



Annual Report 2017-2018

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Board Chair: Dr. Keith Whitescarver

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Message from the School

In June 2018, Breakthrough Montessori concluded its second year of service to Washington DC children and families. This year was marked by opportunities for learning and growth as a school community.

In our second year serving PK students, we honed our skills of guiding and supporting learning through the Montessori method. The results of the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment show progress: 76% of PK students met or exceeded benchmarks for growth *and* achievement in literacy and math (100% of students met or exceeded benchmarks for either growth *or* achievement). The results of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), which evaluates teacher-child interactions, further attest to the quality environment we offer our students. On a scale of 1 to 7 (with a higher score indicating higher quality), our program scored 5.93 on Emotional Support and 5.59 on Classroom Organization.

In our first year serving kindergarten students, we identified room for growth, and we have quickly implemented an action plan to help us best serve our students. The results from our first NWEA MAP assessment show that we are not yet meeting our goals for growth in math and literacy among kindergarten students. In response, Breakthrough is taking the following steps. First, we are incorporating additional instructional techniques into our classrooms. Specifically, we are implementing the Orton-Gilligham Approach, a phonics-based system that utilizes visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning. We are also implementing the American Reading Corporation methodology, which supports students in reading comprehension and decoding skills. Second, we are providing ongoing coaching and professional development to all teachers to ensure student needs are met. Third, we are training our teachers in test proctoring protocol to ensure test results accurately reflect our students' skills.

During the 2017-18 school year, we also identified the future permanent home of Breakthrough Montessori in Takoma Park. We are grateful to the community of Petworth for hosting our school since our founding, and we are pleased to continue to offer a Petworth campus during the upcoming school year. While the acquisition of a new facility produces certain challenges for re-enrollment, we look forward to working with our family community to transition our school to our new facility over the course of the coming three years.

Thank you to our faculty for supporting each child's development with care and love. Thank you to our parents and guardians for the privilege of working with your children. And thank you to all Breakthrough community members who have worked to build this school. Dr. Montessori wrote "If help and salvation are to come, they can only come from the children, for children are the makers of men." As we observe the students of Breakthrough care for each other and their classroom environments, we have no doubt that a bright future awaits them and all of us.

Sincerely,

Emily Hedin
Executive Director

Mission Statement

The mission of Breakthrough Montessori Public Charter School is to provide families of Washington DC a fully-implemented, public Montessori program designed to enable children to develop within themselves the power to shape their lives and the world around them.



School Program

Breakthrough Montessori implements the time-tested Montessori instructional approach, which builds upon the following core beliefs:

- Every child is unique, with individual strengths and weaknesses, learning style, and learning pace.
- The early years -- birth to age 6 -- are an intense period of formative development with lasting cognitive, social, and emotional impact.
- All children pass through predictable stages of development. Each stage requires a specific type of environment and learning experience.

In 2017-18, Breakthrough Montessori served students grades PK3-kindergarten. Our early childhood curriculum (ages 3-6 years) includes standards for the following areas of study:

- Language (oral language, writing, reading)
- Mathematics
- Practical Life

- Sensorial
- Cultural Studies (includes science and social studies)

Our instructional approach is defined by the following characteristics:

Personalized instruction: Instruction at Breakthrough Montessori is differentiated, individualized and tailored to the specific needs of each student. Children receive lessons individually or in small groups with their teacher. Students move through the curriculum at their own pace, and the presentation of new concepts follows the child’s developmental needs, rather than a predetermined timetable. Students receive assignments that vary in complexity according to their ability levels and/or learning styles, and they are allowed to devote different amounts of time to achieve mastery of tasks.

Self-guided learning: Students work independently with materials that enable them to master concepts in language, mathematics, science, etc. Manipulation of these materials satisfies the young child’s developmental need to learn by doing. The materials inherently develop independence, concentration, and control of movement while instilling a love of work and a joy of learning. Materials are sequenced progressively, supporting students as they move toward increasingly complex work.

Observation: Teachers carefully observe students, track progress, and invite them to receive new lessons when they are ready. One of the most important aspects of a teacher’s work is gathering data and continuously assessing students’ performance in order to make appropriate and timely instructional interventions that ensure every child achieves academic success.

Mixed-age classrooms: Breakthrough’s classrooms host students in three year cycles. A child begins as a member of the youngest cohort in the room, benefitting from the example set by older children. Over the course of three years, a child builds trusting relationships with teachers and becomes a leader for younger peers. Likewise, because only a third of a classroom changes each year, Breakthrough’s learning communities enjoy stability, with teachers getting to know both students and their families well.

Thanks to this instructional model, children in Montessori schools experience deep learning. The method is a response to a universal plea among children: “I want to learn, but help me to do it myself.”

At Breakthrough Montessori, we take this instructional model and further increase its efficacy by embedding it within an institutional commitment to development, prevention, and engagement.

Development: We support human development through rigorous and uncompromising application of the Montessori method. Our school is staffed with fully-accredited Montessori teachers who receive ongoing coaching from the director of curriculum and instruction.

Prevention: Because instruction at Breakthrough Montessori is tailored to the individual needs of students, our team can effectively address development challenges early.

Engagement: Our multifaceted commitment to community is grounded in robust family engagement, which begins with authentic, two-way communication with all Breakthrough families. In addition to monthly family events, parent-teacher conferences, and progress reports, families engage with their child's education by regularly observing the classrooms and hosting their teacher for a home visit that fosters strong school-home communication.

Family Engagement

Breakthrough seeks to serve not only the whole child, but the whole family. In 2017-18, families were invited to participate in a total of 30 events organized by Breakthrough Montessori and 35 events organized by the School Home Association (SHA). These events included:

- *Family education:* monthly seminars to help parents and guardians learn more about the Montessori model
- *Social:* potlucks and picnics to strengthen our school community
- *Feedback:* monthly “coffee with leadership” meetings for family members to ask questions and share concerns with school administrators
- *Classroom:* parent-teacher conferences, classroom observations, and special events that welcomed parents and guardians into their child's classroom
- *Equity:* guided discussions, guest speakers and monthly reading groups to enable families to explore the topic of equity in education

In addition, teachers invited all families new to their classrooms to conduct a home visit. In 2017-18, seventy-six percent of families accepted this invitation and welcomed their child's teacher into their home.

Performance and Progress

In 2017-18, Breakthrough Montessori served children in grades PK3-K. We offered five primary classrooms, led by one trained Montessori teacher and one classroom assistant.

Breakthrough Montessori uses the Public Charter School Board's Performance Management Framework (PMF) to establish and monitor our academic achievement expectations and outcomes. In addition to the PMF, we employ a number of assessment tools to evaluate the progress our school makes towards achieving our mission. Below is a summary of the results of each of these assessment tools.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS): CLASS is an observation-based assessment of PK environments that focuses on the quality of teacher-child interactions. CLASS assesses three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization and Instructional Support. The assessment assigns each domain a score from 1 to 7 (with a higher number indicating higher quality). **In 2017-18, Breakthrough's overall program averages for the CLASS assessment were: 5.93 for Emotional Support, 5.59 for Classroom Organization and 2.73 for Instructional Support.** We are pleased to see our classrooms performing well in the categories of Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. We

recognize that the Montessori approach to instructional support looks different than the CLASS approach. At Breakthrough, we believe the teacher guides learning by curating opportunities for children to make discoveries independently, rather than by providing direct, verbal explanation. Moreover, our materials are designed to provide feedback; children are able to quickly recognize if they are using the material correctly and thus obtaining the desired results (we call this feature “control of error.”) Because students are working independently with materials that help guide learning, verbal feedback from an adult becomes less necessary. As a result of these characteristics of a Montessori classrooms, our teachers are often observed speaking less than you might see in other educational settings. We believe this difference in approach drives the slightly lower score in Instructional Support.

Teaching Strategies (TS) GOLD: TS GOLD is the tool we use to assess the progress of PK3 and PK4 students. This assessment measures growth over time in social-emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy and mathematics. **In 2017-18, seventy-six percent of students met or exceeded benchmarks for achievement and growth in literacy and math (one hundred percent of students met or exceeded benchmarks for either achievement or growth).** More specifically:

- Met or exceeded benchmarks for achievement in literacy: 86.9%
- Met or exceeded benchmarks for growth in literacy: 97.6%
- Met or exceeded benchmarks for achievement in math: 100%
- Met or exceeded benchmarks for growth in math: 88%

Northwest Evaluation Association - Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP): NWEA - MAP is an adaptive test that identifies the ceiling of a student’s skills in reading and math. **In 2017-18, twenty-one percent of kindergarten students were above the 50th percentile in growth in math and twenty-four percent were above the 50th percentile in growth in literacy. Fifty-one percent of kindergarten students were above the 50th percentile in achievement in both math and literacy.**

2017-18 was our first year serving kindergarten students and thus our first year implementing the NWEA MAP assessment. Forty-one students (representing about a third of our student body) took the NWEA MAP this year. Breakthrough is taking the following steps to strengthen learning and growth among kindergarten students. First, we are incorporating additional instructional techniques into classroom work. Specifically, we are implementing the Orton-Gilligham (OG) Approach. The OG Approach is an intensive, sequential phonics-based system that accommodates and utilizes visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning modalities. Breakthrough piloted the OG Approach with a small group of students during the 2017-18 school year. The goal of the pilot was for all students to recognize at least 13 letter sounds and to write and read words with a consonant-vowel-consonant structure. Eighty-seven percent of students in the pilot group achieved this goal in its entirety. Thirteen percent of students met this goal partially. The school leadership determined the pilot was successful and have since taken steps to mainstream the OG Approach into Breakthrough’s classrooms. Before the start of the 2018-19 school year, all of Breakthrough’s primary and elementary classroom teachers had participated in either a demonstration of the OG Approach or full training in the OG Approach. We are also implementing the American Reading Corporation methodology, which supports students in reading comprehension and decoding skills. Second, we are providing ongoing coaching and professional development to all teachers to ensure student needs are met. Professional development topics include the OG Approach and the

American Reading Corporation methodology, as well as mapping the NWEA MAP skills onto the Montessori curriculum and identifying which Montessori lessons and materials speak to the skills assessed by NWEA MAP. Third, we are training teachers in test proctoring protocol to ensure test results accurately reflect our students' skills.

Essential Elements Rubric: Each year, Breakthrough Montessori engages in an annual evaluation based on the Essential Elements Rubric of Montessori in the Public Sector. The rubric rates schools according to standards in five domains: Montessori Adults, Montessori Learning Environments, Family Engagement, Leadership and Organizational Development, and Assessment. In 2017-18, the EER ranked Breakthrough Montessori as exemplary in 16 standards; Satisfactory in 8 standards; Needs improvement in 2 standards and Unsatisfactory in 0 standards.

Developmental Environmental Rating Scale (DERS): The DERS is a rating scale designed for environments such as Montessori (and others) which support the development of executive function, linguistic and cultural fluency, and social fluency and emotional flexibility. The DERS measures qualities such as patience and persistence in children, precision and clarity in lessons, and order in the environment. Trained observers use the DERS iPad app to rate 60 research-based environmental attributes over a one hour observation. The DERS allows schools to classify classroom environments as optimal, high functioning, developing or low functioning. **In 2017-8, results from the DERS show that all five primary classrooms at Breakthrough Montessori are high functioning.**

Minnesota Executive Functions Scale (MEFS): The MEFS is a game-like app that educators can use to measure executive function and early learning readiness in children. **In 2017-8, results from the MEFS demonstrate an average growth in executive function among Breakthrough students of 5.7 percentile points.** We are particularly pleased to see these results. Executive function refers to a set of neurocognitive skills, such as self-regulation, cognitive flexibility, working memory, planning, and inhibitory control. These are the skills that allow the brain to organize information, sustain concentration, think flexibly, control behavior, and resolve problems. A growing body of research confirms that executive functions are key building blocks of academic and lifelong success. A child's ability to employ such skills has been shown to more accurately predict academic success than IQ.

Attendance and Re-enrollment: In addition to assessments, Breakthrough looks at attendance and re-enrollment as indicators of our school's success. In 2017-18, we achieved an in-seat attendance rate of 93.2%. We look to further improve our attendance rate in 2018-19 by providing robust family education on the importance of attendance, contacting families each week about any unexcused absences reported, and improving our data management practices to ensure our attendance information is accurate. Our re-enrollment rate (72.5%) fell short of our goal, due in part to the uncertainty around the location of Breakthrough's permanent facility. To improve re-enrollment, we are broadening opportunities for family feedback to school leaders to ensure any concerns or questions parents and guardians have are addressed in a timely manner.

Unique Accomplishments

In August 2017, we welcomed a new class of 45 PK3 students. Their arrival rounded out our primary program with our classrooms hosting mixed-age communities of students ages 3-6 years.

Our students enjoyed more spacious classrooms than the year before, thanks to renovations finished over the preceding summer.

All five classrooms were led by members of our founding faculty. We cannot overstate the commitment of our talented teachers. Not only did they craft a unique classroom experience for each student, they also dedicated countless hours to home visits, classroom blogs, conference and progress reports, coaching sessions, and more. They participated in 85 hours of Child Study (groups of faculty working together to identify interventions and strategies to address challenges in the classroom) and 85 hours of Lesson Study (review of Montessori lessons to ensure consistent delivery of the curriculum across all classrooms). They also participated in 28 hours of professional development on topics such as equity, English Language Learners, and Orton Gillingham (a teaching approach to support growth in reading).

We expanded our team to include afternoon assistants who offered enrichment lessons in yoga and movement, creative expression, cooking, Arabic, and more.

The dedication of our faculty is matched only by the dedication of our families. The Breakthrough School Home Association (SHA) organized an incredible total of 35 events for our school community, including potlucks, reading groups, playdates, camping trips, staff appreciation breakfasts, and so much more. The SHA also undertook fundraising campaigns throughout the year, which raised more than \$17,000.

Families and faculty worked together to advance the cause of equity at Breakthrough. We drafted our [Equity Statement of Values](#), which anchors our vision for our school. We hosted listening session and monthly reading groups to better understand the state of equity, diversity and inclusion in our country's public school system. Each month, we celebrated a specific culture, geographical region or community. The goal of these monthly themes is to help our children and ourselves learn about the world around us and celebrate the diversity of our school community. Our faculty convened regularly for guided discussions about access, equity and inclusion in our classrooms. We look forward to continuing and deepening this important work in 2018-19.



Data Report

Source	Data Point
PCSB	LEA Name: Breakthrough Montessori PCS
PCSB	Campus Name: Breakthrough Montessori PCS
PCSB	Grades served: PK3-K
PCSB	Overall Audited Enrollment: 126

Enrollment by grade level according to OSSE's Audited Enrollment Report

Grade	PK3	PK4	K
Student Count	40	48	41

Student Data Points

School	Total number of instructional days: 180 Number of instructional days, not including holidays or professional development days, for the majority of the school.
PCSB	Suspension Rate: 0.0%
PCSB	Expulsion Rate: 0.00%
PCSB	Instructional Time Lost to Out-of-School Suspension Rate: 0.00%
PCSB	In-Seat Attendance: 93.2%
PCSB	Average Daily Attendance: The SRA requires annual reports to include a school's average daily membership. To meet this requirement, PCSB will provide following verified data points: (1) audited enrollment; (2) mid-year withdrawals; and (3) mid-year entries.
PCSB	Midyear Withdrawals: 3.9% (5 students)*
PCSB	Midyear Entries: 1.6% (2 students)*
PCSB	Promotion Rate (LEA): 98.2%
PCSB (SY16-17)	College Acceptance Rates: Not Applicable
PCSB (SY16-17)	College Admission Test Scores: Not Applicable
PCSB (SY16-17)	Graduation Rates: Not Applicable

*Note: Unvalidated MYW and MYE rates are provided based on examining student movement between 10/6 and 5/31 in SY17-18. The validated rates that OSSE will provide in their Report Card may use different business rules.

Faculty and Staff Data Points

School	Teacher Attrition Rate: 0%
School	Number of Teachers: 5 "Teacher" is defined as any adult responsible for the instruction of students at least 50% of the time, including, but not limited to, lead teachers, teacher residents, special education teachers, and teacher fellows.
School	Teacher Salary 1. Average: \$56,126 2. Range -- Minimum: \$52,750 Maximum: \$59,500

2017-18 Staff Roster

Administration

Omotayo Abiodun, Executive Director (August 2017 - March 2018)
Christopher Lohse, Interim Executive Director (March 2018 - July 2018)
Hannah Richardson, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Kamaria Mabry, Director of Operations
Allison Jones, Child Study Lead and Director of Student Support
Emily Hedin, Director of Family and Community Engagement

Faculty

Abigail Wallace, primary teacher (PK3-K)
Ebony Marshman, primary teacher PK3-K)
Leslie Bell Handy, primary teacher (PK3-K)
Leticia Torres, primary teacher (PK3-K)
Marissa Howser, primary teacher (PK3-K)

Alexandra Guyton, primary classroom assistant
Andrea Solay, primary classroom assistant
Bonnie Long, primary classroom assistant
Hoandi Seibes, primary classroom assistant
Paola Nunez, primary classroom assistant
Sara Anniki, primary classroom assistant
Ersi Polakis, primary classroom assistant
Max Dorsey, primary classroom assistant
Rachel Kuchinsky, primary classroom assistant
Shahad Al Samarrai, primary classroom assistant
Jennifer Queen, primary classroom assistant

Instructional Support Staff

Emunah Ammizahvad, floating primary teacher (PK3-K)
Malaika Javois, Montessori Support Specialist and Aftercare Coordinator
Kevell Cooper, dedicated aide
Ashley Anderson, dedicated aide
Pamela Evans, dedicated aide

Administrative Support Staff

Jasmine Jones, Operations Associate
Landy Cervantes, Front Desk Receptionist

Qualifications

- 100% of administrators hold a Bachelor's Degree.
- 100% of administrators have completed a graduate degree or are pursuing a graduate degree.

- 100% of primary teachers are certified Montessori educators (having completed a year-long, full-time training course by an institute accredited by either the Association Montessori Internationale or the American Montessori Society).
- 100% of primary teachers hold a Bachelor's Degree.
- 80% of primary teachers hold a Master's Degree.
- 73% of primary classroom assistants hold a Bachelor's Degree.
- 75% of instructional support staff hold a Bachelor's Degree.
- 100% of faculty, classroom assistants, and instructional support staff participate in professional development and in-service training specific to their role and responsibilities with children.
- Breakthrough faculty dedicated 28 hours to professional development in SY 2017-18.



Board Roster

David Bagnoli* (Principal, Studio MB) Trustee

Rachel Kimboko* (Child Study Lead, Lee Montessori Public Charter School) Treasurer

Christopher Lohse (Senior Vice President and Managing Director, Education Practice, Software and Information Industry Association) Trustee

Sara Suchman (Director of Coaching and School Services, National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector) Trustee

Keith Whitescarver (Executive Director, National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector) Board Chair

Samuel Whitfield* (Consulting Attorney), Trustee

Katie Brown* (DC Regional Coordinator, National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector)

Vivek Swaminathan* (Practice Leader, Gartner), Trustee and Parent Representative

Tova Wilson* (Teacher, ASA Early Learning Academy), Trustee, Parent Representative, President of the School Home Association

(* DC Resident)



Unaudited Financial Statement

July 2017 through June 2018

Income Statement		Actual
Revenue		
State and Local Revenue		2,532,299
Federal Revenue		87,494
Private Grants and Donations		600
Earned Fees		92,196
Total Revenue		2,712,589
Expenses		
Salaries		1,262,223
Benefits and Taxes		264,237
Staff-Related Costs		13,035
Rent		353,265
Occupancy Service		139,646
Direct Student Expense		316,926
Office & Business Expense		266,780
Contingency		0
Total Expenses		2,616,111
Operating Income		96,478
Extraordinary Expenses		
Interest		10,223
Depreciation and Amortization		86,555
Total Extraordinary Expenses		96,778
Net Income		(299)

Budget

SY18-19	
Revenue	
State and Local Revenue	3,316,770
Federal Revenue	133,925
Earned Fees	185,793
Revenue Total	3,636,489
Expenses	
Salaries	1,625,915
Benefits and Taxes	317,458
Staff-Related Costs	10,848
Rent	668,800
Occupancy Service	245,736
Direct Student Expense	370,354
Office & Business Expense	293,817
Expenses Total	3,532,928
NET ORDINARY INCOME	103,560
Extraordinary Expenses	
Depreciation and Amortization	280,935
Interest	237,347
Extraordinary Expenses Total	518,282
TOTAL EXPENSES	4,051,211
NET INCOME	(414,722)

List of Donors

Stephen Backman (\$500)