

BISHOP JOHN T. WALKER SCHOOL FOR BOYS

A SCHOOL OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF WASHINGTON



CASE STATEMENT *FY 2014-15*

“Education is the door to opportunity.” BISHOP JOHN T. WALKER



“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 low-income communities east of the Anacostia River. BWS promotes the academic, spiritual, social and emotional growth of the boys through a holistic program. We recognize and celebrate boys in a nurturing and vibrant learning community. We strive to alter the educational and social trajectory of boys of limited economic means 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 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 community, parents of all cultural and racial backgrounds share many of the same aspirations for their children, but there are invisible barriers that 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. Low income African American children are more likely to enter school already behind. This problem is especially acute for young boys of color.

The impact of the challenges these boys face is startling:

- Roughly two thirds of black children live with only one parent. A father’s absence increases the risk of his child dropping out of school. Black children raised by single mothers are 75% more likely to drop out of school.
- While only 6% of the overall population, black males accounted for 43% of murder victims in 2011. Homicide is the leading cause of death for black males ages 10 to 24.
- In 2012, black males were 6 times more likely to be incarcerated than white males.

Media outlets ranging from Ebony and Essence to Newsweek 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,” requires an early intervention of the kind uniquely provided by BWS. The current presidential administration recognizes this perilous situation, and has launched the My Brother’s Keeper initiative to give boys of color the chance to reach their full potential.

THE CHALLENGE

Up to 63% of the children who live in Wards 7 and 8 live in poverty, compared to 30% citywide.

In 2012, the high school graduation rate for Ward 8 was 48%, while the national rate was 80%.

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 and 8.

BWS TIMELINE

BWS opens with a single class of 13 four-year olds and five staff (three teachers, Rev. Kwasi Thornell, Administrator and Chaplain, and James R. Woody, Director of External Operations) at St. Philip’s Episcopal Church in Anacostia

\$2.8M renovation of Church of the Holy Communion in Congress Heights completed to serve our Primary School (JK–2).

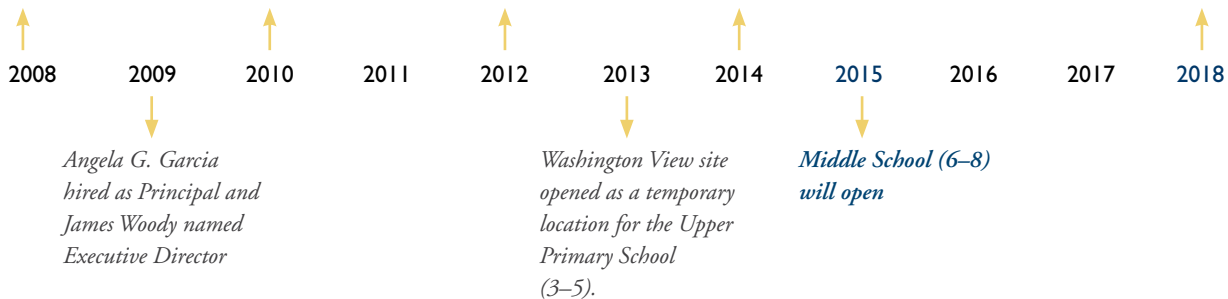
THEARC partnership with BWS launched to provide future Upper Primary and Middle School facilities and enable students to enjoy resources at THEARC.

Currently serving 85 students JK–5, by 2017 the school will educate 160 boys in grades JK–8.

Recognized in 2014/15 class of The Catalogue for Philanthropy

Independent Education provisional membership granted.

First class will graduate from BWS, the 8th grade class of 2018



“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 was launched in 2008 as the Episcopal Diocese of Washington’s response to the serious educational challenges facing African American boys in the low-income communities east of the Anacostia River. We are an academically rigorous 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 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 with the addition of a new grade annually through 8th grade. Our JK through 8th grade model will give the boys a full ten years 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.



A TRANSFORMATIONAL EDUCATION

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, and foreign language instruction.
- Creative and innovative teachers grounded in student-focused education through their training or work in renowned independent schools are critical to our approach.
- We seek to establish the roots of social justice by nurturing empathy in students. BWS was one of five founding members of the coalition which brought the Roots of Empathy program to Washington, DC.



Based on current research about boys and their cognitive and social development

- A member of the IBSC (International Boys' School's Coalition), we are currently participating in an action research project titled Boys As Makers, a technology-focused extension of project-based education to explore the learning that accompanies the process of making.
- Our Lunch Buddies program provides a consistent volunteer male role model for each class.
- Opportunities made available throughout the day for physical activity are critical to mental and physical development.

Child-centered, experiential and developmentally appropriate instruction

- Learning at BWS ignites and feeds the 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.

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

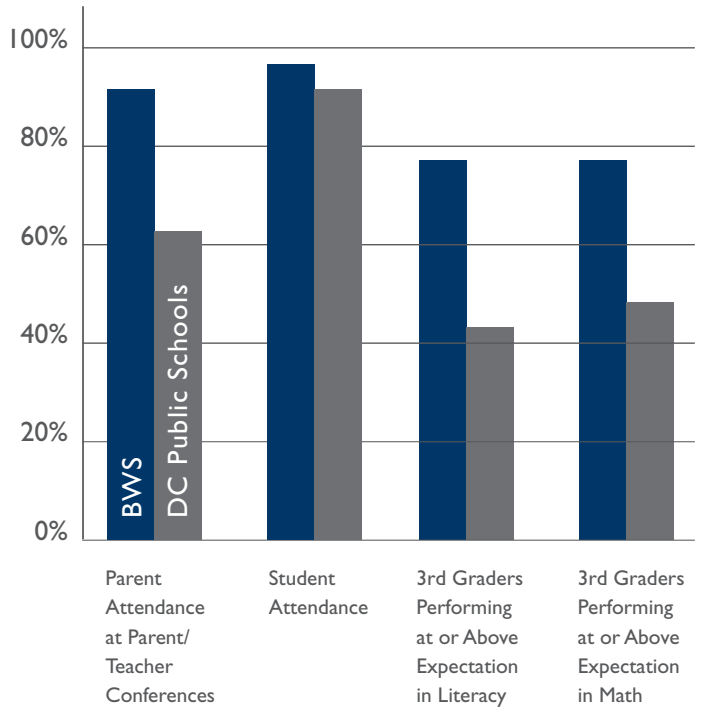
- We offer an extended day (7:30 am to 6 pm M-F), 3 nutritious meals daily (over 38,000) and summer learning opportunities.
- After school program activities include STEM, yoga, African dance and drumming, lacrosse and art through a partnership with Life Pieces to Masterpieces.
- Parental involvement is critical to the success of our students and our school. The Parent Association hosts monthly 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 Family and Community Caseworker to connect them with community resources and parent education.



A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

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.

PROGRAM SUCCESSES



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 seven lead teachers have a combined total of over 40 years of experience in the classroom, and all have a Master's degree. Several of our teachers have come to us after completing highly respected teacher training programs such as the Shady Hill Teacher Training Course in Cambridge, Massachusetts where they receive training in both the philosophy and practice of teaching.

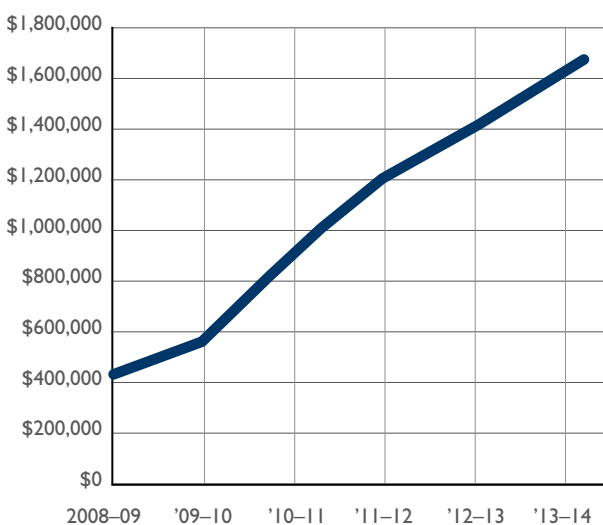
FUNDING THE BISHOP WALKER SCHOOL

Fundraising progress for BWS to-date has been gratifying. BWS has developed a base of over 1,200 donors, most continuing to support the school from year to year. 47 students were sponsored by gifts of \$18,000 or more in FY 2014. In our first six years, we have raised over \$8.8 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.

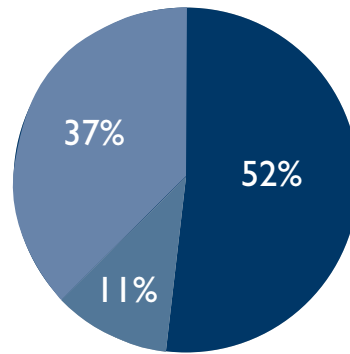
The BWS business model is built on the establishment of a solid base of support that grows as the school's size increases. To ensure the financial support that allows the school to be tuition-free, BWS follows a slow growth model of adding one class and fully funding the operating budget each year. To 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 \$1,938,446.

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 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

BWS REVENUE GROWTH



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



BWS SOURCES OF SUPPORT 2013-14

- Individuals
- Parishes
- Foundations & Corporations

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 \$100,000 in 2014. 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. By offering this program 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.