

Equipped for Success



**Breakthrough
Austin**

I will prepare and someday my chance will come.

Abraham Lincoln

Founded in Austin in 2001, Breakthrough builds a path to college, starting in middle school, for low-income students who will be first generation college graduates. Breakthrough's philosophy is built on the belief that there are no quick fixes and that early, long-lasting interventions can make the difference between dropping out of high school or going to college. The Breakthrough program is data-driven, and relationship-based. Our combination of individualized case management, rigorous programming, a "do whatever it takes" philosophy, and performance management allows Breakthrough to address low-income students' unique academic needs and personal circumstances as they work to become the first in their families to go to college.

Breakthrough equips our students with the tools necessary to negotiate the many and complex steps needed to be college-ready, to gain college admission, and to secure financial aid. Breakthrough believes that by equipping our students with innovative, educational programs, we can break the cycle of poverty in their families' lives forever.

CAPTURING
OPPORTUNITIES

FINDING YOUR VOICE
(we all remember middle school)

UNDERSTANDING
THE JOURNEY

De'Andralyn Dorsey / 7th Grade

Middle School. That place between Mt. Awkward and Overwhelming Pass. It's nice to have a guide.

Breakthrough's Summer Program creates the foundation for the long-term relationships with students and families. The intensive, six-week, academic program for rising 7th – 9th graders improves students' academic and study skills, combats summer learning loss, and provides information and opportunities students need to succeed. Breakthrough's students-teaching-students approach exposes young students to inspiring role models, while older students discover their potential as leaders and educators.

Capturing Opportunities

Breakthrough moves students beyond the classroom to develop relationships with positive role models and peers and explore the world around them. Students take field trips to Texas State University, a ropes course in Georgetown, and Winedale to study Shakespeare. Our students also volunteer at the Capital Area Food Bank and Urban Roots Farm.

On six Saturdays during the school year, Breakthrough's 7th and 8th graders go to St. Stephen's Episcopal School for a full day of project learning and enrichment activities, instilling in our students a college-going experience and attitude.

Understanding the Journey

There are many important milestones on the journey to higher education, and it's hard to stay on track. Breakthrough guides students to coursework and schools that are academically challenging and college-bound. The highly individualized programs begin during the middle school Summer Program with family workshops and continue through the 8th

grade year via a High School Options Fair, individual planning sessions, and assistance with completing transfer requests, applications, interviews, testing, and financial aid forms.

Finding Your Voice

Breakthrough helps students advocate for themselves in and out of school through goal-setting exercises, public speaking opportunities, individual mentoring, and team building activities. Breakthrough students build confidence and find a strong, personal voice that will guide them through middle school and beyond.

"I used to be amazingly shy. I couldn't even correct people who mispronounced my name. But I distinctly remember having to stand on the big stage in Welch Auditorium, as the director on the other side of the room urged me to speak louder and louder. Breakthrough literally helped me find my voice."

Jasmin Vara, Breakthrough Class of 2009, now attending Middlebury College on full scholarship.



GAME PLANNING
STRATEGIES

FORGING MENTAL
TOUGHNESS

ACADEMIC READINESS

Thelma Martinez / 9th Grade

High school is a hard-hat-only zone. It helps to be with someone who knows the ropes.

Breakthrough realizes that the transition from middle school to high school can be a tumultuous time for students, and that 9th grade achievement sets the tone for high school and college success. Therefore, Breakthrough has established programming to ensure that our freshmen are successful and that their course schedules are appropriately challenging, balanced, and college preparatory.

Forging Mental Toughness

By offering a 9th grade Summer Program focused on academics, leadership, and study habits, Breakthrough helps to minimize the impact of the personal, social, and academic transition to higher-performing high schools in the Austin area and to increase 9th grade passing rates. Breakthrough 10th graders participate in a two-week Summer Program on the campus of the University of Texas focused on key school success habits, leadership skills, preparing for college, and exploring future career paths.

Game Planning Strategies

In addition to providing critical academic preparation and support, Breakthrough coaches students in the core competencies and skills they will need to succeed. Breakthrough 9th and 10th graders take part in Saturday workshops throughout the year focused on high school success. During these after school and Saturday events, students participate in lessons on goal-setting and study habits, and build upon the important relationships they have with each other, Breakthrough mentors, and staff.

Academic Readiness

In addition to helping our students master the curriculum in high school, we focus on getting them ready to navigate the bureaucracy of getting to college. Each year we hold a "Road to College" event for all students and parents in grades 7-12. Students and parents are presented with inspirational talks from other first-generation college graduates, attend grade-level workshops and a college fair, participate in panel discussions, and learn about financial aid options and the necessary college entrance exams. We also encourage and support high school students to take free college classes and earn college credit through dual enrollment at Austin Community College.

"For the first time in my life, there is always somebody asking me about my first day of school or if I've done my homework. When my college recommendations were due, I realized I didn't have any stamps, let alone the money or a car to go buy them. I called Breakthrough and Andrea rushed stamps over to my house in the middle of a rain storm."

Alicia Flores, Breakthrough Class of 2010,
attending Texas A&M – Corpus Christi



SHARING
KNOWLEDGE

PREPARED FOR ANYTHING

LEAPING OVER
OBSTACLES

Aaron Cortez / 11th Grade

The goal is in sight. The pressure is high. We're there for that final push.

It takes knowledge and courage to be the first in your family to go to college. Breakthrough provides the information and resources students and families need to enter the world of higher education. Helping students apply to college and for financial aid can be daunting for many educated parents and downright overwhelming for those without the experience themselves. Breakthrough helps students and families complete this long journey successfully.

Sharing Knowledge

Breakthrough students are eager to give back and ensure that younger Breakthrough students and siblings have the same opportunities. Breakthrough students return to the Summer Program as teachers and volunteers. Parents report sharing what they learn with relatives and friends, and encouraging others to apply to Breakthrough. Likewise, our students frequently recruit their siblings, cousins, neighbors, friends, and schoolmates to join the program.

Our students stay involved.

Of the Breakthrough students in 7th through 12th grade who have not moved out of the Austin area, more than 90% remain actively engaged.

Prepared for Anything

We recognize the complexity of many of our students' personal, familial, and social circumstances, and how academic performance can be affected by any other area of a student's life. One of the reasons for Breakthrough's success is the year-round and sustained contact we have with students and families. For these reasons, Breakthrough is much more than

a dropout prevention and college access program. To some it feels like a second family. Our case managers make school visits, home visits if necessary, and referrals for other services, in addition to our core programs. Something as seemingly simple as obtaining eyeglasses can be a giant task for some Breakthrough families. We help overcome these obstacles.

Leaping Over Obstacles

For our students, applying to college is new to them and their parents. Breakthrough provides the track shoes to overcome these final hurdles on their path to higher education. Breakthrough helps with college preparation by taking 10th and 11th grade students on college visits and to attend college fairs. Breakthrough offers SAT preparation classes in the fall and the spring, as well as helps students register, get fee waivers, and drive them to the test if necessary. Our 12th graders receive individualized support as they apply for college and financial aid. Staff members help students select target schools, begin scholarship searches, write essays, prepare for interviews, and complete applications.

"I would never have known this opportunity were out there for me if it were not for Breakthrough. I've never been on a plane or outside of Texas. I'm nervous and yet excited to step outside of my comfort zone and try something new and challenging."

Aaron Cortez, Breakthrough Class of 2011 and recipient of a full scholarship to attend the School for Ethics and Global Leadership in Washington, D.C.



THROWING A LINE

GLOBAL
NAVIGATOR

Telvi Altamirano / Sophomore at Texas A&M

College is here. The preparation and hard work starts again. It's awesome. Breakthroughs happen every day.

Global Navigator

In just nine years, Breakthrough has had a measurable impact on our community. Breakthrough's success is reflected in our students' achievements. Over 90% of our first three classes graduated from high school in four years and nearly three-quarters enrolled in college. Our students are college-ready, based on state standards, at approximately two times the rate of non-Breakthrough students from the same neighborhoods. Breakthrough's college enrollment rate nearly doubles that of their Central Texas low-income peers, and Breakthrough students persist in college after their first year at higher rates than their peers.

Breakthrough students are currently attending over 20 different colleges and universities from Texas to New England to California.

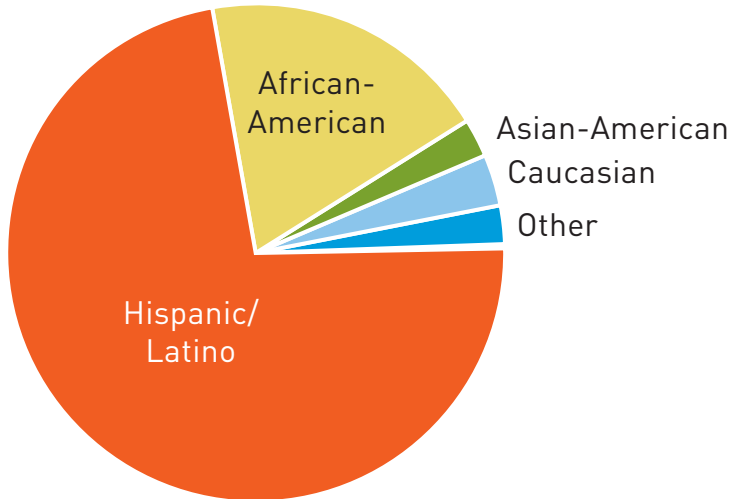
Throwing a Line

The journey does not end after high school graduation. Our case managers maintain communication and provide support to Breakthrough students during their college years to ensure they become college graduates. Students continue to need support to help with annual financial aid applications and course guidance. Although we teach our students to advocate for themselves, Breakthrough students always know they have a "lifeline" and someone who is knowledgeable and who they can trust to call when they have a question or need some guidance.

Breakthrough helps to develop socially responsible and economically productive citizens, with the skills and education to pursue their own interests and passions, both professionally and personally. Every high school dropout in Texas costs the state \$3,168 each year for the rest of their lives because of increased Medicaid costs, increased incarceration costs, and the loss of tax revenue. This amounts to \$377 million annually. The bottom line is that most of the students we serve will not go to college without significant intervention and support, and the individual, social, and economic implications of this are enormous. We expect that Breakthrough students will continue along their path and become community leaders, whose positive impact extends beyond their own families, colleagues, and friends.

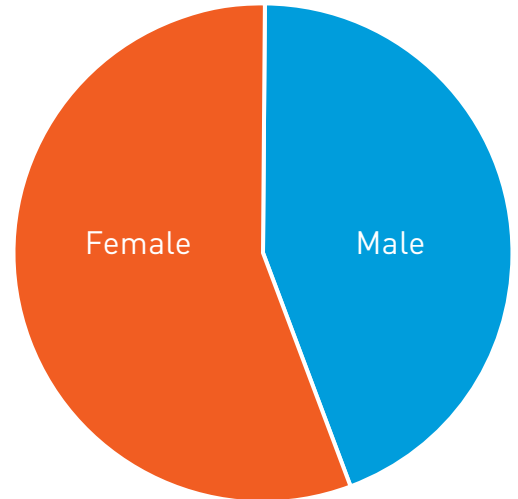


RACE/ETHNICITY



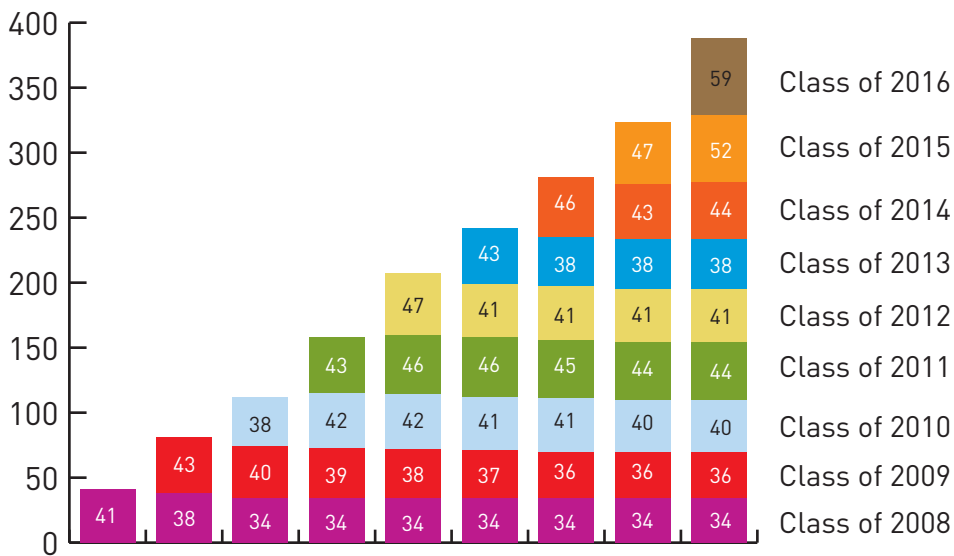
73.2% Hispanic/Latino
 18.9% African-American
 2.6% Asian-American
 3.4% Caucasian
 2.6% Other

GENDER



56% Female
 44% Male

2010-11 ENROLLMENT



TOTAL ENROLLMENT 388

92%

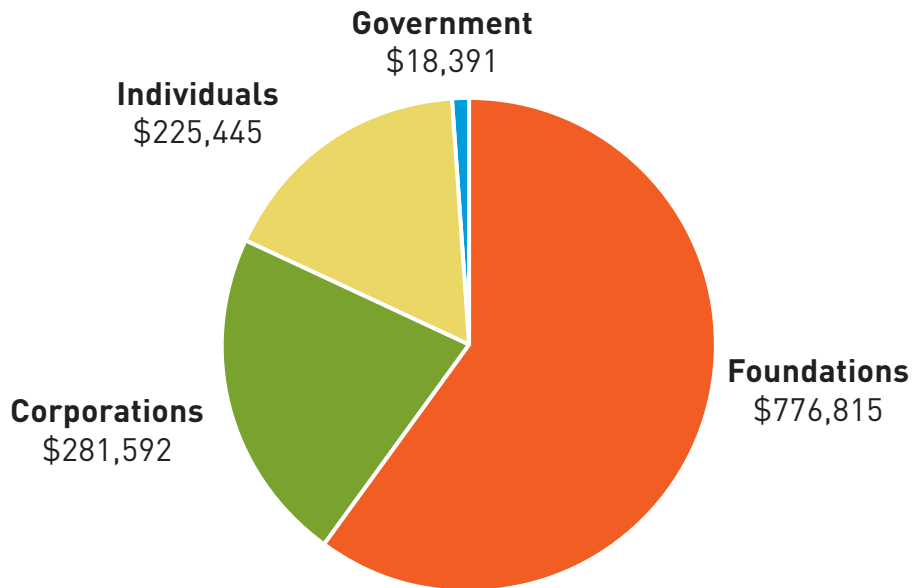
Eligible for free or reduced lunch

96%

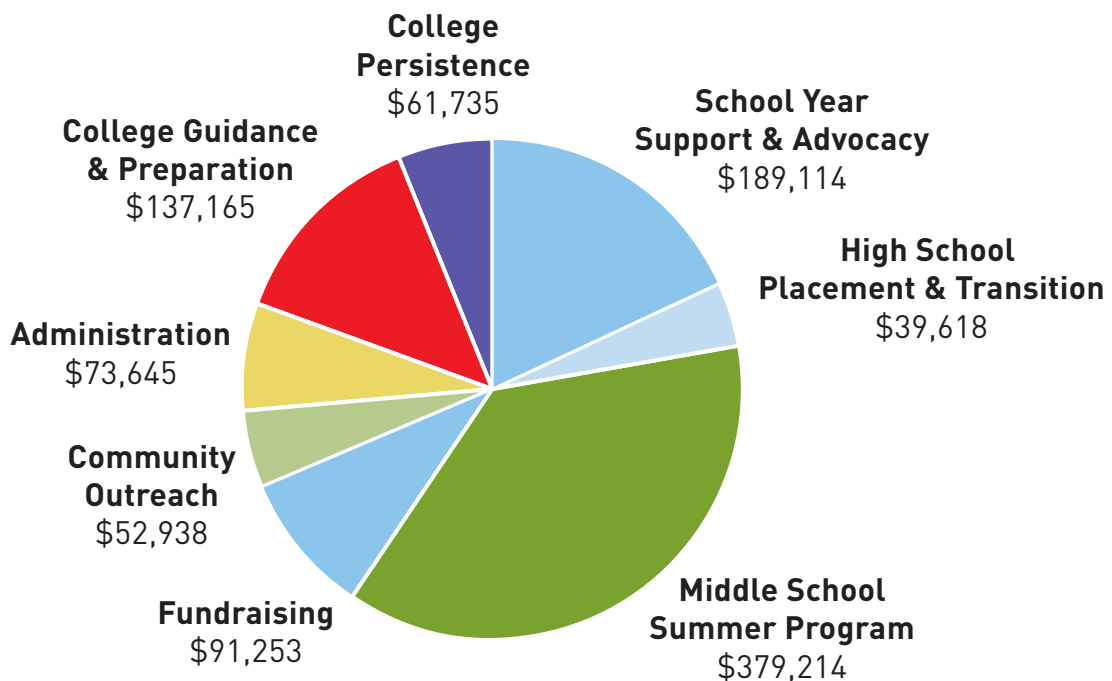
Will be first-generation college graduates



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2010 BUDGETED EXPENSES — \$1,024,682



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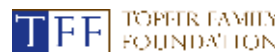
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