



Breakthrough
Birmingham

2014

Impact Report



Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present the 2014 Impact Report for Breakthrough Birmingham. Launched last year as part of our blueprint to inspire highly motivated yet underserved students onto the college track, Breakthrough Birmingham is the first nationally-run site of Breakthrough Collaborative.

Built on Breakthrough's successful *Students Teaching Students* and *Teachers Training Teachers* models, both perfected over the past 35 years, and partnering directly with Birmingham City Schools along with a myriad of regional and local partners, Breakthrough Birmingham was an important step in tackling the opportunity gap.

After serving a 66 students and 22 teaching fellows in 2014, Breakthrough Birmingham has worked to intensively accelerate its middle school students on their path to college. These 22 teaching fellows were extremely fortunate to partner closely with eight local instructional coaches, a critical set of actors in our model. Our instructional coaches provided mentorship, coaching and guidance to our young teaching fellows.

This Impact Report illustrates a sampling of the various ways our dedicated national board of trustees, national staff, site leadership, district, community and philanthropic partners have coalesced to focus local energies towards improving Breakthrough's already successful and ever-evolving national movement. It is a movement that addresses the opportunity gap through innovation, excellence, rigor, community and accountability. It is a movement that serves as a significant launch-pad for members of an often overlooked, yet deeply in need, middle school population to realize their college-bound aspirations. It is a movement that puts forth not only a promise, but also a toolkit for exceptional college students to best prepare and equip them to understand and solve our educational challenges. It is a movement that is explicit and purposeful about leveraging knowledge and know-how—as a local community—to grow into greater possibilities and to achieve meaningful impact.

None of what we do would be possible without the collective “we.” The students and teachers of Breakthrough Birmingham are stronger, are more dynamic and are more empowered because of your inspiration and collaboration. We look forward to growing with you.

Warmly,



Joshua Lachs, Ed.M., M.A.
National Executive Director



To our readers,

Over the past two summers, Breakthrough's unique cohort of teaching fellows have worked with motivated middle school students from the Birmingham City Schools to create a learning environment where hard work and persistence are the norm and excellence in learning is our goal. Under the guidance of our expert instructional coaches, our teaching fellows guided our students as they gained two months in reading and four months in math in just six weeks.



Our students' success would not be possible without the support of our parents, teachers, school leaders, donors and partners, both locally and nationally. From everyone on the staff at Breakthrough Collaborative to each school teacher who has written a student recommendation, Breakthrough Birmingham's success embodies the spirit of collaboration and teamwork, and this Impact Report serves as evidence of the great things that can happen when people are dedicated to working together to provide our students with the best education possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony R. Oliver".

Anthony Oliver, Ed.M., M.A.E.
Director, Breakthrough Birmingham

Program

Students

- 6 weeks of programming
 - 5 days per week
 - 8 hours per day
- 4 academic classes: Math, Literature, Writing, Science
- Electives: Dance, Journalism, Recycled Beats, Wacky Science, Spanish, Art, Study Hall
- Joint elective with Jones Valley Teaching Farm

Teaching Fellows

- 9-week residency
 - 2 weeks of intensive training
 - 6 weeks of classroom instruction
 - 1 week of evaluation
- 100+ hours of professional development

Host School

Bush Hills Academy

Co-Curriculum

- Field trips to Regions Field, McWane Center and Birmingham-Southern College and the Southern Environmental Center
- Career Day with professionals (U.S. Attorney's Office, Belk, Iberia Bank and more)
- College Day at Tuskegee University, the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Samford University

At a Glance

66



Students

66%

Students of color

73%

From low-income households

55%

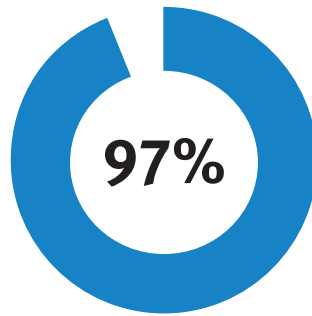
From single-parent households

50%

Will be first in families to attend college

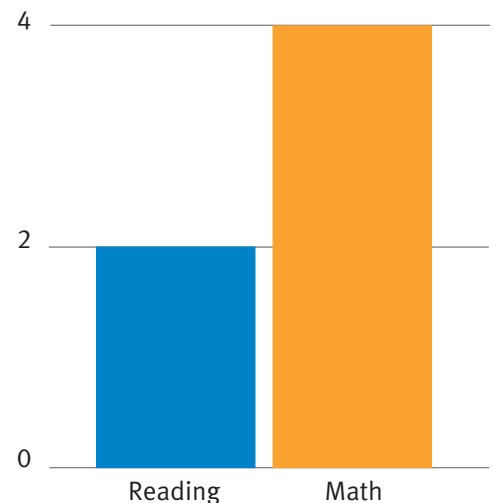
Students

During the summer of 2014, Breakthrough served rising seventh and eighth grade students from across Birmingham City Schools. These young scholars completed a rigorous application process, which included essays, interviews, teacher recommendations and transcripts. Breakthrough staff selected students who showed a willingness to work hard during the summer, a dedication to their studies and the commitment to attend Breakthrough for three years. Breakthrough students attended six weeks of focused academic programming, including four hours of instruction, two hours of individualized support, community-building events and up to two hours of homework every day.



Breakthrough Birmingham students sustained an average summer attendance of 94%.

On the Renaissance STAR Literacy and Mathematics Assessments, students gained 2 and 4 months of reading and math skills, respectively. Most low-income students lose months of reading and math skills over the summer.*



*Jennifer Sloan McCombs et al. "Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning." Rand Education & The Wallace Foundation (2011). <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1120.html>

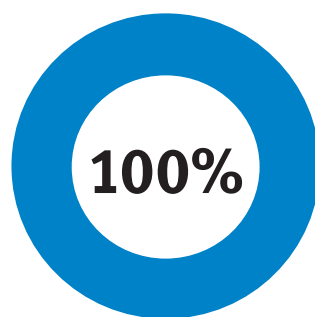
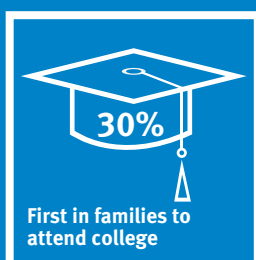
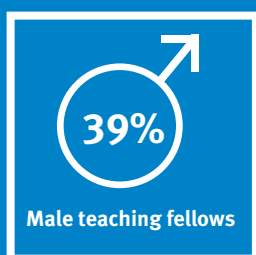
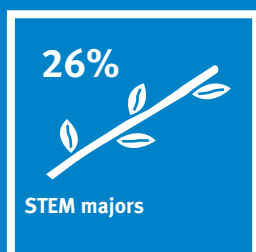
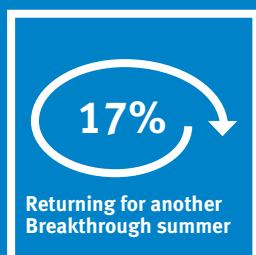
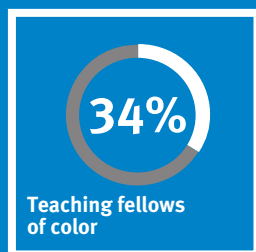


“Breakthrough has taught me that you are able to learn and have fun at the same time.”

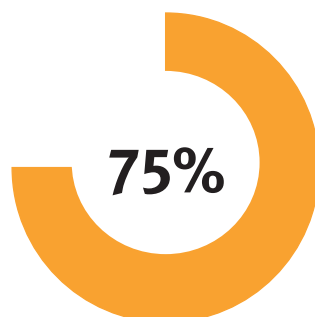
Teaching Fellows

Breakthrough Birmingham teaching fellows started the rigorous application process in the fall, when they wrote essays, submitted transcripts, requested references and created elaborate teaching videos. The most qualified applicants were selected in the spring and began their transformative Breakthrough experience with a two-week intensive training before students even set foot in the building. Once the summer program started, teaching fellows were responsible for all aspects of summer programming, from high-quality classroom instruction to planning field trips and coordinating events. By the end of the summer, teaching fellows gained over 100 hours of training and over 50 hours of classroom experience.

At a Glance

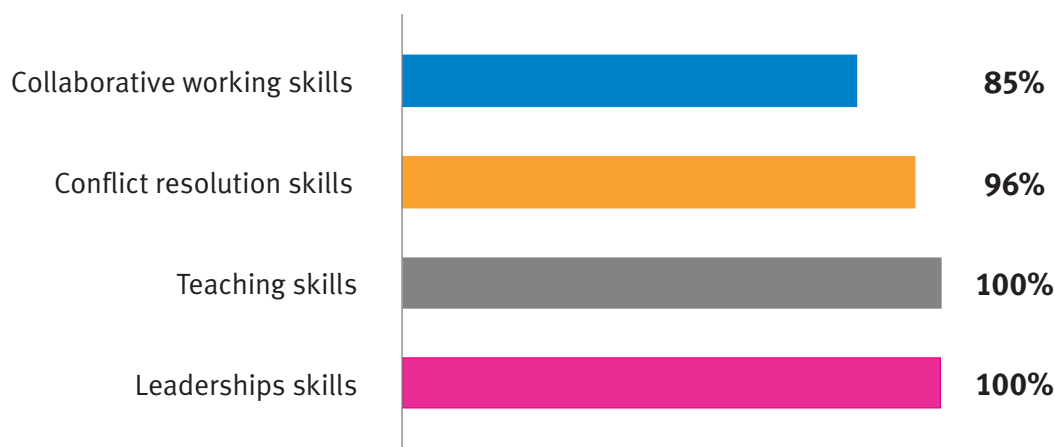


100% of Breakthrough Birmingham's teaching fellows say they were satisfied by their experience



75% of Breakthrough Birmingham's teaching fellows say they are interested in pursuing a future career in teaching.

As a result of their time with Breakthrough Birmingham, teaching fellows agreed they grew in the following areas:



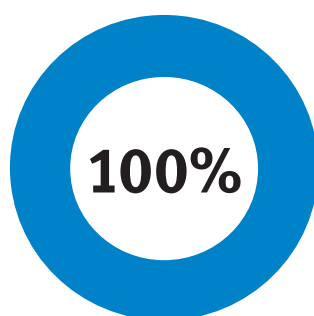
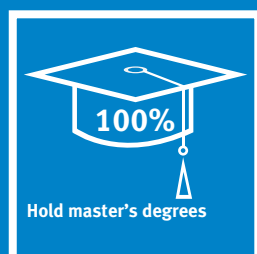
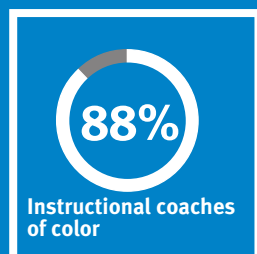


“My biggest accomplishment this summer was discovering my purpose for pursuing a career in education. It gave me hands-on experience to see if my commitment was real. I definitely see myself going into the field of education.”

Instructional Coaches

Breakthrough Birmingham's instructional coaches were expert educators who supported a small cohort of teaching fellows throughout the summer. Coaches provided their fellows with feedback on every lesson plan, observed each fellow's classes two to three times per week and met with them daily to help them develop the skills and habits critical to effective classroom instruction. Using our detailed Teacher Excellence Rubric, instructional coaches are able to pin-point specific competencies and help teaching fellows work toward mastery, while providing both qualitative and quantitative evaluation data to help inform our programming.

At a Glance

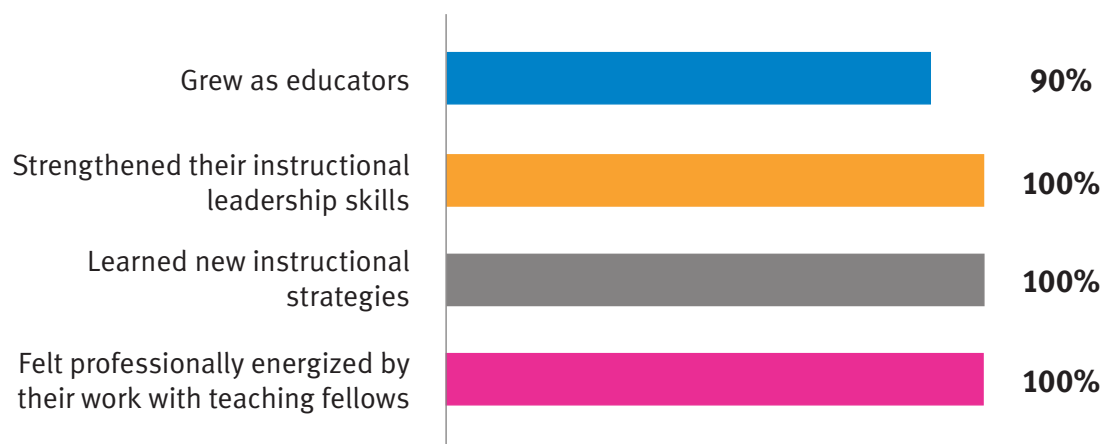


100% of Breakthrough Birmingham's instructional coaches say they would recommend this program to fellow educators.



100% of Breakthrough Birmingham's instructional coaches say they would consider participating in Breakthrough again.

As a result of their time with Breakthrough Birmingham, instructional coaches agreed on the following:





“Professionally, I have been thrilled to be a part of the Breakthrough team. I received excellent instruction on current strategies and philosophies of education as well as business. Personally, it has been extremely meaningful to me to see the difference Breakthrough makes in the lives of students and their families.”



Breakthrough Birmingham

“In the two years of my observation of Breakthrough Birmingham, I have seen that it offers middle school students an excellent opportunity to experience best practices from classroom teachers in a uniquely controlled environment during periods of time when school instruction typically ceases for most children. Instructors receive a tremendous level of academic support and professional training to ensure that students are exposed to what research and data says works. The diversity and energetic presentation of the course offerings make for a stimulating and motivating experience for the selected students of Birmingham City Schools.”

**—Milton J. Hopkins, principal of Herbert Phillips Academy,
Birmingham City Schools**



“Thank you for investing yourselves in the children. My son’s confidence and initiative improved along with his writing and mathematics abilities. It was worthwhile and fulfilling for him.”

**—Parent of Breakthrough Birmingham
2014 student**

Breakthrough Birmingham Supporters

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Assistant Director: Gail Harper Yeilding

Instructional Coaches: Herbert Blackmon, Kendra Bradford, Sandreka Brown, Danyell Butler, Cathy Clark, Shertia Hopkins-Casey, Theris Johnson, Moriel Purnell

Teaching Fellows: Austin Ambrose, Jessica Beaver, Abigail Castle, Ashley Causey, Claire Doemland, Taylor Eads, Ashley Edwards, Nathalie Folkerts, Aaron Getman-Pickering, Justin Heck, Jacob Helf, Meghan Imwold, Avery Jones, Trent Sanders, Aimee Sawyer, Laura Schlagheck, Kao Thao, Henry Washington, Anne Widom, Frank Wu, Rim Yoseph, Mohsina Yusuf

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Wiggins, Childs, Quin, and Pantazis
(D.G. Pantazis)

Partners

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Special Thanks

Birmingham City Schools Child Nutrition Dept.
Birmingham City Schools Transportation Dept.
David Cobb, head custodian, Bush Hills Academy
School Transportation Solutions, Inc.