



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**Cultural Competency In and Out of the Classroom**

**Tuesday, August 4, 2015**

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## I. SUMMARY

Breakthrough Charter Schools is accepting proposals to design, develop, and facilitate a keynote training session with multiple breakout sessions on cultural competency at the network's annual professional development day. This will be a concept to completion production. The purpose of this RFP is to provide an overview of the network's anticipated needs, proposal submission details, and criteria guidelines to ensure fair evaluation for all candidates.

## II. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS

This is an open and competitive process. Proposals received after 12:00pm/noon EST, Friday, June 26, 2015, will not be considered and will be returned unopened. If you wish to submit alternative objectives/suggestions, please do so. The price you quote should be inclusive. If your price excludes certain fees or charges, you must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees. If the execution of work to be performed requires the hiring of sub-contractors, you must clearly state this in your proposal. Sub-contractors must be identified, and the work they will perform must be defined. In your proposal, please provide the name and contact information for each sub-contractor. Breakthrough Charter Schools will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of sub-contractors; however, we retain the right to refuse the sub-contractors you have selected. Provisions of this RFP and the contents of the successful responses are considered available for inclusion in final contractual obligations.

## III. GENERAL

**Objective/Purpose:** To provide a ninety (90) minute keynote session that provides an introduction to cultural competency and its importance in the work at Breakthrough Schools. Following the keynote session, staff will have the opportunity to continue their knowledge-building in cultural competence through their selection of one two (2) hour break-out session based on their racial identity development skills (self-identified or based on self-interest). Example breakout sessions may include:

- Valuing Diversity. Accepting and respecting differences—different cultural backgrounds and customs, different ways of communicating, and different traditions and values.
- Being Culturally Self-Aware. Culture—the sum total of an individual's experiences, knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and interests—shapes educators' sense of who they are and where they fit in their family, school, community, and society.
- Dynamics of Difference. Knowing what can go wrong in cross-cultural communication and how to respond to these situations.
- Knowledge of Students' Culture. Educators must have some base knowledge of their students' culture so that student behaviors can be understood in their proper cultural context.

Following the break-out sessions, a select number of staff will have the opportunity to share their key take-aways during a 30 (thirty) minute debrief and closing session back with the larger group.

These differentiated sessions will provide foundation building cultural competency training for the staff within the Breakthrough Schools network.

**Audience:** The audience for the keynote session will be roughly 400 staff of both instructional and operations support professionals. Roughly 250 instructional staff will be attending the breakout and debrief sessions.

**Key Dates:** Tuesday, August 4, 2015 during our annual network professional development day at Notre Dame College in South Euclid, Ohio.

## IV. BUDGET

Please provide several cost proposals to accomplish the objectives detailed in this request for proposal. Breakthrough Charter Schools has allocated a portion of the budget for this professional development; however, the budget is limited, and cost and quality will be considered when evaluating proposals.

## V. BACKGROUND

**History:** Breakthrough Charter Schools (“Breakthrough”) is a nationally recognized network of high-performing, free, non-selective public charter schools in Cleveland, Ohio. Our mission is to develop a growing network of distinctive school options that prepare Cleveland area students for success in life. Their schools have been recognized as the top-performing network of charter schools in Cleveland.

Breakthrough was formed in 2010 by four existing, successful public charter schools -- Citizens Academy, Entrepreneurship Prep, Village Prep, and The Intergenerational School. Over the past five years, we’ve grown by replicating each of the original school models and by adding Citizens Leadership Academy, a new expeditionary learning-based middle school model. Our work, in partnership with CMSD and others, will help the city reach a tipping point towards providing a high-quality education for children in the city of Cleveland. Our network of schools currently serves over 3,000 students with a strategic plan to grow to serve more than 6,000 children across 19 schools by 2019.

Our students are predominantly 90% African-American with 87% free and reduced lunch and are on average, our outperforming their peers across the city in every subject, and closing the *Achievement Gap* through the hard work and dedication they demonstrate every day.

In 2014, our network developed a diversity and inclusion statement that speaks to our commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive culture for our board leadership, staff, students and our community. The language of our statement is as follows:

*Breakthrough Schools Network, we embrace the power of diversity and inclusion.*

*We believe that a diverse, inclusive learning environment fosters success in educational achievement and performance outcomes, drives innovative thinking, enhances our service to stakeholders, and fosters a workplace where all employees, students and families are respected and valued.*

*We are committed to pursuing the goal of a culturally competent workforce that is reflective and /or sensitive to the communities we serve.*

In addition, as an outcome of our strategic plan, in 2014, we developed a set of network-wide values that guides the actions of all stakeholders in our network as we strive for excellence in preparing our students for success in life. One of our five values is, “We embrace our diversity”, and a description of this value is as follows.

*Diversity is in our DNA, as exemplified by our distinct educational models. We embrace the diverse life experiences, cultural backgrounds, skills, and perspectives of our students, their families, and our staff. Heritage is a meaningful part of a student's education and identity, and families are our partners in maintaining the high expectations that are critical for our students' success.*

*Developing cultural competency that helps us be effective beyond our comfort zone is critical for success in a diverse global economy. We believe in focused training for our staff, especially those with limited experience working in an urban environment, and for our students, many of whom will need new skills when they seek to join communities that are different from the ones they know. Embracing diversity is a great strength of our community.*

As a result of this commitment to diversity and inclusion, in 2014, during our network's first professional development day, we offered a voluntary, cultural competency session that covered the following items: personal and group identity, understanding the language of bias, examining bias, challenging bias, and classroom resources on these topics. About 20 staff members attended this session, and it received some of the highest feedback responses from session participants.

## VI. SERVICE AND WORK REQUIREMENTS

It is our intention to offer a keynote cultural competency session for all staff during our network's 2015 professional development day that will be the foundation for continued development throughout the 2015-2016 academic school year.

### Overview:

When applied to education, cultural competence centers on the skills and knowledge to effectively serve students from diverse cultures. Cultural competence is the ability to successfully teach students who come from a culture or cultures other than our own. It entails developing certain personal and interpersonal awareness and sensitivities, understanding certain bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching and culturally responsive teaching. Additionally, in order to cultivate a classroom of culturally competent individuals, teachers must facilitate learning in which students explore and understand their own cultural identity and grow to love and appreciate who they are and where they come from. Yet, their ability to love themselves and love others depends on their own critical understanding of the world around them, so critical consciousness becomes a central aspect of any pursuit of culturally responsive teaching and critical capacity. As a result of this training session:

### Participants will know that:

- Culture and the lenses through which we see others across lines of difference impact our perceptions and behaviors. In order to truly influence students' academic achievement and the many different definitions of success, as educators, we must confront our own attitudes, values, and biases that influence students, as well as foster a classroom environment where students can identify and explore their own identities, strengths, and values.
- In order to provide a culturally responsive education, adults within the learning community must first uncover and identify their personal attitudes related to the race, culture, and language experiences students bring to the classroom in order to begin to expand their understanding of how to bridge the tension students often experience when navigating different their different identities at school and at home. Understand how to leverage the different strengths that their students bring to the classroom environment.

- This training will provide a foundational step towards creating a culturally inclusive learning environment for our students and cultural competent workforce for our staff.

### Participants will be able to:

- Articulate the impact their archetypes of success and successful students may have on their classroom practices and explicitly call out the role that race plays (their own and that of their students) in that.
- Practice courageous conversations about the impact of race and ethnicity on academic success in order to develop competency in facilitating conversations about race in the classroom.
- Think about and plan how to use the knowledge gained to positively impact a broader definition of student success.
- Sustain conversations that will foster a culturally responsive and inclusive learning and work environment.

## VII. SUBMISSION STEPS

Proposals will only be accepted electronically. All proposals must be submitted to [dharrison@breakthroughschools.org](mailto:dharrison@breakthroughschools.org) by Friday, June 26, 2015.