachtel at the International Institute for Restorative Practices. Restorative practices are grounded in "restorative justice," a new way of looking at wrongdoing that focuses on repairing the harm done to people and the relationships rather than on punishing offenders.

Restorative practices are based on the belief that human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them. The most critical function of restorative practices is restoring and building relationships. Students, Staff, Faculty and Board Members must meet with those they have wronged, explore what happened, and make necessary amends. The restorative practices process can happen in groups as small as three and as large as a whole class.

Source:

<https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/resource-restorative-justice-in-u-s-schools-an-updated-research-review.pdf>

Social-Emotional Intelligence: Breakthrough's social-emotional intelligence model grants our students with the opportunity to make better decisions, engage and influence more effectively, and create the right mood for their surroundings. These daily practices will happen during the first part of every day. Students will do mindfulness practices and learn to observe how their thoughts and feelings might influence their actions. We provide citations about social-emotional learning later in the application.

Source: [https://casel.org/what-is-sel/#:~:text=Social%20and%20emotional%20learning%20\(SEL.Play%3A%20What%20is%20SEL](https://casel.org/what-is-sel/#:~:text=Social%20and%20emotional%20learning%20(SEL.Play%3A%20What%20is%20SEL)

PBIS, restorative justice, and SEL practices help students celebrate positive behavior, develop students' emotional intelligence, and challenge students to resolve conflict through less punitive means. Teachers will receive ongoing professional development to ensure these cultural tenants are constantly upheld as part of our school culture. These professional development sessions will

take place on specified Early Release Wednesdays to ensure school culture stability. Furthermore, Breakthrough aims to root school culture in the core values that guide the mission and vision of the school. Below are some of the ideas we plan to incorporate, based on community feedback and brainstorming:

Scholarship:

- Celebrate student mastery and growth in explicit ways such as a monthly lunch and hallway/classroom displays.
- Recognize student growth and achievement during weekly Wednesday morning assemblies.
- Celebrate standards growth; ensure there are positive Head of School office visits & positive phone calls home from teachers.

Diversity:

- Infuse diversity into the curriculum in a way that authentically engages students with different cultures and experiences.
- Celebrate cultural identity, recognizing that our differences are what makes us stronger as a nation, through presentations.
- Promote cross-cultural understanding through PBL and service-learning units crafted by teachers.

Leadership:

- Through our MMI partnership, we plan to hold monthly leadership exercises such as dilemma discussions, use of the MMI obstacle course, and attend guest speaker sessions.
- Partner with MMI's Rane Center for Leadership to teach civic leadership in individual classes.

Community:

- Monthly projects organized by grade levels to serve the Black Belt community, partnering with local non-profits.
- Host a community forum each semester to gauge community input and thoughts about Breakthrough's progress.
- Institute a community service requirement, fluctuating by grade level. This value stresses the importance of investing in the local community, making Breakthrough students feel proud to be from such a historic area of the country.
- We also plan to have a community resource room, where family stakeholders can access the internet, a washing machine/dryer, and access to additional resources determined necessary by the Governing Board, School leadership, and local nonprofits.
- Elementary students will have time to hear stories read by community leaders and families, reinforcing the importance of community presence in our school building.

Starting with the first day at school, Breakthrough Charter School will immerse parents, students, and community members/stakeholders into our vibrant and inclusive school culture. A school culture emphasizing traditional values such as scholarship, community, leadership, and diversity gives a plethora of ideas we could implement to benefit our school climate and to provide an exceptional learning environment for our learners. These values enlighten the following pedagogical practices that promote, instill and maintain our school culture:

- Professional Development
- Parental involvement
- Committed and revered faculty and staff

Breakthrough's leadership plans create and disperse electronic surveys to school stakeholders (faculty, students, families, community leaders) quarterly to assess school culture perception to ensure the school culture remains strong. This also promotes a culture of feedback, so our leadership can make additions and amendments as needed. We also plan to partner with our advisory bodies to host events at the school that contribute to the school culture. Ideas have included Play Day, Cook Offs, Winter festivals, and more.

For those students that starts in the middle of the school year, they are immediately welcomed in the Breakthrough family. Before taking classes, that particular student and their parents would attend orientation. The school has a student and family handbook that each family receives at the beginning of the year. These handbooks provide expectations and guidance for behavior while

focusing on the aforementioned values. A draft of the student handbook is attached and will be supplemented and modified with input from school stakeholders prior to the start of school.

For those students that starts in the middle of the school year, they are immediately welcomed in the Breakthrough family. Before taking classes, that particular student and their parents/guardians would attend orientation The school has a student and family handbook that each family receives at the beginning of the year. These handbooks provide expectations and guidance for behavior while focusing on the aforementioned values.

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Breakthrough pledges to accommodate the unique needs of students with certain disabilities and disablements. Breakthrough Charter School holistically worships student diversity on all fronts; therefore, we welcome students with Section 504 plans, ELLs, IEPs, and other at-risk students.

Our most vulnerable learners are guaranteed to receive a quality, well-rounded education regardless of language barrier, academic challenge, or disability. We will cultivate an inclusive environment that identifies the positive instead of viewing barriers as a deficiency or hindrance. Our challenge is to eliminate the achievement gap between students with unique needs by building a seamless support system. Achieving this vision will require all educators – from school system leaders and principals to classroom teachers – who passionately share our vision to educate and support students with particular struggles and barriers. We will focus holistically on student learning and provide training to our faculty to find alternatives to working with students with academic or behavior needs that are explicitly spelled out in the IEPs. By following the PBIS model, Breakthrough regularly surveils student data and relies on both instructional strategies and behavioral supports to meet the needs of the school population including students with unique needs.

A typical day at Breakthrough will begin with a warm welcome from school staff in the cafeteria, if students choose to eat breakfast at Breakthrough. Our instructional day will begin with mindfulness practices rooted in a solid social-emotional learning curriculum. Students will start the day setting an intention and rooting themselves in their purpose. Following social-emotional learning practices, students will begin engaging with content in a number of different ways.

Students will learn different English and math standards in an inclusive setting that motivates people to think and act positively. Students will be rewarded for positive behaviors, as discussed in the PBIS model. During lunch, some students may play while others choose to take part in a student-led student organization, supported by a Breakthrough faculty member. After lunch, students will be engaged in hands-on learning, tackling a content question through project-based learning or considering a community need through service-learning. Students will learn to work together and ask questions, cultivating intellectual curiosity. If students struggle with any disciplinary issue, restorative justice practices will be used to identify the root of the problem, perhaps through a restorative circle. Through that exercise, conflict resolution will take place and consequences will be decided. At the end of the day, students may choose to stay after school for mentorship and tutoring. Students might also choose to participate in an after school club or sport. Students will be able to see our core values lived out daily.

Teachers will have common planning time during the day and weekly professional development with time to engage in their professional learning communities. Teachers will receive support deemed necessary by the teacher or administration. All teachers will have necessary curriculum materials. Teachers will be celebrated monthly by the school administration.

Our school culture will benefit all stakeholders and is rooted in research-based best practices.

Attachments

Section 6: School Culture

6.1 [Attachment- Draft Student Handbook](#)

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7. Supplemental Programming

Given the school's emphasis on Leadership, Breakthrough will offer a variety of programs to go along developing this ideal. Partners such as Marion Military Institute are fundamental in the accomplishment of this goal. From guest speakers to access to their facilities at no cost, Marion Military Institute will help prepare our students to become leaders ideologically and physically. Through our access to the MMI facilities, students will be able to participate in sports that are not traditional in the areas such as tennis, soccer, golf and others. Schedules will align with expectations of the athletic association our school will participate in starting during 2021-2022 academic calendar. More information on the partnership with Marion Military Institute can be found in Section 13 and the corresponding attachment in that section.

In our efforts to be culturally responsive, promote leadership and encourage students' independent thinking we want to give them the opportunity to participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities that are relevant to their interests. As part of the leadership component, Breakthrough will encourage students to exercise their own leadership skills to spearhead the creation of student organizations and clubs with the support of volunteer staff sponsors. Based on communication with Perry County families and community stakeholders, we anticipate clubs such as African American student union, religious student groups, popular intramural sports such as basketball and baseball, and non-traditional regional interests like fishing, farming and nutrition. Student clubs will meet during lunch or after school. Through these activities, students will develop cognitively, socially and emotionally while staying true to their culture and interests. Additionally, we believe that engaging in extracurricular and co-curricular activities and purposefully developing and expanding their interests contributes to their overall well-being. This provides an outlet to channel their energy into something positive. Extracurricular and co-curricular opportunities will engage them with content and with others and will teach the social skills to help manage their mental health in the process. Our budget does allot for some extracurricular funding, but these funds are limited. While we will seek grant funding to support extracurricular expenses, we recognize that students might be responsible for fundraising and/or purchasing items.

We believe that foreign languages add a number of cognitive benefits that will help them to succeed not only academically, but also in their future careers. Additionally, the empathy and cultural understanding that children learn from studying a foreign language can help them in all aspects of their life, from playing at school to understanding their peers in the workplace as they join a globalized workforce. Research has found that bilingual individuals, compared to their monolingual peers, had better problem-solving and critical thinking skills, more creativity, improved memory, better multi-tasking abilities, and better flexibility of mind. Breakthrough will expose children to foreign languages weekly. There will be protected time for foreign language learning whether it be through direct instruction, music or play.

We believe that students should be prepared for some of the challenges they will face as they go to college or enter the workforce. Through teaching and providing experience with life skills (taxes, budgeting, cooking, gardening, carpentry, mechanics and many others), we will familiarize students with some of the challenges they may face in the near future as well as give them the opportunity to engage in new extracurricular activities they can explore for credit. Family involvement is key to the success of supplemental programs, and families have already expressed interest and support for this life skills course. BSC will seek guidance from family members' areas of expertise in literacy, community engagement, careers, skills and trades through spotlight lecture type events or workshops for more hands-on projects. There will be protected time for these events.

Breakthrough is interested in seeking funding to support a future summer school program which will provide enrichment opportunities and credit recovery in specific areas of the curriculum. Should funds become available, we anticipate a morning (8 AM – 12 PM) program in three specific areas: elementary math enrichment, elementary reading enrichment and secondary credit recovery. These summer classes would be taught by interested staff members that have completed a summer school teaching application. Traditionally in Perry County, students pay a standard one-time fee per class. Breakthrough will pursue grants to support summer school expenses.

Attachments

Section 7: Supplemental Programming

– No Attachments –

8. Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Based upon an analysis of schools in Perry County, Breakthrough expects to serve students with special needs, including, but not limited to, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans, English Language Learners (ELL), students identified as intellectually gifted, and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out. The below table represents the estimated population sizes of each sub-group we expect to serve, based on data from ALSDE Report Card.

Student Population	Percentage
Special Education (IEP, 504)	13-19%
ELL	< 1%
At-Risk (Chronic Absenteeism)	13-18%
HICAP (Gifted)	Unknown

Based on current data, Breakthrough expects enrollment to include 13-19% special education students and less than 1% ELL students. For the purposes of estimating the percentage of at-risk students, we will refer to chronic absenteeism trends provided by the state. Chronic absenteeism has been linked to decreased academic achievement from kindergarten through high school.

While the cause of chronic absenteeism can differ from student to student, we know that when a child doesn't come to school, their chances of graduating with proficiency are deeply limited. By tracking absenteeism rates as a key leading indicator, we strive to identify students that are at-risk for failing and dropping out early in the year and implement interventions as early as the first quarter of the school year. With this in mind, we have staffed our school model and designed our school schedule with the option to create inclusion or self-contained (life skills) classes depending on the severity of disabilities.

Our comprehensive curriculum includes resources to assist teachers in planning for scaffolding lessons with reinforcement and extension options. The schedule, which includes protected time for enrichment and intervention, specifically for math and ELA, provides ample opportunity for small group and/or individual interventions. An extensive RTI plan serves to identify students with disabilities and at-risk students and provide mechanisms to monitor growth and progression through tiers of services. The model is meant to be fluid as students enter and exit based on the current content they are studying. At-risk students find sufficient support through RTI and in-class instructional supports. Surrounding all of these academic interventions, Breakthrough relies on our social emotional learning program and behavior supports to grow the whole-child.

RTI - Meeting the Needs of At-Risk Students

Breakthrough will employ practices and procedures that ensure that students who are underperforming are identified and receive appropriate interventions. We believe intervention is about prevention and intervention in order to close the achievement gap. Breakthrough will use universal screeners to identify students who are at-risk and triangulate the data points to ensure proper placement into RTI tiers. School readiness will have been assessed using Teaching Strategies GOLD®, an ongoing, teacher-rated, authentic observation-based, research validated assessment system. Grounded in current research related to child development and learning, the Teaching Strategies GOLD® assessment includes 38 objectives across six domains of development (social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and math) that are associated with school success based on school readiness standards. Recent research supports the reliability and validity of using Teaching Strategies GOLD® at kindergarten entry to provide criterion-based information about school readiness. NWEA/MAP is administered to Kindergarten through 8th graders up to three times a year to determine their overall performance and is also used as a universal screener each August and later in the year for students who enroll mid-year. Based on results from screenings, Reading Running Records are administered to diagnose and fine tune intervention instructional needs. Students whose MAP RIT score and running record level are below

grade-level expectation for that point in the school year will be placed in the appropriate intervention tiers. Running records are periodically administered throughout the year to gauge performance and adjust instructional plans. Similar to reading, Do the Math Diagnostic are administered to students lower than their grade level RIT expectation. These diagnostics help determine which intervention tier is most appropriate for students. MAP and Running Records are given a minimum of three times a year. Other Diagnostics are administered when a student moves to a new tier, which can be as quickly as the student progresses.

Tier 1 Core Instruction

The core instruction is designed to provide access to and differentiation of the grade-level content, so all learners can be successful. Breakthrough's academic program is grounded in research on how students learn best. It's important to teach critical thinking when students are young, including how to analyze and evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs. Students then learn how to make judgments and decisions based on others' points of view, interpret information and draw conclusions. while using a student-centered approach. These attributes are especially important when differentiating for students and for supporting struggling students. Teachers use universal screening data and daily formative assessment data to design lessons that provide access to all students. Textual analysis, task-based learning, and inquiry-based instruction provide a vehicle for differentiation, so all students are able to access the grade level content.

Tier 2 Intervention

Students needing Tier 2 intervention receive 30 minutes of small group or one-on-one instruction a day in addition to their core instruction. Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) is a small-group intervention program that provides daily small-group instruction meant to supplement the core English Language Arts block. The systems support struggling readers in grades K-12 by addressing phonics, decoding and comprehension work through engaging with appropriately leveled books through targeted and systematic lessons designed to address deficit areas. Read 180 is a blended learning program designed to accelerate students two or more years below grade level toward independence with rigorous, grade-level text.

Do the Math is a mathematics intervention program created by Marilyn Burns. Do The Math uses explicit instruction to move students through Concrete, Semi-concrete, Abstract (CSA) representations of math concepts and skills. The program is designed to help students develop the skills they need to compute with accuracy and efficiency, the number sense they need to reason, and the ability to apply their skills and reasoning to solve problems.

Tier 3 Intervention

Students needing Tier 3 intervention receive 60 minutes of small group or one-on-one instruction a day in addition to their core instruction. Students will utilize the same RTI support curriculums discussed in the Tier 2 intervention plan. It is important to note these RTI supports align with the curriculum choices made by Breakthrough's leadership team. This additional support is designed to aid students achieve mastery in core content.

Progress Monitoring and Movement Between Tiers

Progress monitoring is conducted at a minimum of twice a month in Professional Learning Communities. Options that Breakthrough is considering for progress monitoring include enVision Math, Do the Math, LLI, Read 180, and EL all have built-in progress monitoring, most of which are software generated and built into regular instructional routines. All programs selected are designed for intervention and have built in systems to evaluate student progress and move students to the next level of instruction or out of the intervention entirely. The RTI team will regularly review and evaluate students' progress and make necessary changes to tier placement. The RTI Team will include the Head of School, grade band teachers, and content specialists. In cases where a student might not be progressing and responding to the interventions, and after attempts to adjust instructional delivery, the school's team will begin evaluating the student for a potential disability.

Implementation of Special Education Services

Breakthrough will organize its special education programs and service delivery options through a continuum of services focused on meeting the needs of each individual child.

Identifying Students with Disabilities

Breakthrough will use a special populations dashboard to track special education student demographics, disability categories, service hours, and location of services. The dashboard houses and monitors information around students in the evaluation processes. This dashboard allows the school support team, composed of school administrators, and special education coordinators the opportunity to track and monitor services and identification of students with special needs so that students are not inadvertently under-served or over-identified. In accordance with State of Alabama requirements, Breakthrough will arrange evaluations for three-to-five-year olds and school-aged children with suspected learning disabilities (Child Find). Special Education addresses the educational needs of children within the school who have identifiable disabilities, from age three through twenty-one years, or until they receive their high school diplomas. Breakthrough teachers will work with the school's Special Education Department to identify teaching strategies, best practices, and interventions to meet the needs of all students. Our Special Education department will strive to offer services in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent appropriate, providing an education in the same manner as it is provided to every other child, alongside their peers in a general education environment.

The identification, location and evaluation of students will include paying attention to particular students who don't have public school records that include former special education services, including includes students attending private schools, students who are highly mobile, students who have been suspended or expelled from school, home-schooled students, students who have not graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma and those who may be in need of special education and related services even though they are advancing from grade to grade, and regardless of the severity of the disability.

Breakthrough will follow Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), in which both documents outline the prohibition against discrimination based on a disability. Students with impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities are eligible for accommodations by the school. Major life activities may include, but are not limited to, walking, hearing, seeing, breathing, and learning. If a student is suspected of needing accommodations in order to participate in or benefit from the same activities as their non-disabled peers, as determined by a parent, teacher, diagnostician, or school administrator, the student is referred to the school counselor who serves as the 504 Coordinator. Additionally, students who complete the evaluation process and do not qualify for special education may also be referred to the 504 Coordinator. The 504 Coordinator then meets with the parent/guardian, the student (when appropriate), a general education teacher, a school administrator, the referring individual, and any other qualified persons who is knowledgeable about the student and their needs. During this meeting, all participants discuss relevant data (educational, behavioral, and/or medical), interventions already in place, placement options, and the possible need for further evaluation. Based on the review of records, the 504 Team is responsible for determining if the student does or does not qualify for a Section 504 Plan or whether further evaluation is required to determine the best approach to meeting the needs of the student. The 504 Coordinator is responsible for developing, revising, and ensuring compliance in the implementation of Section 504 Plans through information dissemination, training, and support of school personnel.

Staffing Plan

Breakthrough intends to hire a school leader, a lead special education instructor, and teachers with experience with student populations similar in educational needs to the Perry County Schools to ensure students will receive the academic, social, and emotional support they need to be successful in elementary school and beyond. Breakthrough will prioritize recruiting, training, and retaining, high-quality, qualified teachers. Quality candidates will be hired to manage a caseload of 18-22 students with responsibilities including advocating for and ensuring academic, emotional, and behavioral needs are met in order to support progress, making tools and resources available to staff implementing any and all parts of the IEP, and managing individual case compliance for each child with support from the special education coordinator.

In serving students with federally recognized disabilities, Breakthrough will employ high-quality special education teachers to deliver services and manage caseloads, include co-teaching in the general education setting, providing consultation to school staff, training and managing paraprofessional staff, empowering and supporting general education teachers around accommodating lessons and assessments and then adjusting supports as students' progress, lesson planning, teaching and collecting data in a self-contained special education setting, and providing guidance and support around behavior management strategies. As advocates for specific students and caseload managers, special education teachers monitor student achievement data on both benchmark assessments and progress toward IEP goals, attend to student behavioral performance and need, track student attendance and discipline records, regularly communicate with teachers, administrators, service providers, and family members to

advocate for and effectively support the ever-evolving needs of diverse learners. Professional development (PD) and on-going supports and trainings are priorities of Breakthrough Charter School's special education program. Special education teachers and staff participate in specialized PD around topics including writing instructionally appropriate IEPs, goal and progress monitoring, accommodations and modifications, Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP), and growth mindset and student advocacy. Special education teachers also participate in content-specific professional development in the areas of mathematics and English Language Arts. Throughout the school year, all special education staff will participate in professional learning communities (PLCs), where current research is discussed, policy changes are shared, and staff can seek support in areas of struggle.

Educational Assistants will be hired as needed by Breakthrough Charter School. To the extent the LEA is unable to provide related services including clinicians to provide speech and language services, occupational and physical therapy services, counseling services, nurses, and vision and hearing services will be contracted through a provider who supports and maintains specialists who are certified/licensed in their field of expertise. In order to provide educational evaluations for the determination of initial and continued eligibility for special education services, BREAKTHROUGH will contract with clinical evaluators to work with the special education teachers and IEP teams to determine the most appropriate location for and time allotted to the delivery of services as based on student need. Given the anticipated needs of our students, special education and otherwise, we have carefully designed the staffing model to ensure robust support is provided and delivered by an effective team focused on serving students and working together with parents and external providers. The team includes the following:

- Head of School
- Special Education Lead Teacher
- Reading and Math Specialists Counselor
- Nurse
- Special Education Teachers Aides

Least Restrictive Environment

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is the requirement in federal law that students with disabilities receive their education, to the maximum extent appropriate, with nondisabled peers and that special education students are not removed from regular classes unless, even with supplemental aids and services, education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily. [20 United States Code (U.S.C.) Sec. 1412(a)(5)(A); 34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Sec.300.114.] 67 The school leader and special education department will ensure that each student's educational plan not only fits their learning needs but is also provided in the least restrictive environment (i.e. in regular classrooms as available, for instance) and other ways that meet the definition of "least restrictive environment" that will benefit the student.

For the majority of students, this means an integrated program inside the general education classroom, where all students benefit from varying co-teaching models in which the general and educator share the responsibilities of ensuring all students, regardless of ability level, access, learn, and master the grade-level curriculum. During inclusive instruction, all students without discrimination may experience whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction as deemed appropriate by the cooperating teachers. For students whose needs exceed the reach of the co-teaching model, instruction can occur in a special education setting with a focus on foundational skills. Within this setting, intervention specialists deliver targeted, research-based instruction to build compensatory strategies and fill in learning gaps. Foundational courses are meant to be temporary placements for students who cannot access the general education curriculum in math and/or ELA until their deficits are remediated.

Modified curriculum in a special education setting is available for students whose IEP team determines that the student's cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and/or physical needs cannot be met without intensive, specialized instruction outside of the general education setting for up to 79% of time in school. Students whose needs are more severe than those that can be met in the general education classroom will access the general education curriculum in a modified format while in a special education setting. Using core content connecting features in Engage NY mathematics and Achievement First English Language Arts, special education teachers will ensure students participate in the grade-level content through a narrowed scope of work. In addition, students will be taught strategies to fill skill gaps through the use of the Florida Center for Reading Research, Student Center Activities, which includes phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Monitoring Disproportionality

Breakthrough will use five of the best sources of information on progress: 1) The results of a student's most recent special education evaluation. 2) Measurable annual goals. 3) Progress reports. Parents must be informed at least as often as parents are informed of their nondisabled child's progress. In addition, periodic general education report cards and parent conferences may provide progress reports. 4) A new IEP is written annually for children in special education. The IEP must include a statement of the child's present level of performance for each goal. Parents can compare this statement to the statement made the previous year, and 5) meeting with the school's Special Education teacher and/or Lead Teacher. Special education instructors will ensure that they, along with the school counselor, will include high school graduation and post-school indicators in each student's IEP. Additionally, all students, including those with disabilities, partake in our unique curriculum that guides students through making post-secondary goals and creating a plan for achievement. Breakthrough is aware of and will provide Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) services provided to students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in a general education environment. Breakthrough will work with the State of Alabama to adopt recommended, appropriate, and transparent methods to evaluate procedural and substantive compliance with special education rules and regulations.

While proficiency numbers are low, we recognize that students can be gifted intellectually even though they have not mastered Alabama grade level standards yet. Breakthrough believes that there are highly capable students in their schools and is prepared to offer extended educational opportunities to them.

Identification and Support of Gifted Students

Students who are gifted may be identified through referral by a parent or teacher or via the RTI process. The RTI process utilizes a universal screener which assists in identifying high performing, accelerated learners. Breakthrough will identify students as intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. With the identification of gifted, students will be educated based on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) created by the student's IEP team. In order to meet the needs of gifted students, we will employ at least one special education teacher who either holds an endorsement in gifted education or has received certification through the employment standards. Gifted students may receive their services in a variety of formats, based on the individual student's needs. These options include, but are not limited to, academic acceleration through curriculum compacting, enrichment projects within the general education setting, supplemental learning materials, and/or grade skipping (supported through the use of the Iowa Acceleration Scale).

Student achievement will be monitored via IEP goals to ensure educational services are appropriately impacting a student's educational experience and success. Breakthrough will work with the Alabama Gifted Education Program, which provides technical assistance to all public school systems serving Alabama's gifted children.

Identification of ELL

Breakthrough schools will serve English Learners (ELs) in compliance with the Alabama Department of Education's EL Policies and Procedures Manual. Identification of students who may be English Language Learners (ELL) begins with the administration of the Home Language Survey to any new student entering school or the district for the first time. Based on family input, the Home Language survey may prompt the identification process forward, requiring that students are assessed using the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT). The W-APT is an English Language proficiency screener designed to assist educators in the identification and placement of English Language Learners. Upon completion, students may test proficient and be deemed transitional, or they may lack proficiency and determination is needed to be made around the appropriate service delivery model for that student. For students whose Home Language survey appears inconsistent with interactions with the family or student, Breakthrough may request a parent interview in order to clarify any misunderstandings and ensure that students are appropriately identified and given access to all necessary academic supports. Breakthrough will use parents' preferred language and will find a fully bilingual interpreter from school staff, community members, a parent liaison or will hire one. Breakthrough will translate written communication into the parents' native language, if helpful to do so, and will connect parents with bilingual staff, if available. The State of Alabama does not have statutes in place regulating specific language instruction educational programs and services for EL students. However, federal guidelines regarding EL students provide guidance needed to identify, assess, and place students into an appropriate language instruction educational program. The completed survey becomes part of the student's permanent record.

The identification and placement of EL students in an appropriate language program that assures them of an equitable, quality education is a four-step process that includes: 1) Home Language Survey, 2) Initial Assessment of Language Proficiency Step 3) Parental Notification, and Step 4) Program Placement. EL students will be monitored on an ongoing basis to assess their progress toward English proficiency/fluency. Students will remain in the EL program until they demonstrate their English proficiency/fluency. EL students will be monitored no less than once each nine weeks during the first year and at least one each semester during the second year.

Staffing Plan for ELL Students

Breakthrough will hire qualified EL staff to serve students based on the number of students and their EL needs. We will continue to monitor enrollment to look for trends of increasing EL students in order to prepare for future school years. Based on current demographics the number of EL students is extremely small and we will monitor enrollment for material changes in this subset of students.

Instructional Program for ELL Students

Breakthrough will offer the same academic content as all other students in the general education classroom. The curriculum will be supported with the following EL instructional strategies: use of sentence strips, set up dialogue journals between the student and teacher, plan activities using role play and drama, use student reading logs, use Cloze exercises, write summaries, give students the outline of lessons and questions that will be asked beforehand, so they have an opportunity to process information and participate more readily, and use pictures in conjunction with speaking and writing.

Attachments

Section 8: Special Populations and At-Risk Students

– No Attachments –

9. Unique/Innovative Program Offering

As our namesake suggests, Breakthrough Charter School serves as an institution of discovery. Breakthrough prides itself in our efforts to deviate from the traditional public school mold and operate as a perpetual source of education improvement and innovation for its students, parents, and community stakeholders. In Breakthrough Charter School's mission statement, our goal is to prepare our students for an innovative world. In the 21st century, the use and access to technology has been connoted to enhance student performance, yet Breakthrough plan to move beyond technological innovation by implementing and focusing on personalized learning, a culturally-relevant curriculum, and other unique programs that are non-existent in the traditional public school sphere.

It is our responsibility to curate as much as possible in this experience, both to provide innovative and creative methods while so promoting our school values: community, leadership, diversity, and scholarship. The following is a list of the programs that will be at the disposal of our scholars, teachers, parents, and stakeholders:

- Collaborative partnerships with institutions of higher education like Marion Military Institute to help with service-learning opportunities, character development, tutoring/mentoring, and the accessibility to facilities.
- Spur innovative thinking through a culturally-relevant curriculum and by exposing elementary students to foreign language
- Broaden student perspectives and modes of thinking through dilemma discussions, project-based learning
- Restricted and dedicated time for social-emotional learning and reflections

The metaphorical expression "stepping outside of the box" reflects the proposed innovative programs Breakthrough plans to integrate within our institutional framework and social-emotional learning model. Intrinsically, schools are social settings and learning is a social process. Our dedicated time for social-emotional learning will allow students, with the application of our school's

core values, to be better citizens and more positive contributors to society. It allows our students the ability to regulate and think about their emotions. If we're not able to let students regulate their own situation, students would not be able to be available to process or regurgitate the information being provided in the classroom. Social-emotional learning would be available to all students; our model would be primed to support our low-income children of color whose lives and communities are plagued with injustices and social inequalities which foster disrupted social bonds with others. Our Head of School is working with NewSchools Venture Fund to receive high-quality professional development around the implementation of SEL practices in the school building, keeping Perry County students and our context in mind.

The partnerships with institutions of higher education like Marion Military Institute and Judson College would also serve as an integral role in our educational and student-development model. We strive for our students to identify and leverage the instilled school value of leadership into the classrooms and within their communities. MMI has agreed for Breakthrough students to participate in the monthly leadership development exercises such as dilemma discussions, utilizing the MMI leadership course, and hearing guest speakers.

Our culturally-relevant curriculum considers academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness. Our faculty and teachers value the identity the students contribute to the learning environment and introduce subject matter that resonates with the student culture.

We plan to incorporate some of our project-based learning and service-learning curriculums with information available from Alabama Exchange. We will also work closely with the ALSDE Early Childhood Education Department, as our Head of School has been in constant communication with Jean Allen, Innovative Projects & Assessment Director for Pre-K – 3rd Grade Integrated Approach to Early Learning. Furthermore, our curriculum is aligned with the Alabama Course of Study and Common Core. We plan to partner with GEARUP as long as the grant continues. Our Head of School has already cultivated a working relationship with Dr. Tonya Perry, the UAB professor that oversees the program. This will be an effort to supporting college readiness for our high school students.

Citations:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/03/the-social-emotional-learning-effect/521220/>

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/16/07/what-makes-sel-work>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/11/29/497943749/6-potential-brain-benefits-of-bilingual-educ>

Attachments

Section 9: Unique/Innovative Program Offering

– No Attachments –

10. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Breakthrough Charter School's primary catchment area is Perry County, Alabama. In accordance with the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act, a second enrollment will extend beyond the primary catchment area if the first enrollment period does not put the school at capacity. For this, enrollment will be compared to capacity following the first enrollment period for Perry County students. At the end of the second enrollment period, the number of applications will be counted, and if that number exceeds the number of spaces available within capacity, those applicants will be placed on a waiting list, and a random lottery drawing will be held to enroll the number of students who can be accommodated within the capacity limits.

BCS is committed to a fair and equitable process for students and families. Breakthrough Charter School plans to use SchoolMint, a K-12 student enrollment software for application and lottery management. Families can use a single account to submit

applications for multiple children from a mobile phone or computer. Prior to the application deadline, Breakthrough Charter School will have designated days for access to a computer lab. BCS staff will be available to assist with the online admission application.

Source: <https://www.schoolmint.com/application-lottery-management/>

The SchoolMint software balances seat availability to generate transparent, accurate outcomes. If a student is selected in the lottery, an acceptance letter will be mailed and emailed to the address on file. One must accept or decline the offer within 5 business days of the date of the acceptance letters. If the offer is not accepted or declined after 5 business days, the offer will be considered expired and that seat will be offered to the next applicant on the wait list. After the admission offer is made, a family can choose to accept or decline the offer through electronic means. If a student declines an admission offer, the seat will go to the next student on the wait list. Documentation with a complete audit trail can be generated from the software. Families can have full visibility into the selection process and its fairness.

Breakthrough Charter School understands that the lottery process is an emotional and difficult time for students and parents. The lottery will be operated in an open and transparent manner. Students will be assigned numbers via SchoolMint, instead of using their name, for the lottery drawing to protect their privacy. After available slots are filled, BCS will keep drawing names of the remaining applicants and place them on a wait list in the order they were drawn.

All students are welcome at Breakthrough Charter School, regardless of family income, race, gender, or academic achievements. BCS plans to customize its outreach efforts to the individual students and their needs. BCS believes the best plan for outreach to families in poverty, academic low-achieving students, students with disabilities and other youth at risk of academic failure is developing personal relationships and connections, not only with the student, but the family. BCS staff must gain trust and insight into the situation before approach to achieve a sense of safety and security with the student and their family. Outreach efforts will include community engagement, such as offering summer tutoring, camps and after-school activities at Breakthrough Charter School prior to opening, hosting athletic camps with Marion Military Institute and Judson College, and participating in Main Street Marion events, such as Jazz on the Square and Obama Day. We will also plan neighborhood-specific informational sessions in Marion and Uniontown, bringing laptops and an internet hotspot connection for families interested in enrolling their child or learning more about Breakthrough Charter School. By doing so, we work to achieve equitable access to enrollment information. Developing the personal relationship with students and their families is the key to outreach. We also plan to host informational sessions in neighboring Dallas and Hale counties and plan to attend county events, including Selma's annual Jubilee and Bridge Crossing, to recruit students.

In addition to the personal relationships, Breakthrough Charter School will continue to develop its partnerships with local non-profits to help with outreach.

Attachments

Section 10: Student Recruitment and Enrollment

10.1	Attachment 8- Enrollment Policy	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:50 AM	PDF / 190.172 KB
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11. Student Discipline Policy and Plan

Breakthrough Charter School plans to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) methodology. PBIS is an evidence-based three-tiered framework for improving and integrating all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. By implementing this model, students will achieve improved social and academic outcomes. Data shows that

schools following PBIS experience reduced exclusionary discipline practices, and school personnel feel more effective. Effective implementation of PBIS practices are critical components of our school culture and proactive approach to discipline- the use of positive reinforcement to encourage positive behavior.

Tier 1: Universal Prevention (ALL)

Tier 1 systems, data, and practices impact everyone across all settings. They establish the foundation for delivering regular, proactive support and preventing unwanted behaviors. Tier 1 emphasizes prosocial skills and expectations by teaching and acknowledging appropriate student behavior.

Tier 1 foundational systems include:

- An established leadership team
- Regular meetings
- A commitment statement for establishing a positive school-wide social culture
- On-going use of data for decision making
- Professional development plans
- Personnel evaluation plan

Tier 1 practices include:

- School-wide positive expectations and behaviors are taught
- Established classroom expectations aligned with school-wide expectations
- A continuum of procedures for encouraging expected behavior
- A continuum of procedures for discouraging problem behavior
- Procedures for encouraging school-family partnership

Tier 2: Targeted Prevention (SOME)

Tier 2 systems, data, and practices provide targeted support for students who are not successful with Tier 1 supports alone. The focus is on supporting students who are at risk for developing more serious problem behavior before those behaviors start. Tier 2 supports often involve group interventions with 10 or more students participating. The support at this level is more focused than Tier 1 and less intensive than Tier 3.

Tier 2 foundational systems include:

- Behavioral expertise
- Fidelity and outcome data are collected
- Screening process to identify students needing Tier 2 support
- Access to training and technical assistance

Tier 2 practices include:

- Increased instruction and practice with self-regulation and social skills
- Increased opportunities for positive reinforcement
- Increased focus on possible function of problem behaviors
- Increased access to academic supports

Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized Prevention (FEW)

Tier 3 systems, data, and practices provide targeted support for students who are not successful with tier 1 and Tier 2. At most schools, there are 1-5% of students for whom Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports haven't connected. At Tier 3, these students receive more intensive, individualized support to improve their behavioral and academic outcomes. Tier 3 strategies work for students with developmental disabilities, autism, emotional and behavioral disorders, or students with no diagnostic label at all.

Tier 3 foundational systems include:

- A multi-disciplinary team
- Behavior support expertise
- Formal fidelity and data are collected

Tier 3 practices include:

- Function-based assessments
- Wraparound supports
- Culture and context fix

Students with disabilities involved in disciplinary proceedings will have a team present that includes a special education teacher, behaviorist and family to review the students IEP.

The families/guardians of our students will be informed of our school's discipline policies during an orientation meeting and in writing via our enrollment and information packet. This information will also be available on the school's website.

Source:

<https://www.pbis.org/resource/is-school-wide-positive-behavior-support-an-evidence-based-practice>

Rationale for School Discipline Policy:

The purpose of our school discipline and policy plan is to understand the “why” behind behaviors and to bring absolute clarity of culture expectations to teachers, scholars and families. Teachers who consistently implement a High Structure, High Support Behavior management system work to identify the “why” behind scholar misbehavior and assist with managing behaviors through implementation of our routines and procedures. Consistent maintenance of routines and procedures are essential to creating an environment where scholars feel safe and are challenged to grow and develop their personal character.

Summary:

This table demonstrates what teachers and students should do when students do not meet expectations within a given class period. It is important to note that our policies are rooted in the belief that students should engage in restorative justice practices with their peers and others in the school community. These protocols are important to follow and are further outlined in our attached draft discipline policy.

Source:

<https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/resource-restorative-justice-in-u-s-schools-an-i>

Consequence Step	Student Action	Teacher Action
1st Incident	Acknowledge and Re-Engage Student should immediately correct behavior to meet expectations and get back to task at hand.	Redirect and Track <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verbal Redirection, reminding the student of expectations, whole group. ● Teacher should utilize classroom “management strategies. I.e: proximity or non-verbal directives (eye contact, hand on shoulder)

		Track Student's Infraction
2nd Incident	<p>Comply and Re-Engage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Restorative Conversation. <p>Student will complete written reflection in relaxation station.</p>	<p>Personally Redirect, Investigate, Intervene and Track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restorative Conversation - addresses why ; ends with action steps for correcting behavior. Assign Reflection or calming activity at relaxation station. Give an option for break if necessary etc. drink of water , stretch.
3rd Incident	<p>Reflect and Restore Harm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student will complete the logical consequence <p>Engage in restorative conversation with teacher</p>	<p>Track Student's Infraction</p> <p>Logical Consequence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue logical consequence that makes sense for the behavior - apology, cleaning area, picking up items... in the moment or at a later time. <p>Notify guardian of logical consequence and timeline for completion.</p>
4th Incident	<p>Student Removal</p> <p>Student is waiting in reflection station for pickup</p>	<p>Communicate and Track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Log referral and call for student to be picked up. <p>Please document all calls to parents.</p>
Automatic Referral	<p>Report to Administrator's Office</p> <p>The student will be escorted down to the administrator's office by staff or administration.</p>	<p>Communicate to Administrator's Office</p> <p>Teacher calls the Administrator's Office.</p>
	<p>Restorative meetings and interventions</p>	<p>Teacher Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in restorative conversation using the affective statements to guide the conversation vs. to blame. Assign and collect logical consequence Teacher can schedule restorative

<p>Restorative Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student will participate in a restorative meeting or interventions with other parties involved. <p>The student will participate in a restorative meeting with parents and administration.</p>	<p>Administrator's Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrators will speak with the student about the infractions. Administrator can schedule restorative meetings with Students and teachers Administrators can schedule parents conferences. <p>Administrators can call parents to help with restorative meetings over the phone.</p>
<p>Out of School Suspension</p>	<p>Suspensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will write statements in their defense about the major infraction they committed. <p>Students will return back to school with their parents and participate in a restorative circle BEFORE returning back to class.</p>	<p>Teacher Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigation of the major infraction. Input Referral via Powerschool Will provide students with work to complete. Restorative conversation with student BEFORE returning to class.
<p>Expulsion</p>	<p>Expulsions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will write statements in their defense about the major infraction they committed. <p>Students will be given a hearing to explain their reasoning for the major infraction committed.</p>	<p>Teacher Responsibility-</p> <p>Record incident</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Responsibility- Lead investigation with the help of the Administrator

Auto-Referral to Administrator's Office

- Continuous disrespectful behaviors and attitude after redirect
- Continuous disruption to the class/learning environment after redirects
- Inability to follow restorative practice (ex: de-escalate in class)
- Physical displays of anger or frustration
- Open defiance of staff member
- Walking out of class
- Drugs/Tobacco
- Bullying and harassment
- Inappropriate use of technology, personal or school
- Real and look-alike weapons

Auto-Referral to an In-School Suspension

- Physical contact out of anger or frustration
- Continuous class disruptions after a restorative conversation has taken place
- Walking out of class
- Open defiance of a staff member
- Inability to de-escalate with administrator

Auto-Referral to an Out of School Suspension

- Fighting
- Real and look-alike weapons
- Drugs/Tobacco
- Profanity towards staff member

Emergency Removal

- 3 Repeated ISS assignments
- Open defiance requiring security/restraining
- Refusal of Restorative Practice

Admin's Office Referral In-take Process:

- Teachers will call main office for assistance
- Front office calls on radio for administrator
- Student is retrieve by administration
- Teacher immediately submits referral in Kickboard
- Admin does an investigation with teachers and students
- Phone call/ conference with family is scheduled
- Administrator determines consequence - logical consequence, restorative conversation, ER/suspension
- Administrator communicates conclusion to teachers via email

Return Back to Classroom Process:

- Restorative conversation with student, administrator, and parent/guardian if available
- Option 1: Pass notification back to teacher
- Option 2: Administrator escorts student to class for restorative conversation with teacher
 - Administrator covers class during restorative conversation

Return Back from Suspension Process:

May include but are not limited to...

- Restorative meeting with all parties involved
- Conference with family
- Morning check in with Dean
- Goal setting and progress monitoring with team

POSSIBLE CLASSROOM MANAGED INTERVENTIONS

(To be documented by classroom teachers)

- Change/re-assign seat

- Conference with student outside of room (Restorative Conversation)
- Pre-correct student
- Contract with student
- Parent Contact
- Safe Space in class.
- Time-out in another class/Class Buddy

<p>Classroom Managed: Minor Infraction- is one that is a low intensity and can be corrected within the classroom setting.</p>	<p>Office Managed: Major Infraction- are those deemed severe in nature and may not only affect themselves, but others in the setting as well.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defiance/Insubordination (mild) • Preparedness • Yelling out • Put-downs • Throwing small objects • Refusing to work • Dishonesty (copying assignments) • Minor Physical contact • Tone/Attitude • Minor dress code • Food or drink in class • Excessive talking • Cheating/plagiarizing • Minor vandalism (writing on desk, etc.) • Minor inappropriate display of affection – hugging & kissing • Cell phones • Excessive violations of teacher managed behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed/abusive profanity/language • Throwing objects w/intent to harm • Defiance/Insubordination (severe) • Major horse playing • Constantly failure to comply • Major dress code violations • Weapons • Fighting or aggressive physical contact • Chronic minor infractions • Threats/Intimidation • Bullying/Harassment of students or teachers • False reporting of a serious matter • Truancy • Smoking • Major vandalism (graffiti, gang related) • Destruction of property • Alcohol (under the influence, possession) • Drugs (under the influence, possession) • Gambling • Forgery • Leaving campus • Sexual Misconduct

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Attachments

Section 11: Student Discipline Policy and Plan

11.1	Attachment 9- Discipline Policy (Draft)	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:52 AM	PDF / 150.554 KB
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12. Family and Community Involvement

The idea of Breakthrough Charter School began with parents and community members. To see declining enrollment in Perry county schools, both public and private, sparked a passion for change. An effort to revitalize the community of Marion was formed with Main Street Marion, and through that effort the realization was made that an education option was needed. Young families were fleeing the county and living elsewhere in an effort to provide a satisfactory education for their children. Even if families remained in Marion, they were sending their children outside of the county for school. Then the questions were asked- Why are the children of Perry county hindered because of where they live? Why do they not deserve the right to quality education options? How can the cycle of poverty be broken without education? During these periods of pondering, the concept of Breakthrough Charter School was formed.

Considering the years of racial division in Marion, the Breakthrough Charter School (BCS) Board has approached the community with a mindset of sensitivity and a goal of inclusion.

In an effort to engage with stakeholders, Breakthrough Charter held focus groups to assess the needs of the community. Parents, community members, educators, and business owners were all invited to the numerous focus groups. The objective of the focus group was to assess the needs and wants of parents and community members within the school design of BCS.

After the needs of the children in the community were assessed and Breakthrough Charter was formalized, BCS held community meetings. These meetings were held in several locations within Perry County to cater to diverse populations and ease racial tensions. Information was provided in regards to BCS and concerns and suggestions from parents and community members were addressed.

During the community meetings, the one misconception that became apparent was the idea that a charter school is not a public school. Racial tensions that have divided Perry County for generations became apparent and action was needed. Local schools are segregated by family choice, so many families and community members find it difficult to believe that a charter school is for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status. In an effort to provide accurate information and calm fears regarding BCS being a "private school", a partnership with Black Alabamians for Education was formed. Black Alabamians for Education hosted "chat and chews" to inform local residents of the definition of charter schools and the benefits of school choice.

As mentioned in question one, the focus groups and community meetings were vital to the design of Breakthrough Charter School. The information campaign through social media postings and community meetings will continue. Along with those efforts, information has been published on social media, Breakthrough's website, and in flyers distributed throughout the community. Using social media, our posts have reached up to 2,000 people, according to Facebook data. Our social media page has over 400 "likes", with over 70% of our followers living in Alabama's Black Belt counties (Perry, Dallas, Hale, etc.). Much of the communication effort will need to be, and has been, through word of mouth and personal connections.

Upon approval, Breakthrough Charter School plans to host workshops for children and their families prior to the official opening of BCS to further acquaint families with the school and its opportunities and educational options. After-school activities and tutoring will be available to the community and led by BCS staff and Marion Military Institute cadets.

Developing personal connections and being present in the community is vital to Breakthrough Charter School's success. BCS plans to volunteer and be present at events hosted by the City of Marion and Main Street Marion, such as "Jazz on the Square", "Treats on Bibb Street", and the "Obama Day" celebrations.

The value of community will be reinforced through monthly service projects organized by grade levels, partnering with local non-profits and the Marion Military Institute Service Leaders Club.

Information received from town halls, focus groups and online surveys express that BCS stakeholders value a school that encourages parental involvement. In the local community, there is a wide variety of household structures and family schedules. Breakthrough Charter School personnel will make every effort to ensure that involvement is accessible to and equitable for all stakeholders.

School personnel will be careful in word choice, to not address only “parents,” but “family, friends and guardians.” Furthermore, school administrators and teachers will be thoughtful in the timing of any community events or school meetings so that participation among family members will be maximized.

In accordance to Act 2015-3, the BCS governing board shall have at least twenty percent of its membership be parents of students who attend or have attended Breakthrough Charter School for at least one academic year. Four of seven members of BCS’s Founding Board are parents of children that will attend Breakthrough Charter School.

A Family/Teacher organization will be formed to aid with community events, fundraising and selecting community service projects for Breakthrough Charter School.

As part of the daily schedule for elementary students, a parent or community member is designated to read to the class. In this effort, the objective is to connect the community, family and classroom to the importance of the education at Breakthrough Charter.

As part of the education of a BCS student, volunteer hours are required. Students must volunteer ten hours a semester in the local community.

Breakthrough Charter School is committed to nurturing the family dynamic of education. It is vital to the success of students at BCS that parents or guardians are involved in their child’s education. BCS will provide informational sessions to teach parents or guardians what education data, statistics and commonly used terms means for student success at BCS.

It is expected for parents or guardians to attend all relative stakeholder conferences. If a parent or guardian cannot attend a stakeholder conference, a make-up one-on-one session should be scheduled with BCS staff.

Parents or guardians will be encouraged, but not required, to volunteer as needed with classroom and after-school activities. Parent or guardian participation is highly encouraged at Breakthrough Charter School.

Attached are letters of support from community leaders, educators (current and retired), and former Perry County students. Furthermore, a petition has also been attached, signed by individuals that live and/or work in Perry County that supported Breakthrough Charter School's efforts.

Attachments

Section 12: Family and Community Involvement

12.1	Supplemental Attachment-Letters of Support	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:56 AM	PDF / 525.798 KB
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13. Partnership or Contractual Relationships

Breakthrough Charter School is grateful for the various partnerships developed over the course of preparing our application. We have three major partners in our efforts to design a strong school model and communicate that choice to our community. First, we have a strong partnership with Marion Military Institute, which will provide support for supplemental programming and enrichment opportunities for BCS students. We received continuous support from New Schools for Alabama as we have strived to design and communicate a successful school model in our application. New Schools will also be sponsoring the development of our School Leader through the New Schools for Alabama School Founders Fellowship, which was awarded to our future Head of School, Darren Ramalho. Finally, in an effort to better communicate school choice to our community, we partnered with Black Alabamians for Education, an organization that has and will continue to deliver programming that educates the community members in our surrounding area about parent involvement and school choice. Black Alabamians for Education has hosted three events in Perry County during this process.

Our partnership with Marion Military Institute (MMI) is one of the major components that makes our school model unique and innovative. . Marion Military Institute, a two-year public institution of higher learning, educates and develops cadets as future leaders through an immersive experiential military environment which integrates intellectual, leadership, character and physical development in order to prepare them for success in four-year colleges, US Service academies, and in military and civilian careers. The vision for MMI is to be nationally recognized as the premier leader development college of Alabama with whole cadet enrichment through an immersive and intentional experiential learning environment, a relevant, rigorous and robust academic program and character and leadership education development system. MMI is a member of the Alabama Community College System and governed by the ACCS Board of Trustees. MMI is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to award Associate of Science and Associate of Arts Degrees. MMI is a member of the Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the United States and the National Junior College Athletic Association.

As is evidenced in the Memorandum of Agreement between Breakthrough Charter School (BCS) and Marion Military Institute (MMI) in attachment 10, MMI has agreed to support BCS students in various capacities to include:

- Access to dual enrollment course upon development of grades 9-12
- Access to MMI student academic tutoring, access to mentoring to include civic mentoring by MMI's honor guard
- Access to MMI's guest speakers when appropriate
- Inclusion of BCS students in community service projects and efforts organized and facilitated by MMI's staff and cadets
- Facilitation of age-appropriate moral reasoning dilemma discussions at BCS
- Access to MMI's leader-reaction and obstacle course to facilitate leadership and character development
- Access to designated MMI facilities to include the golf-course, stadium and track, and parade field on a not to interfere basis in compliance with appropriate liability requirements and agreements.

BCS students will engage in specific leadership development exercises monthly in partnership with the MMI's Center for Leadership. The Anthony J. Rane Center for Leadership is the focal point for cadet character and leadership development at MMI. The mission of the Center is to advance leadership education, training and character development within MMI's Corps of Cadets through rigorous academic study of leadership theory reinforced by challenging character building practical exercises. This "leadership laboratory" is accompanied by curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities that enrich the cadets' experience through the introduction and reinforcement of character and leadership concepts that directly correlate to setting the foundation for developing future leaders of character. The Center sponsors guest speakers and activities/challenges designed by MMI cadets to push leadership growth, another one of Breakthrough's core values.

Service-learning at Breakthrough Charter School will challenge students and teachers to connect content with local community improvement opportunities. The MMI Service Leaders Club will help facilitate service learning opportunities for Breakthrough Charter School students. The goal of the MMI Service Leaders Club is to promote cadet leadership development opportunities through community service projects, campus activities and leadership education. The MMI sponsored club would be responsible for facilitating tutoring efforts by MMI cadets for BCS students.

Breakthrough will also work with New Schools For Alabama (NSFA) to receive necessary backoffice support. Attached is a letter from NSFA verifying this partnership.

Attachments

Section 13: Partnership or Contractual Relationships

13.1	Attachment- New Schools For Alabama Back Office Support	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:13 PM	PDF / 188.354 KB
13.2	Attachment 10- MMI Agreement	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:54 AM	PDF / 45.257 KB

14. Educational Service Providers (ESP) and Other Partnerships

Breakthrough Charter School does not plan to partner with any education service providers at this time.

Attachments

Section 14: Educational Service Providers (ESP) and Other Partnerships

– No Attachments –

15. Educational Program Capacity

Darren Ramalho will serve as Head of School of Breakthrough Charter School. Mr. Ramalho has taught for six years in the Perry County Schools system and for five years as an adjunct instructor at Marion Military Institute. He also works as a library assistant at Marion Military Institute. Mr. Ramalho graduated from UCLA in 2014 with a double major in English and Political Science. He joined the 2014 Teach For America corps, which is how he began his teaching career in Perry County. Mr. Ramalho is the first Teach For America teacher to stay beyond his two year commitment at Robert C. Hatch High School and has taught longer than any Teach For America alumnus in the Perry County. He currently serves as English Department chairperson at Robert C. Hatch High School and has served as a mentor teacher for Judson College education students the past two years. At Robert C. Hatch High School, Mr. Ramalho has served on the school's budget committee, as graduating class advisor, and junior class advisor. Furthermore, he serves on the Board of Directors of C.H.O.I.C.E., a local nonprofit dedicated to improving the city of Uniontown, Perry County, and the greater Black Belt area through education, health, athletics and workforce development initiatives. These experiences demonstrate Mr. Ramalho is committed to the betterment of people in the Perry County. Mr. Ramalho has also had the opportunity to represent Perry County in the education arena on a number of occasions at the state and national levels. Darren Ramalho served on the inaugural Alabama State Superintendent's Teacher Cabinet, amplifying the teacher voice from a rural perspective when considering education policy issues. He currently serves on the ALSDE English Language Arts (ELA) Course of Study Committee and Taskforce, working to rewrite state standards to best meet the needs of Alabama students. Mr. Ramalho was also selected to serve as a panelist at the National Council of Teachers of English's annual conference in Maryland, presenting as a Red Mountain Writing Project fellow on the impact of argumentative writing using strategies developed by the National Writing Project. Mr. Ramalho is also pursuing his master's degree in Public School Building Leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University, where his program is ranked the second best principal preparation program in the nation. Darren was also selected for New Schools for Alabama's School Founders Fellowship program, and he will be leaders from the Citizens of the World Charter Schools network as part of his fellowship. Mr. Ramalho has demonstrated a commitment to educational excellence through the myriad of opportunities made available to him during his six years in Alabama, and we believe these skillsets and experiences. For a more holistic view of Darren Ramalho's achievements and passion for education, review his CV in Attachment 13.

Founding board members Eva Vasquez-Painter, Larissa Clachar, and Susan Stevenson all have education experience that has proved to be invaluable when designing Breakthrough's curriculum and instruction plan, school culture plan, school schedule, and more.

Breakthrough has partnered with a number of organizations to bring our mission, vision, core values, and school model to fruition. We have partnered with CenterPoint Education Solutions, specifically working with Dr. Bonnie Hain, to assist in the development of our daily school schedule and our curriculum design. We will continue to work with CenterPoint Education Solutions during our planning year and the first year of Breakthrough's operation to ensure our curriculum model and scheduling optimally meets the need of students. We have also partnered with Black Alabamians for Education in our efforts to educate the community about charter schools. We will continue to partner with Black Alabamians For Education throughout our planning year, working to educate parents and community members through additional chat and chews, community forums, and charter school visits in and outside of Alabama. As previously stated, Breakthrough has also worked in close partnership with Marion Military Institute (MMI), the nation's

oldest junior military college. Our partnership with Marion Military Institute will remain close throughout the school's regular operation, as we plan to offer Breakthrough students access to MMI facilities, dual enrollment courses, leadership development, and mentorship/tutoring with cadets (MMI students) from across the country.

Breakthrough will work to recruit and hire a diverse, high-performing leadership team during the school's planning year (2020-2021). Attachment 14 will further detail our timeline, criteria, and process for recruitment and hiring.

Darren Ramalho will work on a full-time basis following assignment of a location to lead development of the school and will be compensated through the New Schools Founder Fellowship awarded to him by New Schools For Alabama. The Breakthrough leadership team plans to hire a Director of Operations to begin working in Spring 2021, and we plan to compensate this person through secured funding from NewSchools Venture Fund.

Attachments

Section 15: Educational Program Capacity

15.1	Attachment 14- Director of Operations Position Description	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:59 AM	PDF / 55.214 KB
15.2	Attachment 13- School Leader CV and Qualifications	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 3:58 AM	PDF / 172.74 KB

OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

18. Legal Status and Governing Documents

Attached you will find a copy of Breakthrough's Articles of Incorporation and copies of paperwork that has been filed with IRS for 501c3 non-profit status. The signed Statement of Assurances is also attached.

Attachments

Section 18: Legal Status and Governing Documents

18.1	Attachment- Statement of Assurances	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 5:06 PM	PDF / 2.722 MB
18.2	Attachment 15- Legal Status and Governing Documents	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:02 AM	PDF / 2.651 MB

19. Organization Structure and Relationships

Attachment 17 outlines the Breakthrough Charter School Organization Chart beginning in the 2021-22 school year and outlines how the Organization Chart and reporting structure shift annually through reaching full capacity, as aligned with the Breakthrough Charter School Budget.

Attachments

Section 19: Organization Structure and Relationships

19.1	Attachment 17- BCS Organizational Chart	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:06 AM	PDF / 160.202 KB
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20. Governing Board

In designing this school plan and writing our application, the Founding Board has operated under the guiding principles of transparency, honesty and the belief that all children deserve access to a quality education that will prepare them to be life-long learners and leaders. The first step of our founding board was to develop the Breakthrough Charter School mission, vision and core values. By doing so, we have been able to anchor each subsequent decision in our school design and community outreach to one of our core values. We strive to ensure each action taken by the Board embodies one or more of our values of Scholarship, Diversity, Leadership or Community.

These principles will be brought over to our Governing Board upon approval by the commission.

The members of the Breakthrough Charter School Founding Board will serve up until approval of our application. The main function of this founding board has been to design a strong school model and compose a strong application. Upon approval, most members will stay on to serve as the Breakthrough Charter School Governing Board, while one will transition to the school leadership team.

Founding Board Members

Board Chairperson – Mr. Darren Ramalho

Vice Chairperson – Dr. Susan Stevenson

Treasurer – Mrs. Brittany Crawford

Secretary – Mrs. Eva Vasquez-Painter

Member – Mr. Wendell Crews

Member – Mrs. Laura Leavell, J.D.

Member – Mr. Kalen Early

Member – Dr. Larissa Clachar

The Breakthrough Charter School Founding Board is composed of a diverse group of people with a passion for education in our community. The chair of the board, Darren Ramalho, is an educator and former Teach for America corps member with 6 years of experience teaching at the local public school. He is currently pursuing his master's degree in Public School Building Leadership from Teachers College at Columbia University. Upon approval from the commission, Darren will immediately step down from our Board, as he has been selected to serve as our school leader.

Darren is currently participating in the New Schools For Alabama School Founders fellowship, under the direction of New Schools for Alabama Director, Tyler Barnett. Darren's fellowship will be hosted by Citizens of the World Charter Schools.

The Vice Chair of the Breakthrough Charter School Founding Board, Dr. Susan Stevenson, served as the Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at Marion Military Institute for 15 years. She recently retired from Marion Military Institute in February 2020, and her expertise in education policy, organizational leadership and grant writing has been an invaluable asset to our application team.

The Treasurer, Brittany Crawford, brings knowledge and expertise in recruiting, enrollment and higher education and business. She holds a Master's in Business Administration in Accounting and Finance, which she has used in her role as Treasurer for the Board. As Director of Enrollment Management at Marion Military Institute, she has been responsible for stable enrollment growth during her time at the school. Brittany has two children, one who will be of school age upon opening in 2021.

The Secretary, Eva Vasquez-Painter, originally came to Perry County in 2011 as a Teach for America Corps Member, where she taught for two years at Francis Marion School. Following her two-year commitment, she worked at Marion Military Institute where she has gained seven years' experience in higher education. She currently serves as the Director of the Student Success Center, where she works to develop programming to assist students in ways of academic support. She also brings experience and knowledge with federal grant reporting. She holds a Masters of Arts in Communications from the University of Alabama. Eva has one child who will be of school age upon opening in 2021.

Wendell Crews, another parent in Perry County, and a graduate of Perry County public schools, brings expertise in technology. Wendell received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of West Alabama and began working in the Information Technology field shortly after graduation. His knowledge of the community and IT capabilities has been invaluable to these efforts.

Kalen S. Early is a recent graduate of R.C. Hatch, a public school in Perry County. He obtained an Associate in Science from Marion Military Institute, and went on to earn his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Alabama. He is currently in the process of applying to various law schools in pursuit of his goal to become a lawyer. He has interned in Washington D.C. in Congresswoman Terri Sewell's office (AL-7th), an experience that emboldened his love for political science. Kalen brings a unique voice and perspective to the board, as he is the youngest member and most recent graduate of the Perry County School System.

Laura Leavell, spent several years working in the court system of Perry County before moving to Birmingham. She currently works as an attorney for Cushman and Wakefield in Birmingham, and bring legal knowledge to the board, along with an understanding of

the Perry County community. Laura earned her Juris Doctorate from the Cumberland School of Law.

Larissa Clachar is also a parent of school aged children in Perry County and is currently employed by Judson College as an Assistant Professor and Department Chair at Judson College. She has a Ph.D. in Spanish from the University of Alabama. She is originally from San Jose, Costa Rica. She brings knowledge of higher education and foreign language to the board, as well as the perspective of a parent and community member.

The Breakthrough Board is capable and passionate about launching a charter school in Marion, but do realize that no board member has ever designed and launched a school. In realizing this shortcoming, BCS is working closely with New Schools for Alabama and the leadership team at University Charter School.

Governing Board

The future Breakthrough Charter School Governing Board will operate under the same 50c3 non-profit and governing bylaws; however, membership will change to remove Darren Ramalho as he steps in as school leader. The Governing Board will oversee the operations of Breakthrough Charter School with input from the Breakthrough Charter School Head of School and various advisory bodies to include our parent and community advisory body and the leadership advisory body. It will be the board's responsibility to monitor the performance and continued viability of Breakthrough Charter School. The board will compare performance reports, prepared on a monthly basis from the advisory board, to the established financial, academic and enrolment goals. The board's duties include:

- Compose and evaluate school policy
- Approve yearly school budget
- Appoint and evaluate Breakthrough Charter Leadership Team
- Oversee academic progress and quality
- Manage long-term financial viability
- Ensure all operations are performed with legal and ethical integrity
- Advocate on behalf of Breakthrough Charter to secure and maintain community partnerships and fundraising opportunities

Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest

Breakthrough Charter School Governing Board desires to operate in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible and to that end the board has adopted the attached Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policy.

In the event that a conflict of interest arises, the Breakthrough Charter Board requires the member adheres to following procedure:

1. Duty to Disclose In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest

- a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
- b. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the Organization can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Organization's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable.

Attachments

Section 20: Governing Board

20.1	Supplemental Attachment- Board Member Resumes	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:14 AM	PDF / 545.235 KB
20.2	Attachment 20- Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:14 AM	PDF / 109.213 KB
20.3	Attachment 19- Board Member Information Sheets	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:13 AM	PDF / 368.104 KB
20.4	Attachment 18- Governing Bylaws	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:13 AM	PDF / 154.394 KB

21. Advisory Bodies

Breakthrough Charter School greatly values parent, community and other key stakeholder’s input in monitoring the success of our mission and vision. Breakthrough Charter School's Governing Board will approve the creation of any additional advisory bodies as the need presents itself.

Advisory bodies will provide insight in areas such as community, leadership development, athletics, extracurricular activities, etc. Each Advisory Body will be composed of at least one board member, parents, educators and local and community/civic leaders, as applicable. The sitting board member on each advisory body will be responsible for facilitating communication between the Advisory Body and the Board of Directors. At this point in time, the Founding Board has identified the need for the following advisory bodies:

Leadership Development Advisory Body – Leadership is one of the core values that we believe sets our school model apart from others, which is why the Founding Board will be actively looking to find members to form this advisory body. The role of the Leadership Development Advisory Body will be to advise the board and leadership team on how Breakthrough Charter School can continue to coordinate with Marion Military Institute to develop programming that will enhance the leadership development of our students. The composition of this advisory body should include at least one board member, one parent and one member of the Marion Military Institute faculty or staff to serve as a channel for communication between the two organizations.

Parent & Community Member Advisory Body – Breakthrough Charter also holds community as an important value that will influence our operations; therefore, the board recommends that an advisory body consisting of parents and community members be formed to represent the chief concerns of the community members.

Attachments

Section 21: Advisory Bodies

– No Attachments –

22. Grievance/Complaint Process

Breakthrough will be a community school and have an open-door policy to express any issues or concerns regarding curriculum, policies, procedures, and decisions agreed upon by the governing board. Below are the procedures BCS will follow once a complaint has been issued. All complaints/grievances will be addressed in a timely manner.

1. Complaints/concerns regarding curriculum, staff and faculty members that a community member, staff, or faculty may have should be addressed to the Head of School.
2. Once the complaint has been received by the Head of School, he or she must document the complaint and be as detailed as possible, including dates, time, and other applicable evidence.
3. The Head of School possesses the discretion to address the complaint individually with the complainant with a witness present or call a meeting with the board members to address
4. Should the school leader address the complaint individually and a resolution isn't agreed upon by both parties, the school leader will delegate the complaint to the governing board to be addressed. The governing board will be responsible for resolving the complaint in a timely manner.

Attachments

Section 22: Grievance/Complaint Process

– No Attachments –

23. Staff Structure

Breakthrough Charter School staffing charts are detailed in Attachment 21. The school plans to open year 1 as a PK-8 school, adding a grade each subsequent year, with the goal being a K-12 by year 5. This is evidenced in our staffing chart as we will add positions on a yearly basis.

The overall staffing strategy is based on ensuring smaller class sizes and a commitment to supporting teachers with adequate help from supplemental staff and administrative support that allows them to focus on instruction and targeted intervention. The staffing model maintains special education staffing and multiple assistant/aide roles as well as elective teachers to provide art, music, and PE/wellness opportunities for all students. Breakthrough Charter School will seek to hire several staff with multiple certifications in Special Education and ELL.

School Staffing Model

The Breakthrough Charter School staffing model is based on the following assumptions:

- Years 1 -2: One Head of School, and one Director of Operations. By year 3, Breakthrough Charter plans to add in an Assistant Principal position. These roles comprise the senior leadership team of the school and provide the functional expertise necessary to support teachers, students, and drive improvements in culture, academics, and school-wide outcomes.

- Teachers are staffed based on 20 – 30 students per classroom in grades K-12 and Pre-K classrooms have a teacher and an aide for every 18 students in accordance with the Alabama Pre-K model.
- Years 1-3 provide one FTE for elective staff, increasing to 2 FTE's by year 4. This will be supplemented with part-time assistance.
- Support will be provided with two education assistants in K-3, and one reading and one math specialist.
- Special education staff are based on one FTE for every 20 IEPs. Additional roles include a counselor and office assistant/receptionist.
- Nursing, Cafeteria, Janitorial, Transportation and Security Staff will be contracted. Student to total staff ratios are 11.1 students for every FTE.
- Student to teacher ratios are 13.8 students for every instructional FTE.

Attachments

Section 23: Staff Structure

23.1	Attachment 21- Staffing Structure	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:27 AM	PDF / 112.385 KB
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24. Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

Recruitment

The Breakthrough Charter Board is committed to recruiting, hiring and retaining strong talent that will exhibit a commitment to realizing our mission and vision.

Outreach – Given the rural location of the school, Breakthrough Charter School is prepared to make every effort to engage in strategic local and national outreach by posting on several job boards. Breakthrough Charter School also plans to leverage our connections with Teach for America's alumni network. Members of either the Breakthrough Charter Board or Leadership Team are also prepared to attend various job and career fairs to promote employment opportunities with our institution.

Referrals – Breakthrough Charter School plans to take best practices from other successful charters by encouraging and incentivizing staff members to provide referrals. Staff members will be asked to refer past coworkers, network peers, and schoolmates who have experience and a successful past in education.

Residencies and Certification Programs— Breakthrough Charter plans to explore potential partnerships with various universities and programs that can cultivate talent pipelines. We have already begun conversations about accomplishing this with professors in the education departments at Judson College and the University of Alabama.

Hiring

Breakthrough Charter School will take all necessary steps to ensuring the most qualified candidate is selected for the position, following a standard set of hiring procedures.

Post the Position – All positions will be posted for a minimum of 1 week.

Interview & Sample Lessons (teaching positions) – The top five candidates for each position will be interviewed by a selection committee, appointed by the leadership team. All teaching applicants will be required to provide a sample lesson for the selection committee.

Reference Checks, Certification Reviews and Selection- The selection committee for the prospective position will perform due diligence in checking references and certification reviews. The committee will submit their selection based on qualifications to the board for final approval.

Employment Contract – Upon selection, Breakthrough Charter Employees will be offered an annual employment contract, which outlines their terms of employment, annual pay, supervisor and explicit description of expected responsibilities. All employee contracts will be eligible for annual renewal.

Staffing

The leadership team will consist of the Head of School and the Director of Operations for years 1 and 2. By year 3, Breakthrough Charter School plans to an Assistant Principal. The leadership team will monitor the all facets of Breakthrough Charter School and ensure all activities are in alignment with the mission, vision, and core values The Head of School, as the instructional leader, will be responsible for all aspects of day-to-day operations and administration of the school. The Director of Operations with work directly with and report to the Principal to ensure effective management of the financial model.

The Head of School will oversee and evaluate facility and staff. The Head of School will establish and implement procedures for the day-to-day operations of the school including but not limited to procedures for curriculum and instruction, classroom management, discipline, faculty and staff evaluation, testing, parental communication, and professional development. The Director of Operations will conduct data analysis and oversee non-instructional support services, facilities and internal financial controls, etc. The Director of Operations will report all finding to the Head of School, who will communicate to the Governing Board.

A working employee handbook is attached for review as attachment 22. This handbook is an example of what will be proposed for adoption upon approval. All employees will be provided a handbook that details . After review of the handbook, employees will be required to sign a document acknowledging receipt.

Evaluation

The Head of School will be evaluated by the Breakthrough Charter School Governing Board on an annual basis on the following criteria:

1. Management of all school employees
2. Progress towards organizational goals and objectives
3. Financial and operations management
4. Legal compliance with state and federal regulations

The board will provide a written evaluation the Head of School. This evaluation will be completed during a board meeting, and will then hold a separate meeting to deliver the feedback.

Breakthrough Charter School has selected the Principal Evaluation Rubric from New Leaders for New Schools for use, specifically the Principal and Assistant Principal. This Rubric is available in Attachment 23.

New Leaders provides the following license agreement for use (excerpted). Non-profit organizations, state government education agencies, and local government education agencies (each, a "Licensee") may reproduce, distribute, publicly display and perform, and create derivative works based upon this work for such Licensee's own use in all media now known or hereafter developed.

The Head of School will be responsible for evaluating all teaching positions. Evaluation of instructional staff will include a mixture of announced and unannounced classroom observations. Teachers can anticipate one unannounced observation every 9 weeks that will be followed with a post-observation counseling session. Teachers will also have at least one formal evaluation each semester, with more if the need presents itself. Each formal evaluation will be prefaced with a

Pre-observation meeting with the principal to establish professional growth goals. Each formal evaluation will be followed with a post-observation meeting, in which teachers will be given clear feedback outlining gaps and identifying next steps towards improvement.

During the first year, Breakthrough Charter School will use the State of Alabama's Continuum for Teacher Development. Breakthrough Charter intends to develop an internal evaluation rubric after the first year. This rubric can be reviewed in attachment 24.

Discipline

All Breakthrough Charter School employees will be subject to the same discipline plan. This plan will be shared with all employees. The discipline plan for employees, will mirror our discipline plan with students in that it will have restorative components which will attempt to educate the employee towards improvement. Taking best practices from University Charter School, Breakthrough Charter School plans to implement the following policy:

1. Verbal Warning. A Verbal Warning will be used in situations involving minor infractions or early signs of poor work performance. Multiple Verbal Warnings may be used in situations where the conduct is of a minor nature. For major issues/infractions, Verbal Warnings may not be appropriate.
2. Written Warning. A Written Warning will be used in situations involving repeated minor infractions following the use of Verbal Warnings, or for more serious infractions. For major issues/infractions, Written Warnings may not be appropriate.
3. Performance Improvement Plan / Final Warning. A Performance Improvement Plan and/or Final Warning may be used in situations of repeated minor infractions or for more serious and major infractions. This step will incorporate the Leadership Team and applicable supervisors in determining a course of action to improve the employee's work performance by a date certain. If proper improvement has not been made by date certain, termination may be recommended. A Performance Improvement Plan / Final Warning may not be appropriate for major issues/infractions.
4. Suspension. Suspension may be used for repeated minor infractions or for more serious and major infractions. Suspensions may be in length up to 14 days.
5. Termination. Termination may be used in situations of repeated minor infractions or for more serious and major infractions. The Leadership Team will make the decision on termination of the employee after consulting with the employee, supervisors and other interested parties. An employee terminated will have the right to appeal to the Breakthrough Charter Governing Board to have the termination overturned

Compensation

Breakthrough Charter School is prepared to offer competitive salaries, at or above state minimums in accordance with the ALSDE Teacher Salary Schedule. All full-time employees will be offered a standard benefits package comparable to those offered at public schools to include medical insurance, sick leave and state retirement packages.

Administrative Position	Expected Starting Salary
Head of School	\$75,000
Director of Operations	\$55,000
Assistant Principal (starting Year 3)	\$55,000
Math Chairperson	\$44,000 + Stipend
Reading Chairperson	\$44,000 + Stipend
Elementary Chairperson	\$44,000 + Stipend
Middle Chairperson	\$44,000 + Stipend

Counselor	\$44,000
Office Manager	\$20,000

Instructional Position	Expected Starting Salary
Pre-K Teachers	\$30,000
Pre-K Assistant Teachers	\$20,000
Teachers (K-4)	\$44,000
Teachers (5-8)	\$44,000
Teachers (9-12, added each year with additional grade)	\$44,000
Special Education Teachers	\$44,000
Specialists (Reading and Math)	\$44,000
PE/Elective Teachers (Full Time)	\$44,000
Apprentice Teachers	\$44,000
Educational Aides/Assistants	\$20,000

Attachments

Section 24: Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

24.1	Attachment 22- Employee Handbook	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 5:17 PM	PDF / 659.628 KB
24.2	Attachment 24- Teacher Evaluation	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:19 AM	PDF / 1,012.102 KB
24.3	Attachment 23- Leadership Evaluation	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:19 AM	PDF / 815.308 KB

25. Professional Development

Consistent, intentionally planned professional development is vital to the success of teacher growth and optimizing the classroom experience for our students. Recognizing this, Breakthrough teachers will be expected to complete at least 100 hours of professional development annually, and teachers will be provided ample opportunity during the regular school day and week to accomplish this. We will also consider professional development opportunities statewide requested by teachers that will enrich the students' educational experience and the teachers' professional growth. Prior to the start of school, teachers will participate in a seven-day professional development. This professional development is aimed to build camaraderie, to identify and capitalize on teacher strengths, to become familiar with the different kinds of learning practices the school will engage in daily, and to provide teachers time to unit plan and collaborate.

The Head of School will be responsible for leading and/or organizing professional development at Breakthrough.

Students will be on an early release schedule every Wednesday. Students will be dismissed from school at 1:00 PM weekly. During early release time, Breakthrough plans to engage in professional development sessions collectively and/or in grade bands. These weekly professional development sessions will vary to meet the needs of teachers, but professional development will specifically involve technology integration, curriculum differentiation, classroom culture development, and state testing strategies. Breakthrough plans to provide teachers with specific professional development around Google Classroom, how to embed social emotional learning effectively, and how to develop the most effective project-based learning and service-learning units. We will partner with state and national organizations, such as Alabama Technology In Motion (ATIM) and Six Seconds (an emotional intelligence consultant group) to ensure professional development meets the needs of our students, faculty, and staff. Teaching assistants will also participate in these weekly professional development sessions to ensure staff cohesion both culturally and academically.

Furthermore, grade bands will be given common planning time daily to meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). In these PLC meetings, teachers will review student data (formative assessments and summative assessments), fine tune lesson plans, and develop teaching strategies that will effectively ensure student mastery of content. Teachers will also have time to meet with special education teachers to ensure special education student growth is being monitored and assessed appropriately. Special education teachers will rotate among PLCs to accomplish this weekly.

Finally, teachers will be given data days at the end of each nine week grading period to analyze student strengths over the grading period, identify and/or address gaps, and determine what course of action should be taken for students during their daily intervention time. Teachers will also use these professional days to schedule stakeholder conferences with students and their guardians.

Prior to the first day of school for students, staff will have seven professional development days. During these days, teachers will have the opportunity to build a camaraderie while learning how to ensure key elements of the school's design are being implemented effectively. Each day, there will be a targeted focus. The schedule attached will highlight daily expectations:

- Day 1: Culture Building
- Day 2: Project-Based Learning
- Day 3: Social Emotional Learning
- Day 4: Service Learning
- Day 5: School Culture Expectations and Brainstorming
- Day 6: Lesson Planning and PLC Expectations
- Day 7: Classroom Preparation and Safety/Child Abuse Training

Following this week of interactive, informative professional development, teachers will be able to put into practice the teaching strategies and culture pieces that set Breakthrough apart from other schools in the state. Remaining days prior to the start of school will include additional time for classroom preparation and community outreach.

Attachments

Section 25: Professional Development

25.1	Supplemental Attachment- Breakthrough Summer Institute PD Schedule	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 2:08 PM	PDF / 106.614 KB
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26. Performance Management

The Alabama Charter School Commission will evaluate the performance of every charter school annually for renewal purposes according to a set of academic, financial, and organizational performance standards that will be incorporated into the charter agreement. The academic performance standards will consider status, growth, and comparative performance based on federal, state, and school-specific measures. The financial performance standards will be based on standard accounting and industry standards for sound financial operation. The organizational performance standards will be based primarily on compliance with legal obligations, including fulfillment of the governing board's fiduciary obligations related to sound governance.

At Breakthrough, accountability begins at the top. As students are encouraged to keep track of their data and progress the administration will close monitor its operations to be able to provide all the evidence of performance standards. The Board of Directors reviews progress towards measures in the accountability plan. The Head of School evaluates the most current performance data of the school through weekly meetings with his staff. Data meetings look at overall school performance. The chart below outlines our academic and organizational goals, considering category area and metric.

Area	Metric	Goal
Student Achievement	% of students achieving proficiency on state accountability tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5% annual increase from baseline proficiency on state accountability tests ● Schoolwide proficiency averages above Perry County average for equivalent grade levels
Student Growth	% of students reaching academic growth targets	At or above state average on annual academic growth targets
College and Career Readiness	% of students deemed college and career ready	At or above state college and career readiness average
Graduation	% of students graduating in 4 years	90% of students will graduate within four years
Service-Learning	% of students completing service-learning projects	100% of students will complete a service-learning project annually

Long-Term Academic Achievement Goals

Our academic achievement goals are inspired in the belief in the potential of our students to excel academically at the same level as their most privileged peers. We also acknowledge our students' average academic starting point may be below grade level, and so we know they will have additional rigors on their academic journey. We will establish annual academic goals that work towards our long-term measures of success through accomplishing annual targets as indicators of success. By doing so, we can ensure Breakthrough students graduate on time. These benchmarks will align with the expectations outlined in the above chart.

Evaluating Academic Progress

Breakthrough has a set of clear academic goals for its students to ensure that they are prepared excel in life by either going to college or entering a trade of their choice, starting in Kindergarten. The goals are aligned to the Common Core & Alabama

standards and will be central our academic efforts establish a strong college-preparatory school options for families in the area. The measurement and tracking of daily, monthly, annual, and year-over-year (cohort tracking) academic growth is integral to the stated efforts. This tracking will help us assess student achievement and student growth.

The Board of Directors reviews progress towards measures in the accountability plan. The Head of School evaluates the most current performance data of each grade level. The Head of School tracks assessment data and publicly shares academic performance school-wide in a weekly dashboard.

Major cycles of accountability towards academic data occur during Interim Assessments and MAP data cycles, our most significant types of data cycles. All data cycle dates are set forth clearly at the beginning of the year. Data analysis by subject, grade-band, and cohort occurs after each assessment and involves members of the school leadership team and teachers. Data meetings look at overall school performance on interims and the MAP assessment, subject-level breakdown for reading and mathematics, performance by coaching cohort to determine the efficacy of our coaching support, and finally cohort level data to determine if each cohort of students is improving year-over-year as well as between interim assessments within an academic year.

The Head of School will also track data assessing students' college and career readiness through assessment data and access to postsecondary opportunities. Mr. Ramalho plans to work with Eva Vasquez-Painter, who currently oversees college and career advancement at Marion Military Institute. The Head of School will also verify with the teaching staff that all students have participated in service-learning units.

Academic Corrective Action

Because students participate in frequent assessments cycles with data tracked in a dashboard, academic shortfalls can be predicted and identified early. If a classroom or grade-levels are not on track to meet annual academic goals, a number of interventions may be put in place, which begins first with data analysis by the school leadership team. Academic corrective action strategies to be implemented might include but are not limited to:

- Adjustment of allocated time and enrollment in intervention programming to address students who are not meeting goals: this may include after-school tutoring,
- Saturday school, and/or adjustments to the daily schedule to afford more time or access to intervention programming held during the school day. Increased and targeted professional development for instructional staff.
- Adjustment to schedule to provide more time in a target content area.
- Adjustment to unit plan to integrate target standards across content area lesson planning.
- Application of appropriate strategies to earlier grades or planning to proactively address challenges that may arise in the future.
- Temporarily placing Leadership Team member directly into the classroom.

For issues whose challenges are rooted in culture, additional strategies may include:

- Increased support staff allocations.
- Intensive professional development and culture-focused feedback loop for all staff.
- Temporarily placing Leadership Team member directly into the classroom.

Should a school or schools not meet annual academic goals for the school year, the Head of School and leadership team will plan intensive summer re-training for staff and students, as well as a coaching plan for the Head of School for the following year that will be more intensive and closely monitored by the Head of School and/or Board of Directors.

Data Analysis and Data Coaching

Maintenance of the weekly data dashboard is a collaborative effort of the Head of School and Director of Operations. Training for staff on data analysis and action planning will be conducted by the Head of School. In the summer professional development institute and Wednesday day professional development the Head of School will create structured data analysis and action planning time, which will be followed up with individual data meetings the following week for each teacher.

Excellent documentation and bookkeeping is key to reviewing performance, achievements and shortcomings. The school will incorporate regular data analysis and assessment by the administration, board and head of school will in terms of federal, state, and school-specific measures. Data analysis will allow Breakthrough to achieve and maintain excellence.

Attachments

Section 26: Performance Management

– No Attachments –

27. Facilities

Breakthrough Charter School has identified prospective facilities that have existing classrooms, additional land for expansion, and has several lenders willing to assist in securing a lease or purchase of the property. Once the charter is approved, the school will move into immediate discussions with the property owner and bank who holds the current mortgage. The intention of Breakthrough Charter School is to own the facility via a mortgage or a lease to own agreement. The address of the property is 1820 Prier Dr, Marion, AL 36756 and includes twelve classrooms, a small indoor gym/cafeteria, office space, a library/media center, and outdoor sports fields on a nearly 11-acre property. Four of the classrooms are especially well suited for elementary grades as they have adjacent restrooms and the other classrooms share a separate bathroom facility. The location is ideally suited for enrollment given its central location, proximity to Marion Military Institute, and a short drive for students from three counties.

The property is currently occupied by a small private school that was expected to close due to pre-COVID financial challenges that have likely been further exacerbated by COVID circumstances. The private school's outstanding debt amount on the property is approximately \$500k and could easily be financed in a purchase. The property owner is Marion Bank and Trust, a local bank with an interest in supporting Breakthrough.

Breakthrough is in initial due diligence conversations with three nonprofit community development lenders (Self Help, Hope Credit Union, and Blue Hub Capital) to finance renovations and/or a purchase of the property. These lenders are unique in their ability to support charters as they have federal credit enhancement funds that allow them to make subordinate loans to startup charters and have made hundreds of millions of dollars in charter school loans over the last five years.

A major advantage of the site is the fact the current buildings are operational. However, our walkthroughs and site visits have indicated there may be improvements required. All improvements must be (and will be) completed in accordance with Alabama Building Code and Alabama Fire Protection Code and any other requirements set forth in Act 2015-3 including, but not limited to restrooms, fire safety, campus security, air quality control, and weather proofing. Breakthrough Charter School plans to follow construction requirements and procedures set forth by the Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama Building Commission. Breakthrough Charter School is prepared to follow city and county planning review procedures prior to renovations.

While the existing space will require some renovation and improvements, the existing classrooms will allow for the amount of renovation needed to be spread over multiple years. Additional classrooms will be modular and can be installed and erected quickly. Potential improvements to existing modulars would begin in the fall of 2020. With an opening in August 2021 and the existing twelve classrooms, the renovation timeline is quite manageable.

Further, through relationships that New Schools for Alabama has developed that are available to multiple schools in Alabama, we anticipate development and renovation support to come from SchoolPrint, a nonprofit charter school facilities development organization that is funded by the Walton Foundation specifically to provide grant funded site development, architectural, and owners rep support to charters. The design, development, and architectural support will come at no charge.

The facility is desirable because it is located less than two miles from Marion Military Institute, which provides Breakthrough Charter students access to the opportunities provided by MMI, as mentioned in attachment 10. Also, 1820 Prier Drive qualifies as an "opportunity zone", which we expect will lead to additional funding options and low-cost borrowing. The opportunity zone

program provides a federal tax incentive for investors to use their unrealized capital gains into Opportunity Funds dedicated for investing in the designated opportunity zone.

Additional athletic and outdoor space is available for afterschool or weekend use by the school through the generosity of Marion Military Institute and includes a nine-hole golf course, soccer suitable fields, and even an indoor gym.

Attachments

Section 27: Facilities

27.1	Attachment 26- Facility Supporting Documents	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:24 AM	PDF / 269.268 KB
27.2	Attachment 25- Facility Agreement	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:23 AM	PDF / 34.084 KB

28. Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

Startup

BCS has been planning this school for more than a year and will have nearly two years of total time to organize and execute its startup plan, as well as the resources of New Schools for Alabama (NSFA) and its functional partners, and the capacity of New Schools Venture Fund (NSVF) to draw from as it continues its startup activities.

Identifying a facility location has been done, a founding principal has been hired, a full back-office support function has been arranged (see finance plan), a transportation plan has already been identified down to the number of required routes in year one (2 or 3), a foodservice provider has been identified, safety plans and training are being developed with the assumption the COVID-19 situation will remain, and additional support from local partners (Judson College and Marion Military Institute) addresses both operations, extra-curricular, and talent development needs. The relationship with Teach For America will allow the school to blend experienced and new teachers and provides a pathway to identify future staff and leaders as the school adds grades.

National and statewide partners NSFV and NSFA further support BCS and other new charter schools in by providing best practice startup examples, document tools, facilitating site visits to charter schools, and connecting founders and board members with key functional advisors whether it be leadership development, academics, finance, operations, or governance needs. NSVF has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in new schools over the last twenty years and is an exceedingly careful investor, choosing schools it feels have strong leadership, and the ability to innovate in support of new schools, ideas, and models that support equity in education. NSVF has made an initial grant of \$215k to BCS to support startup. NSFA is organizing both financial support (\$1.5 in competitive grants) to Alabama charter schools and technical assistance specifically targeted to startup and ongoing operations. BCS has been selected by NSFA for a \$180k leadership development grant, and if approved as a charter school will be eligible to receive a \$1.5 million startup grant. Other fundraising activities are underway but having these financial resources at this stage of development will further support a strong startup and ongoing operations function.

Transportation

While Alabama law does not require transportation to be provided, Breakthrough does plan to provide transportation to students attending the charter school. Breakthrough's partnership with Marion Military Institute provides access to decades of experience in transporting cadets for school and military related events. This expertise gives Breakthrough extraordinary capacity to rely upon in developing driver evaluation and driver training functions. Further, with the support from NSFA, the school has CFO/COO level capacity to design and implement its transportation plan in a way that meets its student needs and while maintaining efficiency. With just a couple routes required the scale of transportation that Breakthrough anticipates is also not overwhelming and can be delivered either in-house or through a contract with a transportation provider. Presently, the school intends to lease two buses and run routes with cluster stops where families can meet the bus at pre-determined locations. Charter schools commonly do this,

either internally or via a third party and the budget evidences an extremely conservative amount of \$178k - \$280k annually, which in a COVID-19 environment may require an additional route to reduce the capacity of a bus route. With routes costing approximately \$55k per year this careful budgeting allows the school to provide a third route if needed – even in year one. NSFA has extensive experience in both outsourcing and direct provision of transportation to students and expects to support Breakthrough and other Alabama schools in this and other important areas of startup. All buses will be properly inspected, stickered, and driven by licensed drivers subject to a background check as is required by Alabama law. State funding for transportation will be the source of funds for daily transportation. Transportation to after school events, athletics, and field trips are not required but will be provided to the extent funds allow or as needs arise. Supplemental fees for optional events may be required.

Safety and Security

The safety and security of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors at Breakthrough Charter School is of the utmost importance. At the beginning of each year and upon the return each January, BCS will have mandatory safety-training meetings for all employees and these will be constantly updated and revised. Given the school anticipates opening in what could still be a COVID-19 environment very specific planning has already been done to ensure that proper screens occur either daily or weekly (temperature checks, questionnaires, and staff observation of students) and additional distancing is arranged at events like breakfast and lunch, plans for how to temporarily quarantine students who exhibit symptoms, and an extensive daily cleaning routine will be part of the common staff training. In a COVID-19 environment all staff and students will be trained on social distancing, handwashing, how to limit face touching, and how to sanitize hands (staff and students) and various surfaces (staff), etc. The use of modulars is beneficial in a COVID-19 environment as students use outside pathways to move between rooms and in the elementary grades are limited to single classrooms. BCS anticipates expanding its annual safety and security meeting to include extensive training on how students and staff will arrive, learn, depart, and interact in ways that limit potential exposure. At this meeting, BCS administration will discuss crisis and emergency plans and go in depth with different situations that may arise. In addition to the meeting and ongoing discussions, BCS substitutes will be required to have access to the school safety information and specific procedures upon arrival.

All non-students or non-staff members who visit the school will be screened by a school security system known as Raptor Ware. The Raptor school security system is in place in thousands of schools, both district and charter, and helps to quickly screen individuals who are not allowed in the school (sex offenders, for ex.) and will help to manage custody issues, organize volunteers, and respond to emergencies. The Raptor system will have faculty's numbers and information stored. In the case of an emergency, the system sends each member of BCS staff an email, text, and phone call notifying them of the situation. In addition to Raptor Ware, cameras can be located throughout the school in various areas and on buses. School officials will have access to monitor the cameras, if needed.

Throughout the year, Breakthrough Charter School will make certain all exit doors remain locked and the front door has controlled access. BCS will require that all guests use the main entrance of the building. Upon arrival, guests must sign in, Breakthrough Charter School will utilize the Raptor Ware school security system before approving entry by a guest. After a completed scan by Raptor ware, the guest will receive a visitor pass to be worn for the duration of their visit. To exit, the guest must sign out at the front office and return their visitor pass.

Breakthrough Charter School plans to use a fully executed crisis and emergency plan to handle situations that may arise. BCS will work with the local emergency responders to revise crisis and emergency plans and procedures on a reoccurring basis throughout the school year. BCS will work closely with the fire chief throughout the year to develop a plan for an active shooter situation, conduct bi-annual test of the fire hydrants near the school, schedule walk-throughs of our campus and participate in drills. Drills and emergency plans are kept up to date for emergency responders to access. In addition to the crisis and emergency plan, monthly fire and weather safety drills will be performed. After completion of the drills, employees at Breakthrough Charter School will reflect on the drills and discuss solutions to any issues that may arise. A map of the school and the drills will be posted in every classroom. Breakthrough Charter School is committed to working with the local emergency response agencies to keep our school safe.

Student safety begins with the location of the student. Teachers will have an electronic attendance count that must be submitted with each class and revised throughout the day – as required by Alabama law. Morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up procedures will be developed and implemented by the Director of Operations with consultation with local law enforcement officials.

Breakthrough Charter School plans to implement a student safety seminar at the beginning of each semester. During this time, BCS will teach students the importance of safety when using the worldwide web or social media platforms. The issue of cyber bullying will also be discussed. Bullying forms will be posted on our website, the counselor’s office and the main office for any student that may need it. See Complaint report form attached.

Insurance- See Attachment 29

Breakthrough Charter School will have a comprehensive set of insurance policies that include workers compensation, general liability, umbrella, directors and officers, employee practices liability, and vehicle coverage. These coverages will align to the state required limits and will be in place prior to launch of the school.

Meal Delivery Plan, including a wellness plan- See Attachment 30

Breakthrough Charter School will provide a breakfast and lunch program to all students though a vendor arrangement managed by School Food Wellness Group (SFWG). SFWG is a national school lunch technical assistance firm that specializes in supporting food service startup for new schools, and ongoing food service oversight on an outsource basis. BCS will receive this support as part of its services agreement with NSFA. SFWG oversees NSLP for charter schools and district schools in a variety of states and has specific expertise in charter schools. They service the largest charter network in California, Aspire Public Schools, as well as schools in all four time zones of the lower 48 states. Their program of service includes setting BCS up with a compliant NSLP program, managing provider bid processes, and overseeing point of sale, FRL, and monthly foodservice financial data.

Attachments

Section 28: Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

28.1	Attachment- Complaint Form	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 5:34 PM	PDF / 194.345 KB
28.2	Attachment 28- Financial Workbook	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 5:33 PM	XLSX / 83.67 KB
28.3	Attachment 27- Start-Up Plan	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 5:30 PM	XLSX / 13.26 KB
28.4	Attachment 29- Insurance Coverage	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:33 AM	PDF / 304.054 KB
28.5	Attachment 20- Meal Delivery and Wellness Plan	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 4:32 AM	PDF / 119.886 KB

29. Operations Capacity

Breakthrough Charter School’s applicant team includes a blend of local leaders dedicated to providing an additional education option in Perry County as well as additional capacity from NSFA’s best in class technical assistance and back office providers. The combination of a strong founding staff, a diverse board of directors, and key outsource support from NSFA and its partners gives BCS the depth and breadth required to successfully ensure strong operations capacity. The board of the school is already in place and is described in the governance section. It includes members with backgrounds in accounting and finance, recruitment and enrollment, teacher training, higher education leadership, and local leadership and will add and rotate members in coming years.

Additionally, BCS has partnered with New Schools For Alabama for additional operations capacity. NSFA provides CFO/COO

level technical assistance to their partner schools and also arranges additional providers for essential services. BCS will be utilizing NSFA's carefully selected foodservice, back-office, and facilities providers to ensure capable startup and operations functions occur in critical areas. All of these providers are best in class and have been supporting and advising charter schools for ten or more years. LBMC W Squared is the back-office provider and provides a cloud-based accounting, internal control, purchasing, cash management, financial reporting, payroll, benefits, and HR function for the school. LBMC W Squared is a large regional accounting firm with extraordinary capacity and a niche in serving charter schools. NSFA's CFO/COO support provides senior leadership and advisory support that small schools are rarely able to access on their own and works with the board and leadership on annual budgeting, startup and operations, facilities financing, and strategic planning. NSFA also has access to SchoolPrint, a nonprofit facilities advisory program that provides guidance and support to charter schools who are developing or renovating facilities. SchoolPrint is a philanthropic program of the Local Initiatives Support Company (LISC) and supports schools with essential facilities related technical assistance such as architectural, design, building codes, general contractor bidding processes, and owners rep services, among others.

Key partners that bring operations capacity include NSFA's technical assistance team led by Chris Reynolds (a former charter leader with experience starting up and running ten schools in four states, including major school facilities renovation projects), the foodservice advisory firm School Food Wellness Group, the back-office accounting provider, LBMC W Squared, and additional support for federal programs, and technology partners, and strategic planning. Additionally, BCS has access to LISC's program of philanthropic facilities support to charter schools. This program assesses charter school finances and their development capacity, and then connect them to pre-qualified organizations that can support their plans for new or expanded school facilities.

Specific facilities projects that NSFA has led or been part of include advising on lease and building renovations and district partnerships in Little Rock, AR as well as the design, development, financing and renovation of over 500,000 square feet of public school facilities in Michigan, Illinois, Texas, and Tennessee. These include district buildings, modular campuses, bank financing, capital projects, and New Market Tax Credit financing. We are confident that NSFA has more than adequate expertise to help us develop and finance a facility in Perry County.

Key members of the applicant team include Eva Painter and Darren Ramalho, both Teach for America alumni that taught in Perry County School system and continue to work in education. Both have leadership experience and Mr. Ramalho is well known for his professional development activities with teachers and often presents at state and national conferences. As a department chairperson, Mr. Ramalho regularly evaluates teachers and has particular experience in supporting and developing young teachers.

Other members of the applicant team include Dr. Susan Stevenson, former Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at Marion Military Institute implemented curriculum design and student progress at MMI and at the private high school that used to operate on MMI's campus.

Dr. Larissa Clachar is an instructor at Judson College and knows how to effectively teach foreign language. Larissa, Susan, Eva and Darren possess the skills and knowledge to design and implement curriculum and instruction and lead staff in professional development.

Brittany Crawford, has an undergraduate degree in Accounting and a Master's in Business Administration specializing in accounting and finance. Ms. Crawford is also the Director of Enrollment Management at Marion Military Institute, where she oversees recruiting and retaining students to MMI. She is an expert at managing student recruitment and the financial challenges of operating a school and evaluates the entire performance management cycle for MMI's recruitment and enrollment functions.

Wendell Crews provides information technology expertise as a member of the applicant team. He is able to provide local support and guidance as the school implements its chosen technology platforms and the various software used within the school. Having this expertise prior to opening is a key asset to the school.

Attachments

Section 29: Operations Capacity

– No Attachments –

30. Unique/Innovative Operational Aspects

Breakthrough Charter School aims to offer unique operational aspects in three primary capacities. First, our extensive partnership with Marion Military Institute provides multitude opportunities that would otherwise not be available at the local public school. As is previously outlined in Section 13: Partners and Contractual Relationships, BCS and MMI will collaborate to provide unique leadership opportunities to BCS students. Students will have access to MMI's facilities and leadership development programming. The Academic Success Center at Marion Military Institute has a career development component that can be offered to BCS students as well. This additional career development opportunity will be supportive of the state of Alabama's overall College and Career Readiness Initiatives. These various services offered from Marion Military Institute have proven successful with its college students. Last year Marion Military Institute reported an 7% increase in graduation rate from its 2016 to 2017 cohorts. Furthermore, Marion Military Institute recently reported an increase in overall student GPA and credit completion from 2018 to 2019, which suggests the whole person education model to be a successful tool to achieving overall student success.

Breakthrough Charter School also plans to release at 1pm every Wednesday to provide time for professional development and collaboration for teachers. BCS believes it is critical to provide teachers the time and resources to develop and enhance instructional methods. This additional development time will be structured and designed by our Head of School, who will base these decisions on data received from continuous teacher evaluations.

Finally, Breakthrough Charter School will be unique in its inclusion of advisory bodies. As is mentioned in Section 21: Advisory Bodies, Breakthrough Charter will encourage the formation of advisory bodies as the need presents itself. Initially, Breakthrough Charter School seeks to form both a Parent and Community Member Advisory body and a Leadership Development Advisory Body. The Parent and Community Member Advisory body will be different from a typical PTA, in that it will be open to other community stakeholders. Additionally, the Leadership Development Advisory body will ensure that BCS is effectively utilizing its existing partnership with Marion Military Institute to work towards achieving the school's mission to develop students into citizens and leaders.

Attachments

Section 30: Unique/Innovative Operational Aspects

– No Attachments –

FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

31. Financial Plan

Breakthrough Charter School has a strong governance structure with legal and business expertise, a deep partnership with Marion Military Institute, and has selected NSFA's outsource solution for accounting, payroll, and financial statement preparation. This combination of strong governance and best in class outsource accounting provider ensures effective creation of internal policies, controls, and related financial practices.

Financial Planning and Accounting

Breakthrough has selected NSFA's back office outsource solution to ensure a strong annual financial planning and accounting function for the school. Outsourcing to a skilled provider ensures proper accounting procedures, state reporting, and compliance are in place as well as appropriate levels of internal control. Responsibility for accounts payable, payroll, benefits, taxes, purchasing, monthly financial statements, bank reconciliations, etc. will be provided by New Schools For Alabama's back-office provider LBMC W Squared. This firm services charter schools in several states and understands the unique aspects of local, state, and federal reporting. They have clients that are less than a million dollars in revenue to clients with hundreds of millions in annual revenues and have been in business for over 15 years. They have a team that provides support to clients that includes, CPAs, controllers, and full A/P, payroll, and benefits staff. Costs for this service are included in the budget (\$40k annually) and allow the director of operations and school founder to leverage a strong finance function from the outset.

The Dir. of Operations and finance chair are the primary leadership charged with collaborating with outsource providers and liaises with the board to ensure strong financial controls and reporting. With approvals of major expenses coming from the Principal and board, this structure ensures a strong internal control environment.

This structure, in collaboration with the Principal ensures a strong system exists to create an annual budget, financial forecasts, and related analyses to support the accounting and finance function of the school. Key systems (payroll, benefits, bank reconciliations, etc.) are all provided via outsource, and include a system for approvals, POs, purchasing utilize an outsource accounting provider to ensure effective and accurate data and reporting. All financial related approvals, such as the annual budget, executive compensation, vendor contracts (audit firm, for ex.), etc., will be approved at regularly scheduled board meetings of the school. Annual and monthly reporting will be uploaded to the state system on a recurring cycle by the selected outsource provider.

Purchasing

The Head of School and his or her designee will approve all purchase orders or invoices within the approved budget and all payments/disbursements above an established amount will require two signatures. A complete monthly report of these expenditures shall be made available to the finance committee and Board of Directors as directed. Any purchase or contract above the statutory limit for a charter school will require board approval. Approvals, payments, and access to the general ledger will be appropriately segregated though the use of the outsource accounting firm, providing greater internal control than can be achieved internally in a small organization. The Board of Directors will be responsible for compliance with all applicable state and federal competitive bid laws to the extent they are applicable.

Payroll

Payroll is outsourced but the Director of Operations will prepare and approve payroll source information (time sheets, attendance logs, new hire forms, etc. The outsource provider processes payroll/benefits/taxes/w-2s, quarterly filings, etc., and records all payroll costs in the general ledger. All salary adjustments will be approved by both the principal and director of operations and all salary adjustments of the principal's direct reports (leadership team) are ratified by the board of directors.

Financial Reporting

The outsource accounting firm will provide regular financial reports to the Board of Directors, including budget comparisons, statement of income and expenditures, balance sheet, ongoing financial forecasts and other related information. Reports will be reviewed monthly or as needed by the Finance Committee and the Board of Directors. The review of financial reports should be related to the annual goals and strategic objectives as approved by the board of directors. All financial statements will be available to the public through the school's website.

Financial Policies

Upon approval, a thorough review of existing policies will be conducted to determine what changes may be necessary to ensure compliance with the Alabama code and to ensure effective procedures are implemented for vendor approval, purchasing, payables, cash management, bank authorizations, and other financial management systems.

Breakthrough's board will review interim financial statements and approve a budget annually by a set date. The principal and director of operations shall have responsibility for preparing and adhering to an annual budget as approved by the board of directors.

The board's role is to be ultimately responsible for the financial administration of the school and the director of operations and principal are responsible for implementing the financial function timely and accurately and with appropriate transparency as required of a public school. It is expected the school will utilize an outsource accounting firm for full payroll, general ledger, and monthly financial statement preparation.

Each year, the board shall approve an audit by an independent accounting firm and provide it to the public, the LEA, and the state of Alabama. This audit will be posted on the school's website along with the annual form 990 report. The process by which an audit firm is selected will include an RFP for an annual financial audit (GAAP) and also any necessary government accounting reports. LBMC W Squared will not bid on this work as they are the outsource firm and will instead assist in preparing the bid request form and evaluating for the board the various audit bids that are received.

Each year, Breakthrough will adopt an annual budget in an open public meeting. Copies of the approved budget and prior year audited financial statements and Form 990s will be made freely available online. In accordance with open meetings laws in Alabama, all meetings of the board of each nonprofit LLC will be open to the public and appropriate notices published on the website.

Breakthrough anticipates contracting with a skilled provider for various services including but not limited to accounting, payroll, insurance, legal, and audit services.

Anticipated costs for outsource accounting and payroll services are budgeted at 2.5% of revenues (less than the cost of a full time director of finance), plus approximately \$10k annually for an audit. Insurance is budgeted at \$24,000.

Criteria for selecting such services will be determined by the director of operations and ultimate selections will be approved by the board of directors in accordance with financial policies and procedures of the school operator. Selection of providers will be based on the quality and merits of the proposal or quote, past experience, estimated cost, and other factors. The board is under no obligation to select the low bidder.

Breakthrough will, upon approval, secure directors and officer's insurance and employment practices liability insurance as well as general liability insurance to protect the school, staff, and students in accordance with Alabama law. In addition, an umbrella policy increasing liability levels will also be part of the insurance package. Specifics of the coverage will be aligned with insurance requirements of public charter schools in Alabama.

See Attachment 30 for the detailed budget in Excel format.

Attachments

Section 31: Financial Plan

31.1	Attachment 32B- Secured NSVF Funding Letter	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 5:46 PM	PDF / 114.407 KB
31.2	Attachment 32A- Secured NSFA Funding Letter/Anticipated Funding NSVF Letter	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 5:44 PM	PDF / 63.948 KB
31.3	Attachment 31- Budget Narrative	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 5:39 PM	PDF / 187.737 KB
31.4	Attachment 30- Breakthrough Charter School Budget	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 5:36 PM	XLSX / 83.67 KB

32. Financial Management Capacity

Breakthrough has key partnerships with Marion Military Institute, NewSchools Venture Fund, and New Schools for Alabama which provide extensive operational and strategic capacity to support a strong financial management, accounting, and fundraising program. As a key partner in NSFA’s back office and technical assistance services program (which Breakthrough will be utilizing as verified in the attached letter), the addition of LBMC W Squared as the outsource accounting provider allows for a best in class financial management solution. This firm has a large portfolio of clients ranging from less than one million in revenues to hundreds of millions annually. They also have a number of charter school clients and are well regarded in a variety of other industries as well. Relevant clients include several Tennessee charter schools, a Florida school, and the nation’s largest philanthropic charter school facilities lender with a loan portfolio approaching half a billion dollars. Recent testimonials addressing LBMC’s effectiveness are included below.

"We used W Squared as our back-office accounting provider for 8+ years and their support was essential to our ability to grow our organization from one to six campuses. They provided expert level support we could not have hired internally at an affordable price and helped ensure we had reliable and accurate monthly and annual financial reporting." [CFO of a large Nashville charter school network]

"We are exceptionally happy with our partnership with LBMC W Squared. Our working team has been fantastic, always professional, knowledgeable, and responsive. LBMC has enabled us to provide for three things out of the box that are difficult to setup/have during startup: access to well implemented, cloud-based technology solutions (bill payment, T&E management, and advanced account platform); robust financial controls; and, dedicated resources that can flex up or down as needed (additional support during audit, for ex.)." [Dir. of Finance, Charter School Facilities Fund]

Please refer to the operations sections for additional information on LBMC W Squared’s capacity and experience and the MOU provided by NSFA that outlines the services.

In addition, the school has a board of directors with financial, legal, and fundraising experience that gives the school strong functional expertise as well as direct experience in managing millions in educational and nonprofit spending – including accounting for federal and state funds, administering food service, and securing a range of vendors necessary to support a higher education campus.

MMI raises millions each year and is able to provide office space, fundraising support, computer resources, and other back office services as well as key strategic support for the schools fundraising activities. The school is also a participant in the New Schools for Alabama school leader fellow program and in addition to startup funding also includes training and support for financial planning activities of the school.

New Schools For Alabama provides access to both legal and accounting expertise through its technical assistance team and through relationships with other outsource providers, such as accountants, law firms, lenders, and facility advisors.

In addition, the relationship with MMI brings key resources to the school (outdoor facilities, temporary classrooms, digital learning opportunities, summer programming, etc.) at little or no cost.

Presently, BCS has secured a strong initial board of directors, has developed a high-quality financial model, received almost \$400k in philanthropic support, and has identified an outsource accounting provider for comprehensive financial, payroll, taxes, reporting, etc. of at least two outsource accounting providers, and an initial fundraising grant of \$180k. Additional funding support of up to \$1.5 million in the U.S. Dept. of Education's Charter School Program is likely, furthering the school's advantageous startup position.

As a new entity, the school has yet to complete a fiscal year so prior financial results or audits are not applicable.

Attachments

Section 32: Financial Management Capacity

32.1	Attachment- Back Office Support Verification	Ramalho, Darren, 7/13/20 5:52 PM	PDF / 188.354 KB
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EXISTING OPERATORS

33. Existing Operators

This portion of the application is not applicable to Breakthrough Charter School.

Attachments

Section 33: Existing Operators

– No Attachments –