

JOSEPH C. BRISCOE ACADEMY

**ANNUAL
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL
REPORT
SY 2020-2021**

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ABOUT JOSEPH C. BRISCOE ACADEMY

Joseph C. Briscoe Academy (JCBA) is a holistic community school serving students in grades 6-12. We are a special education placement school providing a menu of targeted supports, including a small student-to-teacher ratio, intensive social work and psychology services, and a focus on social-emotional learning. In addition to standard academics, Joseph C. Briscoe Academy students learn coping strategies, emotional regulation, and skills for daily living. Our ultimate goal is to prepare our students to transition back into a traditional learning environment, as well as to graduate from the school system fully equipped to enter the workforce or post-secondary education.



2020-2021

PUSHING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

This school year has been a lesson in flexibility, adaptability, and creative problem-solving. JCBA began the 2020-2021 school year with full-scale virtual learning, a format of instruction that brought forth unique opportunities to reach students and families, eliminating barriers such as transportation. However, it also highlighted socioeconomic disparities like never before, and saw school staff working harder than ever to provide families with internet access, food, work packets, tech support, and more.

In November, we began opening up our physical doors to a few students, and we worked diligently to ensure balanced instruction and attention was provided simultaneously to both in-person and virtual students.

As we continued to welcome more students back to our building, communication and collaboration became paramount. The JCBA team sought to address student attendance barriers and meet their health and social needs. We delivered groceries, led donation drives, made home visits and countless phone calls to parents, planned both in-person and virtual engagement activities, and so much more. Throughout everything - the PPE, social distancing, Zoom challenges, internet outages, and all - we remained committed to building positive relationships with our students and families. We are happy and humbled to say that our efforts have not gone unnoticed, as highlighted by our 100% satisfaction rating in this year's End of Year Baltimore City Public Schools family survey!

While this certainly wasn't the ideal year to serve as JCBA's initiation into the community school strategy, ultimately the challenges underscored the importance and value of being a community school. By building relationships with stakeholders, helping students and families overcome obstacles, and monitoring ongoing needs and assets, Joseph C. Briscoe Academy is becoming a stronger school, and our students stronger people. We look forward to continuing the work.

Year in Review

DATA SNAPSHOT

12,715 pounds of food distributed



Bags of groceries ready for distribution at our monthly pantry in partnership with the Maryland Food Bank

73% families receiving at least one resource or service (food, school supplies, coats, referrals for programming, etc.),

14 partnerships utilized

\$700+ received in monetary and in-kind donations of school supplies, holiday gifts, food, hygiene items, and more

8 college/career-focused workshops and events provided

100% of staff receiving at least one training in positive school climate practices

Hygiene items and menstrual products available to students and families courtesy of I Support the Girls



Joseph C. Briscoe Academy's Peace Garden, a project started with a grant last school year and completed this school year with the help of students and staff

Thanksgiving meal bags prepared for families in need using in-kind and monetary donations from our partners and supporters



Collaboration is Key

COMMITTEES

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Community School Coordinator led or participated in the following committees:

Attendance Committee - Member

Objective: To address attendance concerns and barriers by analyzing attendance data, planning incentives, and aligning to district attendance protocol.

Clinician Team - Member

Objective: To provide wraparound health and social supports to students and families in need of mental health services, case management, and other specialized supports.

Family and Community Engagement Committee - Lead

Objective: To increase family engagement and community outreach through family-centered events and initiatives and community partnerships.

School Family Council - Chair

Objective: To bring together all stakeholder communities (staff, parents, community members, etc.) to support school goals around attendance, student achievement, behavior, climate, and family and community engagement.

Social Media Committee - Member

Objective: To increase social media outreach, share school updates and events with the greater Baltimore community, and promote a positive image of the school.

PTO - Acting secretary

Objective: To provide a space for parents to build community, share power with school staff, and get involved with school initiatives.

ILT - Member

Objective: To ensure the implementation of effective instruction and support the goals outlined in the annual School Performance Plan.

It Takes a Village

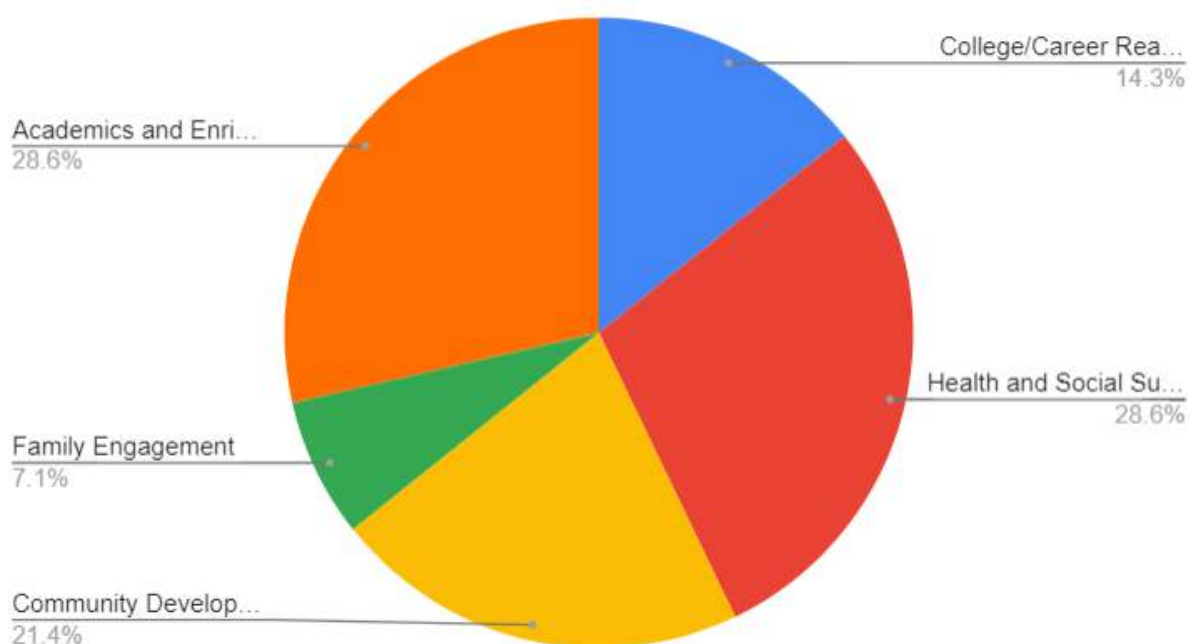
PARTNERS

Whether they provided strategic, ongoing support, a one-time service, or their presence and collaboration, we are indebted to our partners for helping to make this school year a success.

SY 2020-2021 School Partners (alphabetical order)

Bridging Gaps Through Positive Solutions
 Children's Mental Health Matters
 Coleman Events
 Heritage Crossing Resident Association
 Holistic Life Foundation
 I Support the Girls
 Maryland Food Bank
 Metropolitan Community Church of Baltimore
 Positive Schools Center - Intensive Climate Cohort
 Positive Schools Center - Next Generation Scholars
 Seton Hill Neighborhood Association
 Team Up for 1
 University of Maryland, Baltimore Writing Center
 University of Maryland Extension, Expanded Food and Nutrition
 Education Program (UME-EFNEP)

A breakdown of partnerships by need fulfilled:



Putting in the Work

HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESSES

Family Engagement

During Joseph C. Briscoe Academy's very first needs assessment in 2020, family engagement was lifted up across all stakeholders as a priority need for our school. Participants noted a culture of contacting families solely for disciplinary reasons, a lack of parental involvement, and the need for a strong School Family Council (SFC) and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Throughout the 2020-2021, our Community School Coordinator, administrators, and other school staff collaborated to address this need in various ways:

- Hosting several in-person and virtual events, such as a drive-by Meet and Greet, October candy giveaway, Academic Enrichment Night, and a Mother's Day Sip and Paint
- Reviving the school's PTO and hosting monthly virtual meetings
- Communicating regularly with parents via call, text, email, social media and GroupMe for check-ins, surveys, and invitations to events in addition to student-related matters
- Starting a school newsletter that was sent to families monthly and contained school updates, important reminders, upcoming events, and more
- Highlighting a Parent of the Month each month, and rewarding them with a \$10 Amazon gift card and recognition in our newsletter and on social media
- Maintaining a robust SFC and holding monthly virtual meetings open to all families and community members

In the 2021-2022 school year and beyond, we look forward to building upon these foundational efforts to continue improving family involvement and deepening our relationships with students and their caregivers.

College and Career Readiness

As a school serving the high school population, college and career preparedness is a crucial component of our work with students. This school year, we partnered with Next Generation Scholars to provide a series of career preparation workshops for our 11th and 12th grade students, in which they practiced skills such as job searching, writing cover letters and resumes, and maintaining professional attire and speech during interviews. We also partnered with the Writing Center at the University of Maryland, Baltimore to provide a two-part resume workshop open to all of our high school students, where they had the opportunity to receive personalized feedback on their drafted resumes. Staff along with the Community School Coordinator hosted an in-house YouthWorks application session, where students were offered 1:1 help with applying for YouthWorks and gathering the necessary documentation.

In addition to career preparation, we invited our 11th and 12th grade students to attend a virtual college visit with the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC).

As we brought these experiences to our students, they continued to receive guidance counseling and exposure to our Culinary Arts classes and Building & Construction CTE program.

("Highlighting Successes" continued on next page)

Putting in the Work

HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESSES

Health and Social Supports

There is a saying in education that declares, "Students must Maslow before they can Bloom" - essentially, students must have their basic needs met before they can be expected to navigate academic achievement. This year at Joseph C. Briscoe Academy, we worked diligently to adhere to this philosophy by bringing in a variety of health and social supports. With collaboration between the Community School Coordinator, the clinician team, and other school staff, we:

- Registered as a school distribution site for the Maryland Food Bank, providing our families and community members with free groceries each month
- Hosted a school supply drive, a Thanksgiving meal drive, and partnered with Team Up for 1 to host a holiday gift drive, all of which successfully solicited in-kind and monetary donations from our neighboring community associations, churches, and individual community supporters
- Assisted families with navigating multiple social services as needed, including Medical Assistance applications, P-EBT troubleshooting, housing assistance, obtaining government-issued identification, COVID-19 emergency assistance debit cards, etc.
- Referred families as needed to resources such as mental health services, the Baltimore Furniture Bank, and tutoring and mentoring programs
- Connected with I Support the Girls to provide a wealthy supply of menstrual products, hygiene items, and undergarments for our students and families
- Participated in Mental Health Month and Children's Mental Health Week as a school champion with the Children's Mental Health Matters campaign, through which we provided mental health education and resources for students and caregivers as well as practice with coping skills

LOOKING AHEAD

As we move into the 2021-2022 school year and our second full year as a community school, Joseph C. Briscoe Academy looks forward to growing our community school strategy to more effectively and deeply address the needs of the school community. We will explore new ways of building authentic relationships with families and inviting them to act as decision-makers in their child's education. We will bring in additional partnerships to expose students to enrichment activities such as arts, STEM, and athletics. We will create a resource closet filled with clothing, shoes, hygiene products, PPE, household appliances, non-perishable food, and other tangible resources available to all students, families, and staff. We will continue to receive training around restorative practices and positive school climate, and put that training into action on a daily basis through restorative circles and virtues language. We will embody our school theme of "Positive Minds with Positive Purposes" and continue to make Joseph C. Briscoe Academy a school where our students, families, and staff are equipped for success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special note of gratitude for all of those who cultivated Joseph C. Briscoe's inaugural year as a community school:

Tamika R. Daniels, Principal

Anisa Stubbs, Assistant Principal

Theodore Spain, Assistant Principal

Kamala Carnes, Former Principal

The JCBA School Family Council

The JCBA Clinician Team

The JCBA Family and Community Engagement Committee

The JCBA Social Media Team

The JCBA Attendance Committee

Every one of the 50+ JCBA staff members who showed up for our students above and beyond the call of duty

Our partners and community champions

Shantay McKinily, Executive Director, Positive Schools Center

Oprah Keyes, LCSW-C, Assistant Director of Community Schools, Positive Schools Center

Donna Greaves, Associate Director, Positive Schools Center

Emily Ames-Messinger, LMSW, Assistant Director for the Intensive Climate Cohort, Positive Schools Center

Andre Turner, Senior Program Trainer for the Intensive Climate Cohort, Positive Schools Center

UMB Social Work Community Outreach Service (SWCOS) staff

Baltimore City Public Schools Family and Community Engagement Office

The Community School Coordinators/Site Specialists across the district, for sharing their knowledge and resources

Everyone who believes in the mission and vision of the community school strategy

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