

EDITION #5

BREAKTHROUGH

BULLETIN

Our efforts. **Their success.**

STEPPING INTO THE 2025–26 SCHOOL YEAR TOGETHER



Dear Breakthrough Community,

As we launch the 2025–26 school year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the work that has brought us to this exciting beginning. This summer has been a season of preparation and growth across our network—a testament to the dedication of our educators, staff, and partners who believe deeply in what’s possible for our scholars.

Our teachers and leaders began their work as early as July 7, engaging in leader intensives, new teacher training, and our annual all-staff institute. These sessions were rich with best practices and centered on our instructional priorities, ensuring that classrooms open strong and that learning is joyful and rigorous from day one. The energy in these spaces was inspiring, and I am confident it will carry forward into the year ahead.

On August 7, we came together as one Breakthrough family for our All Staff Kickoff. The day was filled with connection, learning, and joy. From hearing powerful staff stories to celebrating the start of a new chapter, it was a moving reminder of the love, commitment, and shared purpose that live across our network.

While professional learning was underway, our operations team was hard at work transforming our campuses. With the support of new capital investments, the team completed more than 75 projects across all five schools. From fresh paint and new flooring to upgraded lighting, signage, and landscaping, our schools are brighter and more welcoming than ever.

We also addressed critical infrastructure needs, from a new boiler and expanded classrooms at Midtown to kitchen upgrades that will support our new food service model. And at Woodland Hills, construction continues on a brand-new gym that will serve as both a space for student growth and community connection.

We also launched two critical service relationships: a new transportation partnership with Community Bus Services and a new food service partnership with Aramark. Both represent meaningful investments in the daily experience of our students and families.

When I step back and look at the collective effort of this summer, one truth is clear: we are ready. Ready to welcome our scholars back into vibrant, prepared schools. Ready to support teachers with the resources and professional learning they deserve. Ready to pursue academic excellence with joy and love at the center of all we do.

Thank you for your continued belief in Breakthrough and in our scholars. I am honored to lead alongside you and deeply grateful for the community that makes this work possible.

Here's to a year of growth, connection, and possibility.

With gratitude and optimism,



ANDREW MCRAE

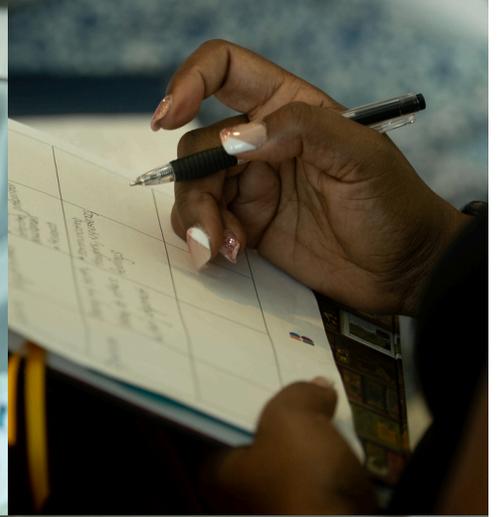
Chief Executive Officer
Breakthrough Public Schools

CONNECT ON LINKEDIN

ALL STAFF

KICK OFF

PHOTO RECAP





FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL





MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

The dream of Breakthrough Public Schools became a reality with the start of the school year in early fall of 2010 — and this year, we proudly celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of that incredible beginning.

It's hard to believe that fifteen years have passed since that very first day. Today, the evidence of our growth and impact is clear: we now operate five full K-8 campuses, serving approximately 3,000 scholars across Cleveland each year.

Equally inspiring is the growth of our alumni community. We now count more than 3,300 Breakthrough alumni — many of whom continue to stay connected, whether they're living across the globe, throughout the country, or right here in Cleveland, giving back to the city that helped shape them.

It fills us with immense pride to share that Breakthrough alumni are now teaching in our schools, working across Northeast Ohio, serving on our boards, and even mentoring the next generation of scholars.

And most recently, we celebrated a major milestone: our fourth-ever Breakthrough Alumni Reunion, bringing together graduates from the five classes of 2009-2013 for unforgettable celebration of community, growth, and shared history.

Fifteen years ago, a dream took root — a dream to uplift students through love, purpose, and unwavering support. Today, that dream is a thriving reality, thanks to the thousands of Breakthrough scholars and alumni who have walked this journey, and to every teacher, every family, and every friend like you who believed in what was possible.

Your steadfast commitment has helped build something powerful — a community where education is not only accessible, but transformational. It is your dedication that keeps the Breakthrough mission strong and vibrant.

As a new school year begins, we reflect with gratitude. Thank you for staying the course with us. Thank you for your belief in every child's potential. And thank you for continuing this journey with us — to keep the dream of a quality education alive for every scholar at Breakthrough Public Schools.

With deep gratitude,



SUSAN ERTLE

President
Friends of Breakthrough Schools

LET'S STAY CONNECTED

DEVELOPMENT

Emerging Leaders

Check Out Our [Updated Website](#) and Join the Friends of Breakthrough Schools' Emerging Leaders!

No matter where you are in your career, Breakthrough's Emerging Leaders are committed to making a meaningful impact on the lives of over 6,000 scholars and alumni—while growing personally and professionally.

As an Emerging Leader, you can:

- Make a direct difference for Breakthrough students and alumni
- Build relationships with community leaders and local professionals
- Amplify awareness for educational equity
- Develop leadership skills while advancing a cause that transforms lives

Now with Two Membership Tiers:

Social (Free)

Quarterly updates on EL events and initiatives, access to volunteer opportunities, networking with other young professionals and Friends of Breakthrough Board members, plus 20% off EL pay-per-event registrations (excludes BASH)

Leadership (\$150/year)

All Social benefits, plus free admission to EL-hosted events, an exclusive EL T-shirt, deeper engagement opportunities, meetings, and take on leadership roles.



REGISTER TODAY

and help create opportunities that change lives.

For more information visit [our website](#) frequently for the latest updates!

EMERGING LEADER LEADERSHIP

Lauren Andrews | Taylor Bowen
Nick Hylant | Derrick Johnson
Celeste Kamasa Scott
Aurora Kitko | Mac Lagor
Cooper Mead | Ryan Sowers

Swing for the Stars

Thank You For Your Support!

Thank you for making the 15th annual Swing for the Stars golf outing at Canterbury Golf Club a tremendous success!

Your participation and support helped us raise essential funds for scholars in the Breakthrough Public Schools network. With your help, we're making quality education a reality for every child in Cleveland.

Congratulations to all our winners, and thank you again to everyone who participated. We hope you enjoyed the day on the course as much as we did!

Early Bird Registration:

Join Us on the Green
Next Summer 7.27.26



SWING FOR THE STARS

15TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING
HOSTED BY FRIENDS OF BREAKTHROUGH SCHOOLS



Presented by

Re-live the event.
Explore the photo gallery!

THANK YOU, EVENT COMMITTEE!

HONORARY CHAIR MATT BREWER
COMMITTEE TOM DITTOE | MARY HERZAK
BRYAN SCHAUER | CRAIG PANZICA

Semper Virens Legacy Society

The Semper Virens Legacy Society was established to recognize individuals who have made a long-term commitment to Breakthrough Schools or wish to make an estate gift to memorialize their dedication to Breakthrough's mission. It was created in partnership with the Cleveland Foundation where we have established the Friends of Breakthrough Schools Legacy Fund.

This fund helps to ensure long-term financial stability through the preservation and investment of dollars for the future benefit of Breakthrough Public Schools, its scholars, and alumni.

Learn how you can shape the future with your legacy—contact Tim Mann, Senior Advancement Officer via email: tmann@breakthroughschools.org or phone: 216-373-2604.



I am proud to be a member of the Semper Virens Legacy Society at Friends of Breakthrough Schools. As a younger professional, I am not the typical legacy donor. However, I am committed to the work being done by Breakthrough Schools - providing access to a quality education and preparing Breakthrough Scholars and alumni to live choice-filled lives. By making a planned gift, I am able to set the stage for a larger gift than I can currently make in my lifetime. It is so easy to make a legacy gift at any level, regardless of your age. The team at Friends of Breakthrough Schools can walk you through it. Join me as a member of the Semper Virens Society so Breakthrough can continue to provide opportunity to scholars for generations to come!

Free Foutz

Friends of Breakthrough Board &
Semper Virens Legacy Society Member

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Take a school tour!

Wednesday, September 17 | 8:30A-10A

Breakthrough Midtown Campus

1417 E 36th Street, Cleveland, OH 44114

For information and to register contact
Tim Mann at tmann@breakthroughschools.org.



[Click for information and to register!](#)

Professional Developments: A Fireside Chat with Megan Mayhugh

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

This ongoing series features panel discussions with
community leaders.



[Click for information and to register!](#)

OCTOBER EVENTS

Take a school tour!

Tuesday, October 28 | 8:30A-10A

Breakthrough Willard Campus

9401 Willard Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44102

For information and to register contact
Tim Mann at tmann@breakthroughschools.org.



[Click for information and to register!](#)

NOVEMBER EVENTS

Professional Developments: A Fireside Chat with Susan Chiancone

Thursday, November 13, 2025

This ongoing series features panel discussions with community leaders.



[Click for information and to register!](#)

DECEMBER EVENTS

Take a school tour!

Thursday, December 11 | 8:30A-10A

Breakthrough Glenville Campus

12523 Woodside Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44108

For information and to register contact
Tim Mann at tmann@breakthroughschools.org.



[Click for information and to register!](#)

Friends of Breakthrough

APRIL EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE
Friday, April 24, 2026

For information and sponsorship opportunities,
[visit our website](#)



APRIL 24, 2026

Sign up before
12/15/25 and
get 15% off!
Use the promo
code "BASH15"



Beyond BREAKTHROUGH

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH CAREER

We had an amazing time reconnecting with alumni from E Prep Cliffs Classes (now our Midtown campus) of 2009–2013 at our recent reunion hosted by Beyond Breakthrough on August 8, 2025! From laughter and shared memories to updates on life after Cliffs, it was a joy to see so many familiar faces come together. Thank you to everyone who showed up, showed love, and made it such a special event.

Once a Cliffs scholar, always Breakthrough family!



A STEP Beyond

We're thrilled to introduce A Step Beyond—a brand-new, three-year student success program launching in the 2025–26 school year, led by our Beyond Breakthrough High School Success team. The program kicks off with 30 Breakthrough Public Schools alumni, all of whom are current 10th graders eager to dive in with us in order to build skills and confidence in academic success, college navigation, career exploration, and financial literacy.

This is just the beginning—we can't wait to see the impact these scholars will make!

Want to learn more or get involved? Reach out to our Managing Director of High School Success, Cullin Fish, at cfish@breakthroughschools.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER EVENTS

Annual High School Fair

Thursday, October 16 | 5P-7P

Breakthrough Midtown Campus

1417 E 36th Street, Cleveland, OH 44114

[Sign up to volunteer!](#)



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Morgan

8th Grade

Breakthrough Southeast



Q: How long have you been with Breakthrough Public Schools?

A: 9 Years- Since Kindergarten

Q: What is a challenge you have faced with school and how did you overcome it?

A: Not everybody is so accepting if you have differences. I am open and not worried about those types of things and focus on what I am here.

Q: What about your schooling over the years has made an impact on you?

A: The teachers are nice and accepting. They have an open heart. They always give you a chance to redo. My favorite teachers are Mr. Ovak and Ms. Wilcoxson.

Q: What are your future plans? High School? College? Military? Career...?

A: For high school I am looking at Beaumont or Hathaway Brown. Afterwards, I am interested in going to LSU or Southern University.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Malaya McNutt

Middle School, Class of
Breakthrough Midtown (formerly E Prep Cliffs), 2024

High School
Gilmour Academy

Current Grade
Sophomore, 2028



Q: What are you involved with in high school?

A: I'm doing volleyball, I did swimming this year, and I'm in theater. I am also in 4 different clubs: yoga, mindfulness club, yearbook club, and gardening club. I also work two part-time jobs.

Q: What is your favorite memory from Breakthrough?

A: My favorite memory was when we had our 8th grade trip to Washington, DC. That was the best trip ever. The teachers were so fun; they were so loving. I really actually miss them and I wish they could come to my school now and teach.

Q: What's something you wish you knew before entering high school?

A: Do not change yourself to fit in. I feel like everyone did when they got to high school and were in a new environment. Be yourself.

Q: What's advice you would give current 8th graders?

A: Enjoy the experience. Ask your teacher questions, get to know your friends a little deeper, hang out with them. Do more than only study.

Q: Why is Beyond Breakthrough special?

A: They ask you many questions to see where you're at in life, and I feel like if people have that in the future, I think their life will be much better. Because, you know, you always need somebody to support you, if no one else is there to support you.

Q: Why should alumni work with Beyond Breakthrough?

A: They can help you feel seen. Beyond sees you and supports you. If someone sees you and they hear you, you're going to feel inspired to live life.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Kylie Roden

Intervention Specialist
Breakthrough
Southeast Campus



Q: How long have you been at Breakthrough?

A: This is my fourth year teaching at Breakthrough.

Q: How does Breakthrough support you in your position?

A: Brittney Terrell, our assistant principal of ESE, is amazing and always supports me with any questions or concerns I have with my individual scholars. The admin team at Southeast is also very helpful, especially when it comes to handling more challenging behaviors and/or brainstorming ideas to best support our scholars and school culture. Additionally, Breakthrough provides intervention specialists with pull-out curricula that allow us to provide targeted academic and behavioral interventions, which helps us meet the specific needs of our scholars.

Q: What's your favorite part about working with students one-on-one or in small groups?

A: My favorite part about working with students one-on-one or in small groups is getting the chance to build meaningful relationships and tailor instruction to their unique needs. It is so rewarding to meet them where they are, understand how they learn best, and watch their confidence grow as they begin to experience success. Many of my scholars struggle with believing in themselves and their abilities, but in a smaller setting, they feel comfortable being themselves, opening up, and truly showing what they know. I also enjoy learning more about their personalities, interests, and strengths while helping them work on specific skill gaps - all in a supportive, low-pressure environment.

Q: How do you collaborate with other teachers to ensure all students are successful?

A: I collaborate with other teachers to ensure all scholars are successful by working closely with general education teachers and support staff to provide high quality individualized instruction, especially for my scholars with IEPs. This includes adapting materials to meet both academic and behavioral needs as well as sharing student strengths and data to help tailor lessons. I also bring strategies to support general education content and delivery. Open communication allows us to create consistent support systems across all settings making sure every scholar has the access and opportunity they need to succeed.

Q: Can you share a recent "breakthrough" moment you've witnessed with a student?

A: A recent "breakthrough" moment that I have witnessed was with a scholar I worked with over the past two years. When we started, he was reading at a Kindergarten level, and at the end of last year, he was reading at grade level (Grade 4). This scholar worked and continues to work incredibly hard in class, small group, and at home to improve his reading skills. I will never forget the day he raised his hand to read aloud a grade level book to the class. He read a whole paragraph fluently and without any errors. It brought tears to my eyes because I remembered the first time I gave him a word fluency screener in third grade - he only recognized four kindergarten words and said he didn't know how to read the rest. Seeing his progress has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career, and is a reminder of my "why" I do this job.

Q: What's one thing you want families and donors to know about the role of an intervention specialist?

A: One thing that I want families and donors to know is that the role of an intervention specialist is not just about academic support, but about supporting the whole child. Many of our scholars face challenges outside of the classroom that make it hard to focus, stay regulated, or fully engage in learning. My role is to build strong, trusting relationships with scholars who may be dealing with both a disability and also external challenges. I try to create a space where they feel safe, valued, and confident. Through targeted academic interventions, I help them strengthen their skills - but just as importantly, I support their social and emotional growth, giving them the tools they need to succeed - not just in school, but in life.

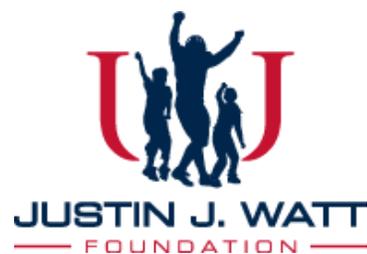
EXPANDED LEARNING SPOTLIGHT

New Flag Football Uniforms

We're proud to share that our Expanded Learning Team is hard at work creating meaningful out-of-classroom experiences for our scholars across the network. From enriching extracurricular activities to exciting athletic opportunities, this team is helping students grow, connect, and thrive beyond the classroom.

One highlight this year: our Sports Program was awarded a \$5,700 grant from the J. J. Watt Foundation to provide all five campuses with new girls flag football uniforms! We seized this exciting opportunity to redesign our uniforms, aligning them more closely with our network branding and ensuring our teams look as strong as they feel.

All campuses will continue to offer sports teams and extracurricular activities throughout the year, allowing every scholar to get involved, build skills, and represent their school with pride.



BREAKTHROUGH

PUBLIC SCHOOLS



breakthroughschools.org

