

A SCHOOL OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF WASHINGTON



"Education is the door to opportunity." BISHOP JOHN T. WALKER

CASE STATEMENT FY 2016-17



“Let us get the order straight—love your students, know your subject, teach with energy and conviction and impart the truth.”

BISHOP JOHN T. WALKER



THE BISHOP JOHN T. WALKER SCHOOL FOR BOYS (BWS) was founded in 2008 as the Episcopal Diocese of Washington’s response to the serious educational challenges facing African-American boys in underserved communities east of the Anacostia River. BWS promotes the academic, spiritual, social, and emotional growth of our students through a holistic program that recognizes and celebrates boys in a nurturing and vibrant learning community. We strive to alter their educational and social trajectory and prepare them for leadership and service in their community and beyond.

Poverty creates tremendous obstacles to a quality education. Children living in poverty often have to overcome complex nonacademic hurdles to achieve success in school, including health and safety issues, social and emotional challenges, chronic and acute stressors, and cognitive lags. Boys and young men of color continue to face persistent challenges.

In our city, parents of all cultural and racial backgrounds share many of the same aspirations for their children, but invisible barriers keep some children from progressing at the same rate as their peers. This is particularly true for African-American boys, who are twice as likely as their white counterparts to be held back in elementary school, three times as likely to be suspended from school, and half as likely to graduate from college—a phenomenon known as the black male achievement gap.

The impact of the challenges these boys face is startling:

- According to a December 10, 2015 report by the Bainum Family Foundation, children living in Ward 7 & 8 are 6 times more likely to live with a single parent compared to other Wards in the city. Furthermore, children living in Ward 7 & 8 are twice as likely to live in homes where no parent has stable employment.
- A 2015 report by the DC Fiscal Policy Institute found that since 2007 African Americans in DC are the only ethnic group to see an increase in the poverty rate. Ward 7 & 8 have the highest poverty rate in the city, which is 33% compared to 18% city-wide.
- In 2011, 50% of youth under Department of Youth and Rehabilitative Services (DYRS) supervision are from Wards 7 & 8. 96% of these youth are African-American.

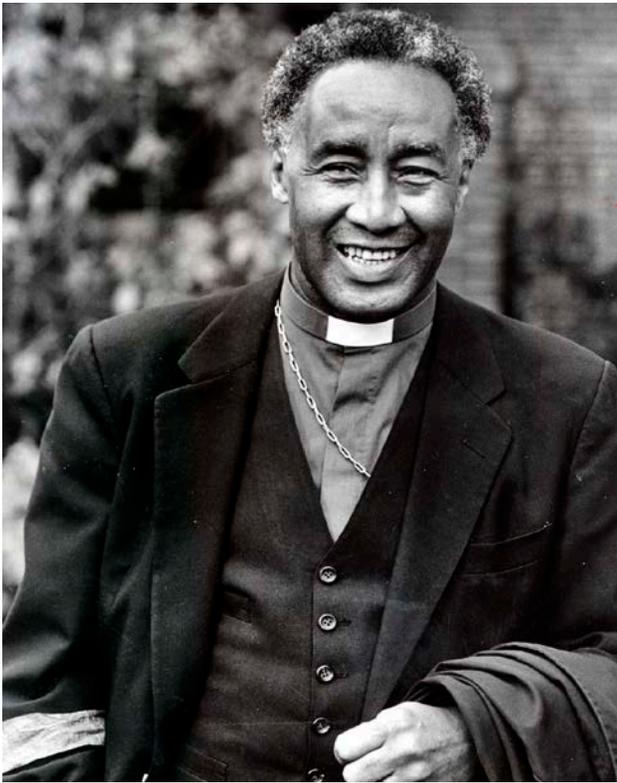
Media outlets ranging from Ebony and Essence to Newsweek and the New York Times have all recently sounded the alarm about the crisis facing African-American boys. The conditions surrounding their lives, described by Marian Wright Edelman as “a toxic cocktail of poverty, illiteracy, racial disparities, violence, massive incarceration, and family breakdown,” require an early intervention of the kind uniquely provided by BWS. Programs such as the My Brother’s Keeper initiative recognize these circumstances and work towards giving boys of color the chance to reach their full potential.

THE CHALLENGE

20% of adult residents in Wards 7 & 8 do not have a high school diploma, five times as many in Ward 3 and more than twice as many in Ward 2.

In 2014, the high school graduation rate for Ward 8 was 44%, while the national rate was 81%.

Only 17% of residents in Ward 7 and 10% of residents in Ward 8 hold Bachelor’s degrees compared to 47% for the District as a whole.

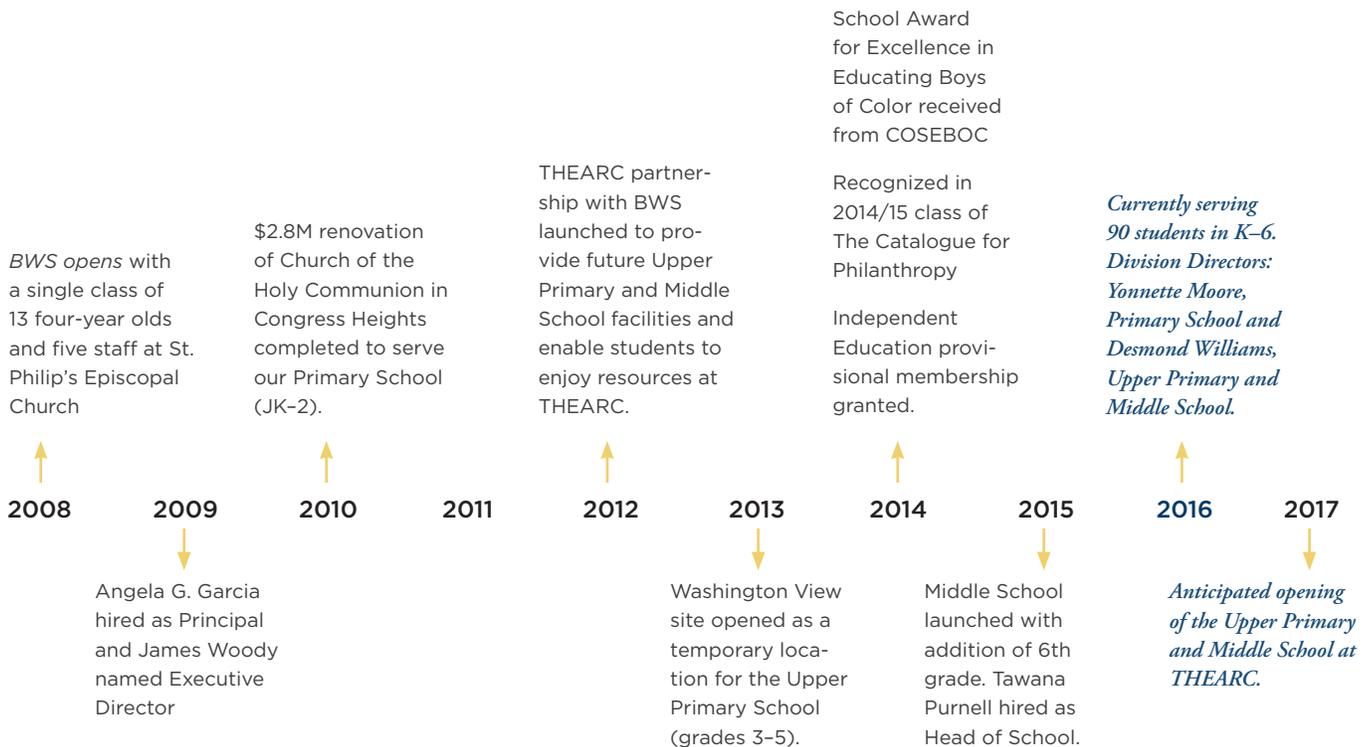


OUR FOUNDING INSPIRATION

The Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys celebrates the life and legacy of the extraordinary educator and priest who became the first African American Episcopal Bishop of Washington. Instrumental in the integration of independent schools in the District and committed to quality educational options for all children, Bishop Walker saw education as the vehicle through which people could be lifted out of poverty and despair. He did not accept that a lack of financial resources should prevent access to a high quality education. BWS connects John Walker’s personal attributes of honesty, respect, responsibility, and perseverance, and his fundamental work in education, social justice, and service to others with his abiding faith that an ambitious agenda is often not only the best—but the only—way forward.

Research shows that providing a quality elementary education will contribute to dramatically different outcomes than the statistics predict for boys in Wards 7 & 8.

BWS TIMELINE



“Philanthropic investments in strategies to address the myriad challenges confronting black males will help in turn ‘to lift all boats’ for underserved, vulnerable and marginalized people and will ensure a brighter, stronger and more equal and open society for us all.”

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

A MISSION TO CHANGE LIVES

BWS is an academically challenging tuition-free independent school, rooted in the traditions of Episcopal education; informed by current research on boys’ social and intellectual development; focused on a child-centered educational approach and the educational philosophy of Bishop John Thomas Walker. Welcoming boys of all faith traditions and working in partnership with parents, our mission is to foster the love of learning, intellectual curiosity, spiritual foundation, and moral character each student will need to achieve his full potential. By providing a stimulating and supportive learning environment that is child-centered and experiential, we are helping to eliminate the achievement gap between our students and their more affluent peers.

We will continue to grow until we reach 8th grade. Our K through 8th grade model will give the boys sufficient time within this nurturing and supportive community to develop the intellectual, emotional, and social skills required to be successful in top quality high schools and in their future lives.

BWS FAMILIES

The 44% of our student’s families who live below the federal poverty level have an average household income of a little over \$10,000 per year.

Average household income of a BWS family is \$30,741.

Over 70% of our students live in single parent households.



At BWS, we respect the infinite capacity of each child. We firmly believe that our investment in the education of the boys entrusted to our care will have positive ripple effects across their neighborhoods and our city.

As a result, our unique approach is built upon a series of underlying principles including attending to the whole child: active learning, perseverance, community, collaboration, social justice, intrinsic motivation, and deep understanding of content.

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR APPROACH IS ROOTED IN FOUR KEY ELEMENTS:

The tradition of Episcopal schools’ commitment to academic excellence

- We nurture spiritual growth in our students through chapel, religion classes, and service projects.
- We teach a rigorous core curriculum (literacy, math, social studies, and science) which is relevant to our students, hands on, and encourages critical thinking. Our holistic approach includes art, music, wellness, and character education.
- Creative and innovative teachers grounded in student-focused education through their training or work in renowned independent schools are critical to our approach.



Based on current research about African-American boys and their physical, cognitive, and behavioral development

- Our Lunch Buddies program provides a volunteer male role model for each class.
- Opportunities made available throughout the day for physical activity are critical to mental and physical development.
- Our responsive classroom approach fosters a sense of belonging, significance, and emotional safety.

Child-centered, experiential, and developmentally appropriate instruction

- Learning at BWS ignites and feeds our boys' intellectual curiosity.
- Project-based curriculum celebrates and honors research, plans, and the conversations that take place in the work process.
- Regular field trips expose our students to a wide array of enriching cultural, historical, and interactive learning opportunities.
- Pedagogically progressive, our curriculum is steeped in the tenets of experiential, authentic learning. Differentiated, developmentally sensitive instruction aims to reach the broad range of learners in our classrooms. Enhanced by environmental literacy and character education across the curriculum, impactful culturally relevant

topics, and a basic foundation in literacy and number sense, student learning is thoughtfully interpreted and meaningful.

A comprehensive network of support for our boys and their families.

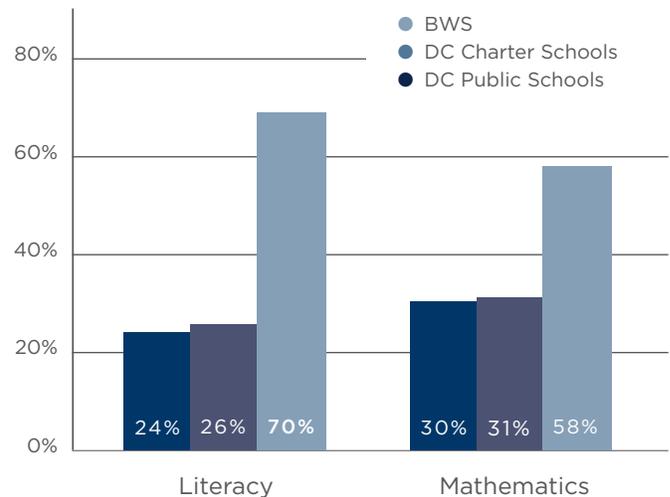
- We offer an extended day (7:30 am to 6 pm M-F), 3 nutritious meals daily (over 48,000 annually) and summer learning opportunities.
- After-school program activities include STEAM, homework help, and life skills through a partnership with The Fishing School.
- Parental involvement is critical to the success of our students and our school. The Parent Association hosts discussion group meetings focused on subjects ranging from raising academically and socially successful children to nutrition and stress management. We also require that our families volunteer at the school monthly. The involvement and shared responsibility between our teachers and parents strengthens our school community.
- In support of our families, Bishop Walker School facilitates children's health services, including hearing, speech, language, dental, and mental health screenings. We also support all of our families by providing a counselor and a community engagement coordinator through a collaboration with Samaritan Ministries of Greater Washington to connect them with community resources and parent education.

LIVING THE VISION

In the short time since our 2008 inception, we have made tremendous progress. We provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum for our students, a comprehensive network of social services support to our students' families, and skill-enhancing professional development for our teachers while emphasizing meaningful parental involvement. This fosters a school community that equips its students with the confidence, competence, and character that will enable them to achieve success and serve others throughout their lives.

While our results compare favorably to other schools available to our student population, we are not satisfied with the scores. We have implemented a departmentalized faculty structure which will enable our teachers to more fully develop a specialized curriculum to help our students achieve their academic best.

LEARNING OUTCOMES IN 3RD GRADERS



OUR APPROACH

We are an independent elementary school for boys only. Highly qualified teachers focus on the ways boys learn best and work with small classes of no more than 16, where active, experiential learning, and critical thinking are valued above merely memorizing facts and figures.

BWS selects exceptional teachers to work with our boys. Our lead teachers have a combined total of over 35 years of experience in the classroom, and 66% have a Master's degree. Each has demonstrated passion for our mission and is a skilled practitioner.



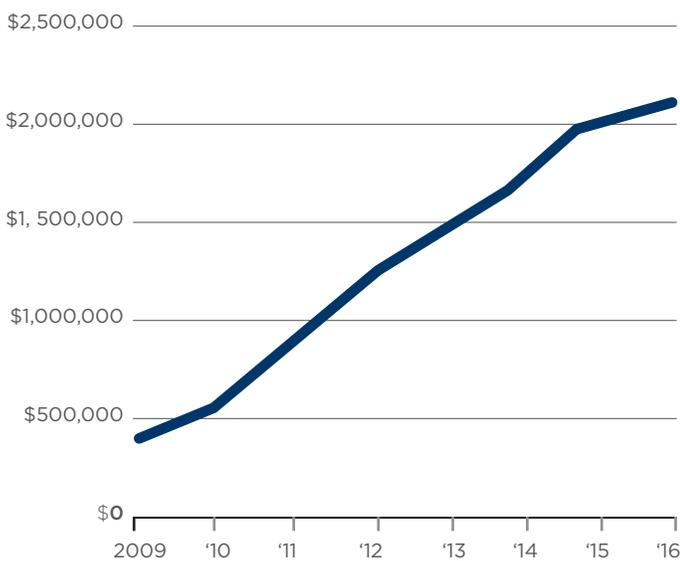
FUNDING THE BISHOP WALKER SCHOOL

Fundraising progress for BWS to-date has been gratifying. BWS has developed a base of over 2,500 donors, most continuing to support the school from year to year. 68 students were sponsored by gifts of \$18,000 or more in FY 2016. In our first eight years, we have raised nearly \$12 million, enough to cover annual operations and to fund—with support from the Episcopal Diocese of Washington—the renovation of space for our Primary campus at the Church of the Holy Communion in Congress Heights.

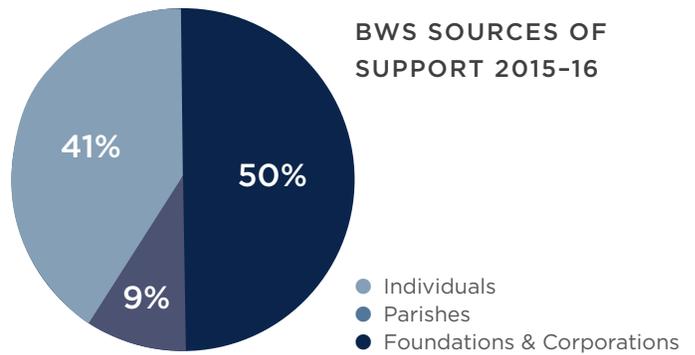
The BWS business model is built on the establishment of a solid base of support that grows as the school's size increases. To ensure the financial support that allows the school to be tuition-free, BWS follows a slow growth model of adding classes while fully funding the operating budget. To date, the school has substantially managed these increases. The chart below shows our progress. In order to meet the current year's operating budget, BWS must raise \$2.1 million.

BWS is not alone as a tuition-free private school, and indeed there are encouraging examples of other schools that are long established and successful. One of the oldest is Regis High School in New York, founded in 1914 as a Jesuit college-preparatory high school that accepts only students who cannot pay tuition and is now largely

BWS REVENUE GROWTH



*This chart does not include funds raised for capital needs.



supported by its successful alumni. St. Ignatius Loyola in Baltimore is 20 years old, has an operating budget of \$1.9 million, and recently completed a capital campaign of \$6 million. St. Ignatius has a stream of endowment income which provides 16% of their operating budget. Other successful models include the Washington Jesuit Academy in DC, founded in 2002 with an annual budget today of over \$3 million, and Epiphany School in Boston, founded in 1998 to serve students in Grades 5 through 8 and successfully raising over \$2.5 million annually.

Our diverse base of support includes individuals, corporations, foundations, and parishes. Several foundations and law firms support BWS by sponsoring a student. Parishes have increased their giving from less than \$15,000 four years ago to over \$140,000 in 2016. We have many gifts that are in the \$10,000 and above range. Our supporters are inspired to make a real difference in the lives of young boys who are living in poverty by providing a supportive and academically rigorous education that builds character from the inside out during their formative years. At the Bishop Walker School, our students are developing a love of learning and strength of character that will help them achieve their highest potential in life.

As an independent school, with no tuition revenues or government support, philanthropy must fully support the school each year. In order to fulfill our mission of offering an independent education to boys east of the Anacostia River, the Board realized that an inability to pay tuition could not be a bar to attendance.