



20
24

BREAKTHROUGH BIRMINGHAM

IMPACT REPORT



Dear friends,

As I write this letter and reflect on Breakthrough Birmingham's growth and impact, one word continues to run through my mind: data.

Data is storytelling — many times, it's using numbers to mold narratives about what has been and what could be. In my sixth year leading Breakthrough Birmingham, I've come to appreciate the people and the possibilities behind those numbers.

It isn't enough to know that we served over 330 students through our free year-round programming, bringing our total to 872 scholars supported on their path to post-secondary success since 2013. It's about Patrick's confidence in math thanks to our school year Algebra class and his ability to stay true to himself while making new friends.

Training 38 teaching fellows during our summer fellowship is impressive. But I have to remember Kaila — a former scholar herself — exclaiming, "these are my kids; I was meant to be here."

It isn't enough to know that our scholars have a college-going rate of 76% — 21 points higher than the state average. Or that we graduated our first eight teachers from our Thrive Coaching program to support the long-term sustainability of early-career educators in our classroom — with 91% reporting that they plan on staying in the classroom for 5+ years. Or that in the last six years, we've gone from one program with a single staff member to four programs and a 16-person team, fueled by our record-breaking \$1+ million in revenue this year to fuel this expansion.

Numbers are important, but they're just the beginning. At Breakthrough Birmingham, we focus on people. Our goal is to empower our scholars with the relationships, growth, and exposure they need to become future decision-makers in their communities. It's with your continued support that this remains possible.

As we look to the future, we remain steadfast in our commitment to fostering academic success and cultivating future leaders. With your support, we'll keep breaking through barriers and opening doors to opportunities that once seemed out of reach. Thank you for being an integral part of this journey. Together, we're not just changing lives; we're reshaping the future of education in Birmingham and Talladega.

With deep gratitude,



Mariohn Michel
Executive Director, Breakthrough Birmingham



OUR MISSION

Breakthrough Birmingham works with **highly motivated**, traditionally underrepresented students to achieve **post-secondary success**, while also **empowering aspiring leaders** to become the next generation of educators and advocates.

OUR PILLARS



RELATIONSHIPS

building & maintaining
healthy relationships with
others and ourselves



GROWTH

progressing academically
& holistically, including with
social/emotional wellness



EXPOSURE

opening up to new
experiences, new people,
new ideas, new perspectives

SUMMER PROGRAM 2024

ACROSS 3 SITES (EAST BIRMINGHAM, WEST BIRMINGHAM, AND TALLADEGA)



208

Scholars

116% increase in
scholar participation
over the last 4 years



38

**Teaching
Fellows**

Teaching scholars
and leading
classrooms



17

**Instructional
support staff**

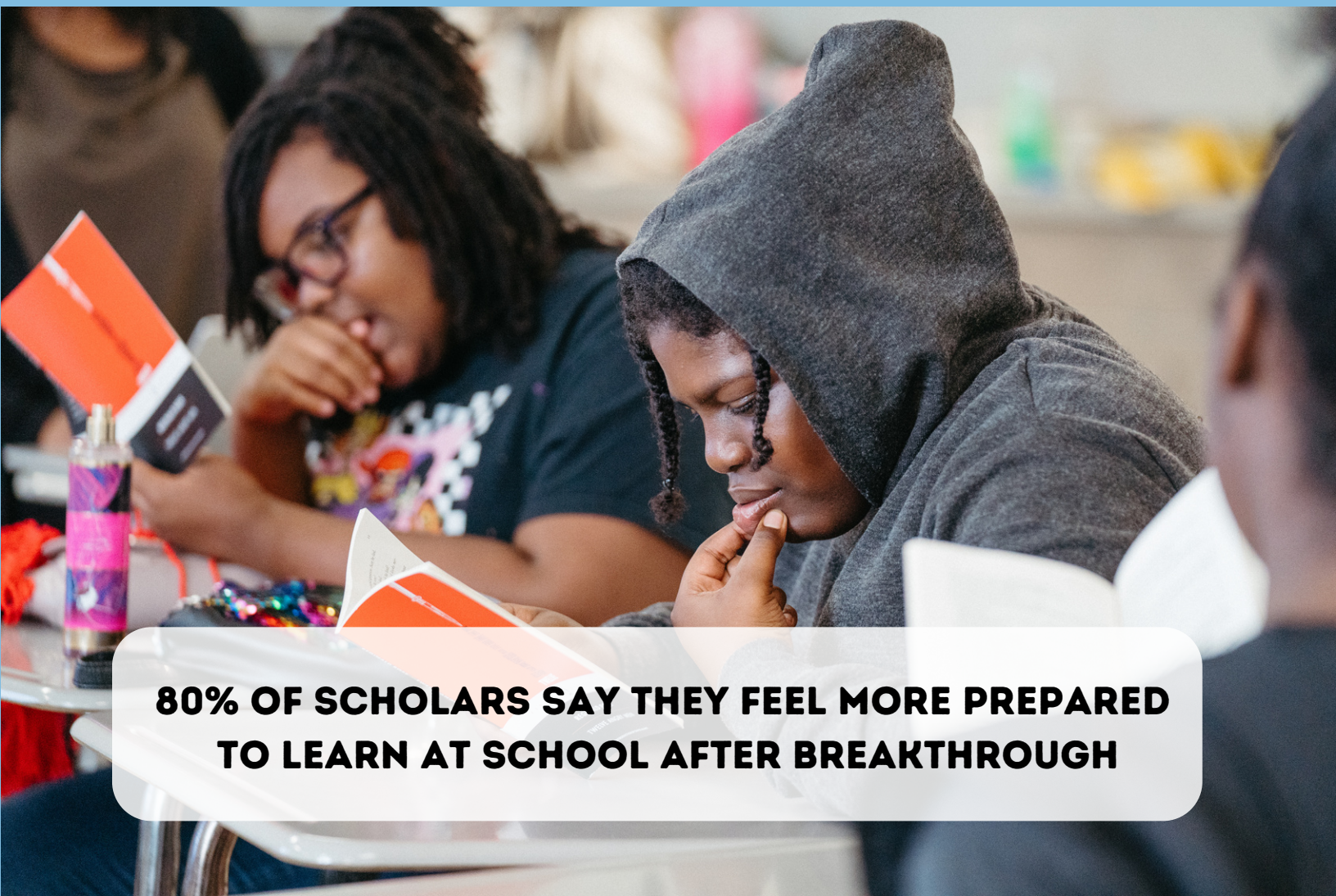
Coaching Fellows in
instruction, classroom
management,
and school culture



98%

**Parent
satisfaction**

Parents satisfied with
their scholar's summer
experience



**80% OF SCHOLARS SAY THEY FEEL MORE PREPARED
TO LEARN AT SCHOOL AFTER BREAKTHROUGH**

'24 TEACHING FELLOW COHORT

DEMOGRAPHICS

55% of Teaching Fellows attend an HBCU

85% of Teaching Fellows attend an in-state institution

33% of Teaching Fellows are first-gen college students

85% of Teaching Fellows identify as a person of color

24' COHORT SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT

- Adrian College
- Alabama A&M
- Alabama State University
- Auburn University at Montgomery
- Emory University
- Spelman College
- Samford University
- St. Olaf College
- Stillman College
- Talladega College
- Tuskegee University
- University of Alabama
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- University of Alabama at Huntsville
- University of Chicago
- University of Mississippi
- Wake Forest University

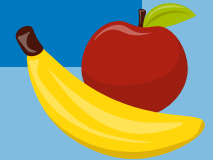
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A

**SCHOLAR
ARRIVAL!**

BREAKFAST

8:30

8:40



**HUMANITIES
CLASS**

9:00

ADVISORY

10:00

Like homeroom!
Focused on Social-
Emotional learning
and deep dives into
helping scholars plan
for their future

MATH CLASS

10:30

LUNCH

11:30

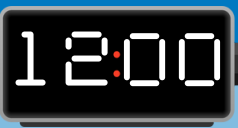


"The best part of Breakthrough was making new friends and making connections with the teachers. This made me feel like I can have a positive relationship with the teachers at school."
-Summer 2024 Scholar

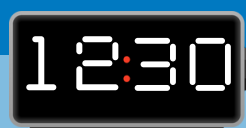


BREAKTHROUGH SCHOLAR

RECESS



SCIENCE CLASS

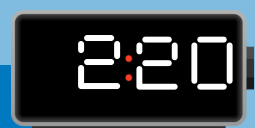


ELECTIVE

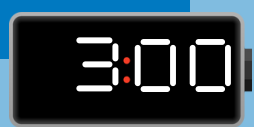


Think Breakthrough pep rally! Songs, chants, games, etc.

ALL SCHOOL MEETING



GOODBYE FOR NOW!



Field trip to explore the Cahaba River tomorrow!

Summer 2024 Electives

- American Sign Language
- App Building with EdFarm
- Arts & Crafts
- Chess
- Creative Writing
- Dance
- Debate
- Home Economics
- Musical Theater
- Poetry
- Russian Language
- Self-Care
- Sports



STEM with Jones Valley Teaching Farm



“Breakthrough has really transformed my life. It has helped me find my purpose not only within education but in my community as well. It has formed me to become the person I am today and shaped my beliefs and values.

Breakthrough is so important to me that I am now moving to a place I never imagined because Breakthrough has played such a pivotal role in my life.

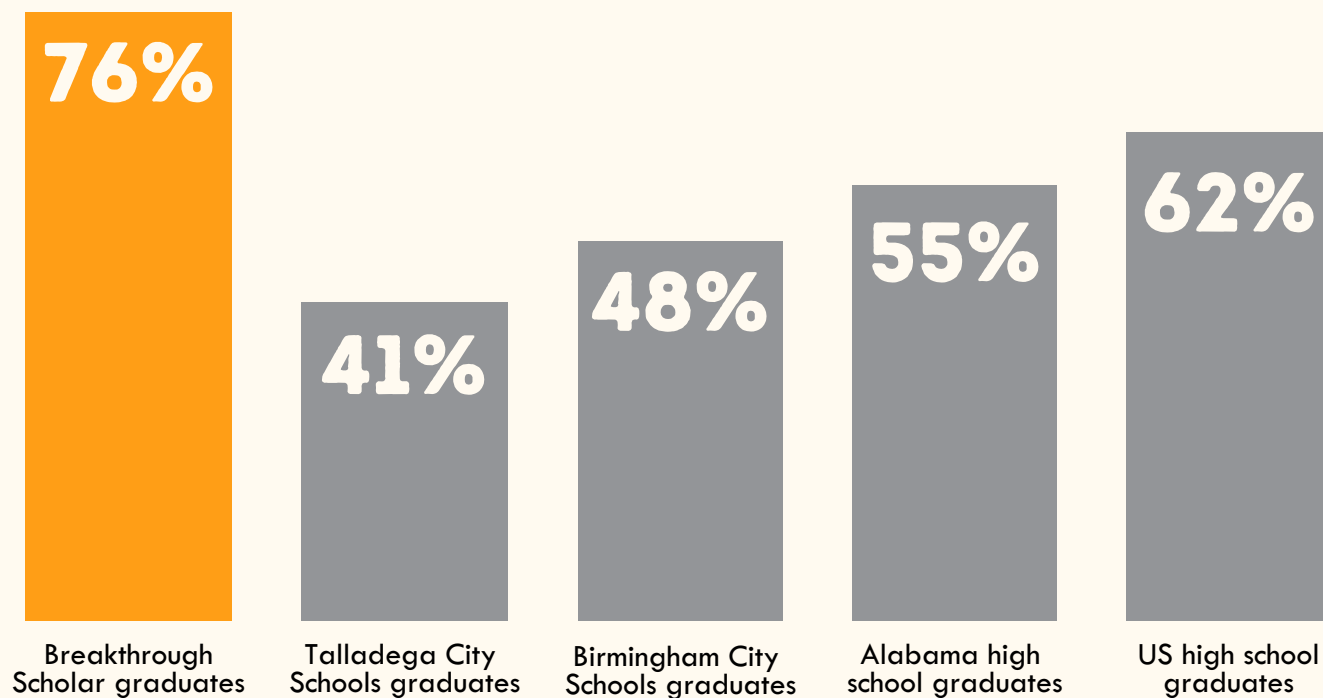
The continuous support from the Breakthrough staff is amazing, even when I’m not there. The relationship piece was so important to me”

Ja'Maya King

23' & 24' Teaching Fellow
Spelman College

2025 Teach For America Alabama teacher
in Birmingham City Schools

76% OF BREAKTHROUGH BIRMINGHAM SCHOLARS ATTEND COLLEGE



OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Breakthrough Birmingham's new Outdoor Classroom program, developed with the Jefferson County Greenways Coalition, engaged 40 rising 9th graders in a transformative six-day experience at Red Mountain Park, Turkey Creek Nature Preserve, and Ruffner Mountain.

Scholars explored environmental science, conducting water quality testing, native plant identification, and geological observations, while drawing on nature as inspiration for poetry and narrative writing. This collaborative initiative in outdoor environments offered an immersive, hands-on experience for scholars that nurtured both their academic and social-emotional growth.

**18 HOURS OUTSIDE
PER SCHOLAR**



RED
MTN
PARK



SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM (SYP)

Breakthrough Birmingham's School Year Program provides **extended year-round support** for middle schoolers, focusing on academic and **social emotional skill-building**, as well as career exposure.



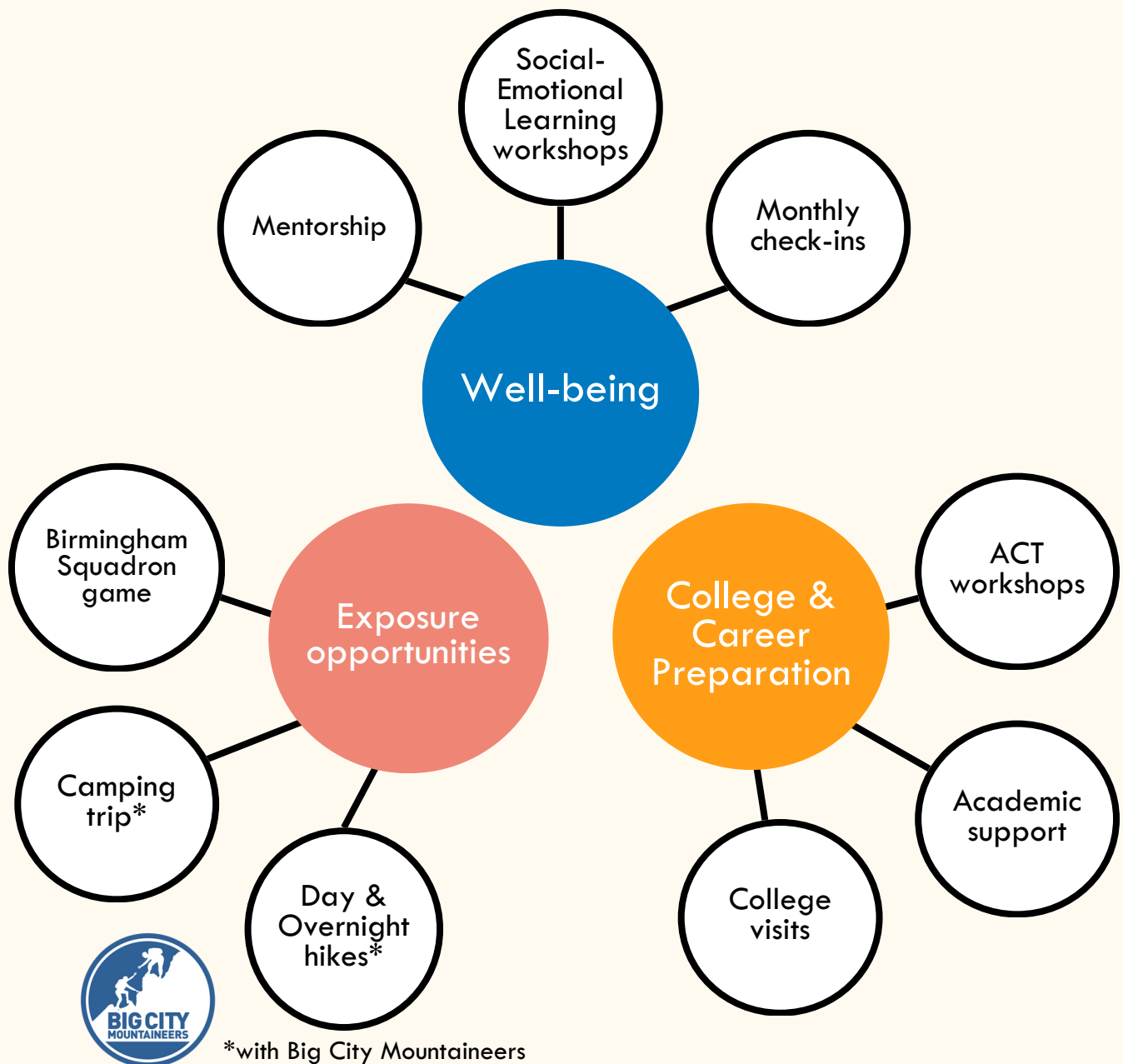
During 2023-2024, 73 scholars took part in our school-year programs, through which we engaged 17 community partners.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS:



EXPLOREU (XU)

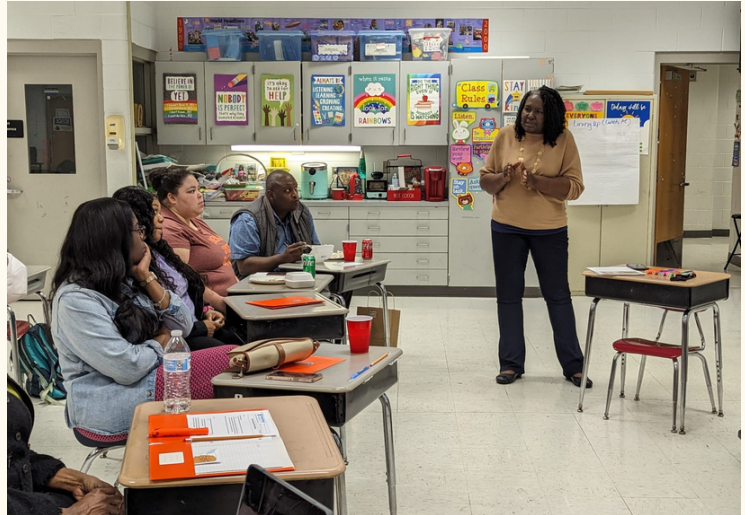
ExploreU supports high schoolers, emphasizing college and career preparation alongside mental well-being and soft skill-building. Our goal is post-secondary success for our scholars, and continued support into high school is helping them achieve it.



THRIVE TEACHER COACHING

THE ISSUE

In Alabama,
52% of new teachers will
leave the classroom within
the first three years of
employment.



WHY BREAKTHROUGH?

We have a proven track record for igniting and sustaining passion in new educators. Since 2013, our team of veteran educators has coached 240 undergraduate students to successfully lead classrooms. We know that our coaches can provide the structure and support needed by new teachers to thrive professionally and remain in education while maintaining balance in their lives.

**THRIVE'S
APPROACH**

**WEEKLY
CLASSROOM
OBSERVATIONS +
1-ON-1 FEEDBACK**

**MONTHLY GROUP
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

**CERTIFICATION +
PRAXIS SUPPORT**

**STIPENDS FOR
PARTICIPANTS**



2024 THRIVE COHORT

11 Teachers

Coming from
Martha Gaskins
Elementary School,
Wilkerson Middle
School, and Chalkville
Elementary School



50%

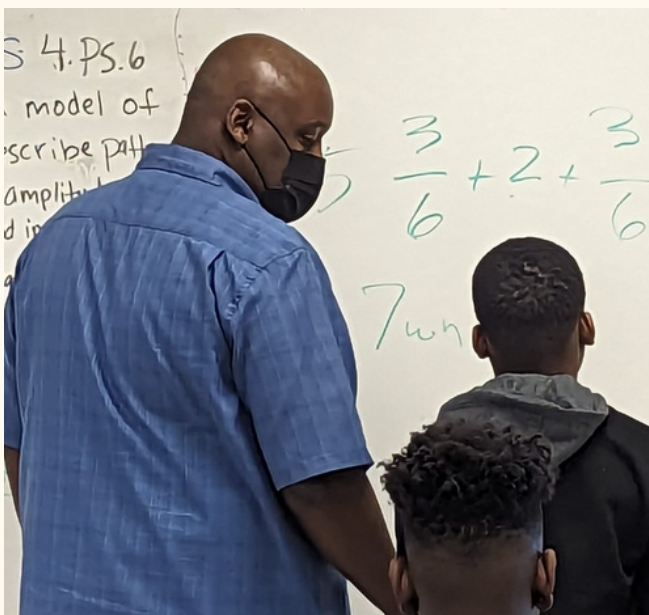
**REDUCTION IN
AFTER-WORK
WORKING HOURS**

95%

**THRIVE TEACHERS
STILL IN THE
CLASSROOM**

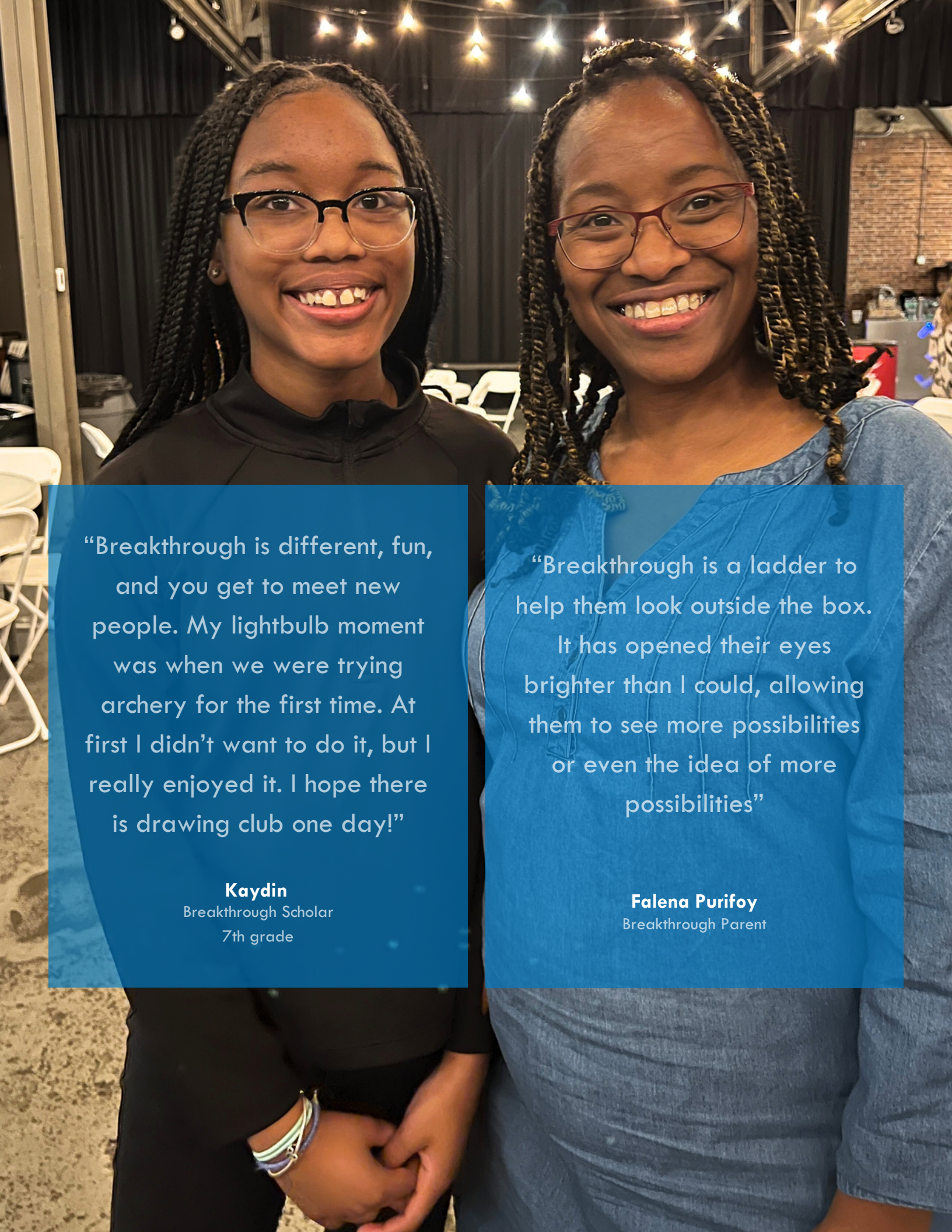
100+

**HOURS OF IN-CLASSROOM
OBSERVATION
PER COHORT**



"I was considering leaving my first semester. Having worked in law enforcement, I know what a high stress job is like, but teaching in the classroom is not a job for the faint. It was extremely overwhelming. But I was able to get the simple tools I needed through Thrive's coaching, like how to set procedures for everything you do, how to have a strong presence, build relationships with the kids, cut down behavior issues, and plan and transition. Thrive has helped me with my confidence."

- Quentin Mitchell, 4th Grade Math Teacher, Thrive Cohort 1



“Breakthrough is different, fun, and you get to meet new people. My lightbulb moment was when we were trying archery for the first time. At first I didn’t want to do it, but I really enjoyed it. I hope there is drawing club one day!”

Kaydin
Breakthrough Scholar
7th grade

“Breakthrough is a ladder to help them look outside the box. It has opened their eyes brighter than I could, allowing them to see more possibilities or even the idea of more possibilities”

Falena Purifoy
Breakthrough Parent

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

MULTIYEAR GIFT FROM ALABAMA CIVIL JUSTICE FOUNDATION

With ACJF's generous commitment of \$100k for three years, Breakthrough Birmingham aims to double the number of students it supports. This will increase the quality of academic supports for students year-round, as well as increase the number of Teaching Fellows entering the education and leadership pipeline in the state.



MOST IMPACTFUL PROJECT AWARD

In March, Breakthrough was honored with the the Birmingham Business Journal's "Most Impactful Project" award for its summer program.

INNOVATE ALABAMA

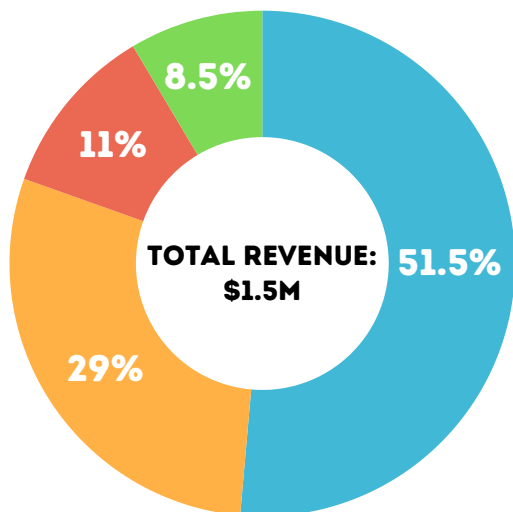
Breakthrough is delighted to be accepted into the Innovate Alabama Network, a comprehensive resource that connects communities, nonprofits, and institutions across the state that are fostering innovation locally.

Innovate's financial support will help fund the following:

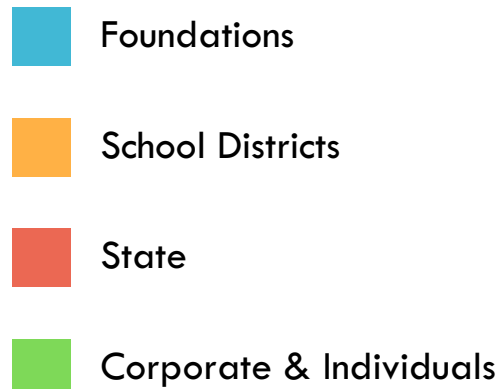
- Strengthening STEM curriculum (academic support & exposure partnerships) for summer and school year programs
- Building an active alumni network for scholars & teaching fellows
- Expanding to additional rural counties in the state



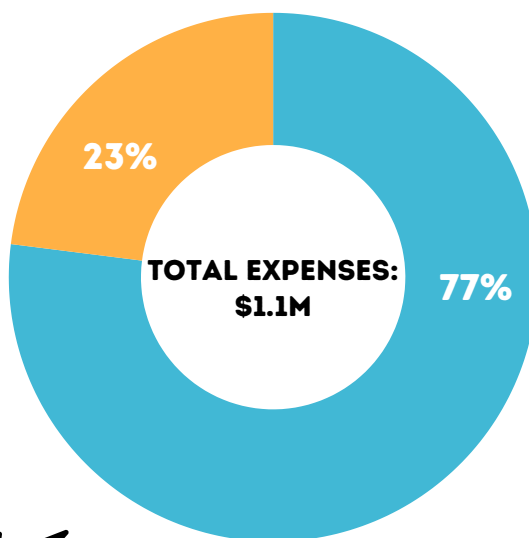
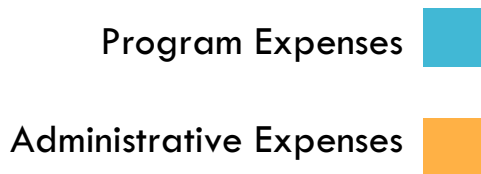
A YEAR OF GROWTH + SUSTAINABILITY



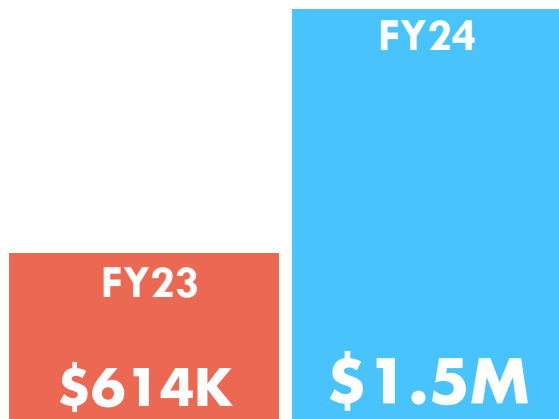
REVENUE



EXPENSES



TOTAL REVENUE



EXPENSES

PERCENT OF TOTAL REVENUE

FY23 **121%**

FY24 **71%**

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Institutional Supporters

Alabama Civil Justice Foundation
Alabama State Department of Education
AmFirst Bank
Caring Foundation
Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham
Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama
Daniel Foundation
EBSCO Community Impact
Goodrich Foundation
Independent Presbyterian Church Foundation
Innovate Alabama
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Jennifer Pennington
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Ethan Summers



OUR TEAM

Mariohn Michel
Executive Director

Hattie O'Hara
Development Manager

Samantha Nelms
Program Manager

Caroline Elrod
Communications Coordinator

Tay Berry
Program Coordinator

Andrea Johnson
Instructional Coach

Victoria Saenz
Development Associate

Morgan Sanders
Recruitment Assistant

Ruchi Soparawala
XU Apprentice

Cathy Clark
Thrive Manager

Jessica Wright
Recruitment Manager

Jourdan Elliott
Recruitment Coordinator

Isabella Cruz
Operations Coordinator

Evie Whitsett
Program Coordinator

Claire Cole
Operations Consultant

Madison Zeitvogel
SYP Apprentice

Jordan Chapman
Program Apprentice

OUR BOARD

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Redhawk Advisory

Harris Anthony
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