



HB 33 Interested Party Testimony
Jeremiah Triplett, Sr., Kenesha Terrell, Immanuel Gainer
Breakthrough Public Schools
House Finance Committee
Chairman Jay Edwards
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Chairman Edwards, Vice Chairman LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of HB 33, the state biennial budget bill. My name is Jeremiah Triplett Sr. With me today are Kenesha Terrell and Immanuel Gainer who will share their experiences with Breakthrough Schools as well. We appreciate you allowing us to testify together to be efficient and respectful of your time. Breakthrough Public Schools is a network of 10 nonprofit, high performing community schools on 5 campuses in Cleveland, most of which are sponsored by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Our student population is 98% minority and 78% low-income who often arrive at our schools several grade levels behind in educational attainment.

I am the proud parent of a current Breakthrough 5th grader, Shaniah, and two breakthrough alums, Jeremiah Jr, an 11th grader at Hawken, and David-Isaiah, a 10th grader at Davis Aerospace and Maritime. Our journey with Breakthrough began 8 years ago. After trial and error of searching for the right school system in Cleveland, we found Breakthrough. With the help of Breakthrough Schools (Go Cliffs Campus!) we have had our voices heard as parents, and our scholars have accessed academic networks that would perhaps otherwise have been unavailable. We continue to experience the impact that Breakthrough is making in our lives as parents and for our scholars.

How has Breakthrough impacted us? Breakthrough challenged all of us to be engaged with education at a higher level, and created a strong foundation upon which our scholars are building. Jeremiah is excelling in Hawken with a consistent 4.0 plus GPA, and has been selected to participate in several lead roles in their performing arts program. David-Isaiah is proving that he is a peer leader by participating in a school program that assists other scholars with mindfulness and awareness tactics. Shaniah, leading from the rear, is proving to be a role model among students, being selected to be a co-host of the 12th annual Breakthrough charity fundraiser, and is also making impacts in her community as a Girl Scout.

Kenisha Terrell - My name is Kenesha Terrell and I graduated with the founding class of Breakthrough Public School's very first school, Entrepreneurship Preparatory School, or "E Prep" in 2009. Following E Prep, I attended Cleveland School of the Arts for High School, and have been studying vocal music, performing, and teaching since then. Currently I am the Founder and CEO of an organization called Cultural Collective Arts, where we utilize the arts to redirect and guide grade school students and people in the community. Giving back in every way we can is the focal point of our purpose.

Breakthrough Public Schools has played a significant part in encouraging me, as a young black girl in middle school, to believe that I could pursue my dreams through entrepreneurship. Recently, I've reconnected with Breakthrough, and they have been nothing short of compassionate and supportive to me. They've embraced myself and my work as if we've never lost touch and that speaks volumes - because this is a K-8 SCHOOL. I believe in this Breakthrough community so much that even my daughter walks the same hallways that I did as a third grader at the Cliffs Campus, and we will continue to build in any way we can in partnership with this amazing family.

Immanuel Gainer - My name is Immanuel Gainer, and I am a 2015 graduate of Breakthrough Public Schools. I attended Citizens Leadership Academy, a Breakthrough school, for 3 years, and although a few years have passed, the effect Breakthrough has had on me- on my life- has been tremendous even to this day. I came into Breakthrough with some relatively negative experiences from my previous schools and expected the same. To my surprise, I had teachers who had the time to work with me, even one on one during their lunch times if they had to. But it wasn't just a great academic program- the faculty understood our surroundings and they became a lifeline of sorts, especially to those of us that embraced the opportunity.

Breakthrough Public Schools changed my way of thinking and the way I looked at life, really allowing me to grow as a maturing young man and not being written off as another failed statistic. And it didn't end with 8th grade graduation. Breakthrough continues to have significant impact on my life. Through ongoing support and connections both corporate and academic, Breakthrough has continued to assist and support me in all my post-Breakthrough endeavors. Based on the character I built while at Breakthrough, I pushed myself as I was taught, and found myself enlisted in the United States Army and in a civilian career that I love as a business development manager.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Governor DeWine and Lieutenant Governor Husted for their ongoing fight to support all children--especially children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Since their election in 2018, they have demonstrated their deep commitment to see all children receive the education they need regardless of the type of school they attend. One provision within their budget I wish to call out is the Quality Community School Support provision. Since 2019, this provision has provided community schools that have consistently demonstrated their ability to outperform their home district and outpace the state's expectations for growth with the additional support they need to continue and expand the work that they're doing in Ohio's challenged school districts. In the most recent budget, the Governor is proposing increasing the allotment per economically disadvantaged pupil for schools that qualify from \$1,750 to \$3,000.

We also ask you to support the provision of HB 33 which increases the per pupil amount for community school facilities to \$1,000 and also amend HB 33 to include a \$1,000 community school fairness supplement for all brick-and-mortar community schools. Finally, we ask you to make these funding provisions permanent so that funding for Breakthrough's current scholars is stable and predictable which will give the scholars their best chance to have stories just like ours.

We thank you for your time and will be happy to take any questions you may have.