



**NEW SCHOOLS
FOR ALABAMA**

2022 ANNUAL REPORT





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WHY WE'RE HERE

Too often in Alabama, a student's race and zip code dictate their educational opportunities.



ALABAMA RANKS

40th

IN THE NATION ON
STANDARDIZED TESTS.

36,000

Students in failing schools in Alabama

¹CREDO, Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford. *Urban Charter School Study*.

²Shakeel, M.D., & Peterson, P.E. (2021). Charter Schools Show Steeper Upward Trend in Student Achievement than District Schools: First nationwide study of trends shows large gains for African Americans at charters. *Education Next*, 21(1), 40–47.

³DeAngelis, C., Wolf, P., Syffestad, C., Maloney, D., & May, J. (2021). *Making it Count: The Productivity of Public Charter Schools in Seven U.S. Cities. School Choice Demonstration Project*, University of Arkansas Department of Education Reform.

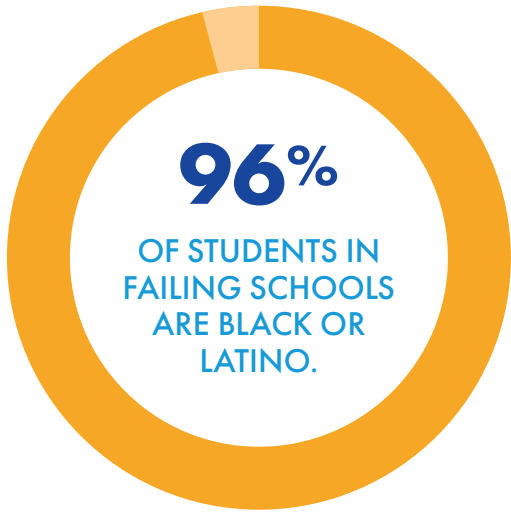


1 IN 10 ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS DO MATH ON GRADE LEVEL.



1 IN 3 ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS READ ON GRADE LEVEL.

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS READ ON GRADE LEVEL.



96%
OF STUDENTS IN FAILING SCHOOLS ARE BLACK OR LATINO.

1/2 YEAR

IN LEARNING

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS ATTENDING CHARTER SCHOOLS GAINED THE EQUIVALENT OF AN **EXTRA HALF-YEAR OF LEARNING** OVER THEIR NON-CHARTER PEERS.²



DISTRICT SCHOOLS

CHARTER SCHOOLS

43% GREATER RETURN ON INVESTMENT

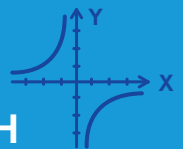
CHARTER SCHOOLS HAD A **43% GREATER RETURN ON INVESTMENT** THAN DISTRICT SCHOOLS **IN MATH AND READING**, AVERAGING 6 POINTS HIGHER ON NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS PER \$1,000 SPENT THAN DISTRICT SCHOOLS.³

44 DAYS

BLACK STUDENTS ATTENDING CHARTER SCHOOLS GAINED THE EQUIVALENT OF **44 EXTRA DAYS IN READING** OVER THEIR NON-CHARTER PEERS.¹

BLACK STUDENTS ATTENDING CHARTER SCHOOLS GAINED THE EQUIVALENT OF **59 EXTRA DAYS IN MATH** OVER THEIR NON-CHARTER PEERS.¹

59 EXTRA DAYS IN MATH



WHAT WE'RE DOING

Students mired in failing schools can no longer wait for their existing options to improve. To help rectify the scourge of educational inequity in Alabama, we are jumpstarting the growth of new, innovative, tuition-free educational options with a focus on serving under-resourced communities.

CHARTER SCHOOLS IN ALABAMA

The following schools are currently open or slated to open by 2026.

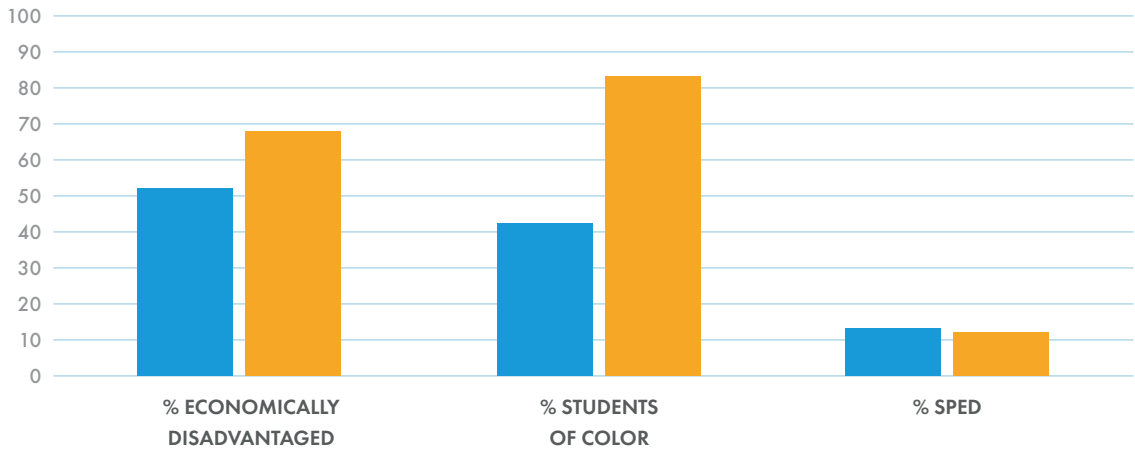
SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES SERVED	YEAR OPEN
ACCEL Day & Evening Academy	Mobile	6–12	2017–18
Alabama Aerospace & Aviation High School	Bessemer	9–10	2022–23
Breakthrough Charter School	Marion	K–12	2021–22
Empower	Bessemer	K–2 and 6–7	2022–23
Freedom Preparatory Academy	Birmingham	K–8	2024–25
i3 Academy	Birmingham	K–8	2020–21
Independence Prep	Fairfield	K–8	2025–2026
Iron City Business Academy	Birmingham	6–12	2024–2025
LEAD Academy	Montgomery	K–12	2019–20
Legacy Prep	Birmingham	K–12	2019–20
LIFE Academy	Montgomery	K–8	2021–22
Magic City Acceptance Academy	Birmingham	6–12	2021–22
Montgomery Education Foundation, Davis Elementary Conversion Charter	Montgomery	K–5	2021–22
Phalen Leadership Academies, Bellingrath Middle	Montgomery	6–8	2022–23
Phalen Leadership Academies, Nixon Elementary	Montgomery	PK–5	2022–23
University Charter School	Livingston	K–12	2018–19

ENROLLMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

While charter schools are rapidly expanding across the state, ensuring that more students have access to quality, tuition-free options, we are equally encouraged to see that charter schools are serving the children who need them the most. The following table represents a breakdown of key student demographic data among charter schools as compared to the state average.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS STATE V. CHARTERS

■ STATE ■ CHARTERS



STUDENTS ENROLLED
IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

5,632

▲ 2,300 SINCE 2021

The movement is
continuing to *grow*.

ALL ABOUT NSFA

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to support the growth of excellent charter schools in Alabama to ensure that every child has access to a quality public education.





OUR CORE VALUES



Equity

We work to ensure that all kids in Alabama have equitable access to a quality public education.



Quality

We are committed to advocating and supporting the development of quality in charter schools, including assurance of quality in the charter school applicants, operators, and authorizers, and seek to be a respected resource of quality guidance, assistance, policy and practice support, as well as quality information for all stakeholders.



Innovation

We value and embrace bold ideas, leading with a focus on what is possible and taking risks to challenge the status quo to significantly improve student outcomes when it does not meet the diverse needs of all kids.



Transparency

We are committed to holding high, research-based expectations for potential applicants and current grantees while providing candid feedback to groups in need of improvement.



Collaboration

We actively seek new and embrace existing relationships to facilitate a deep collaboration between school systems, students and families, business communities, nonprofits, and other organizations to foster innovative solutions to educational challenges.

ALL ABOUT NSFA

OUR WORK

To accomplish our mission, we concentrate our work on four distinct areas of service—we call these our *Strategic Pillars*.

1. NEW SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

We recruit high-quality charter school operators from out-of-state and develop homegrown leaders to build great schools throughout Alabama.



2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

We provide charter school applicants, operators, and authorizers with expert guidance on technical needs such as developing an application, reviewing an application, finding a facility, managing the back-office, and more.





3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We ensure that parents and communities have access to clear information about school quality and the benefits that other options may present.

4. POLICY ADVANCEMENT

We work with policymakers and administrative agencies to ensure that the regulatory landscape is supportive of high-quality charter schools.





ALL ABOUT NSFA

OUR GOALS

- By 2023–2024, we will have supported the launch of at least **15 new high-quality charter schools in Alabama**, at least 75% of which will serve **60% or greater economically disadvantaged students.**
- By 2023–2024, we will have provided **expert technical assistance to every charter school and charter school authorizer in the state.**

OUR BOARD

BOARD MEMBER

COMPANY

Khadijah Abdullah

Shipt

Dave Borden

Aldridge, Borden & Co.

Carol Butler

Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation

Nick Gaede

Bainbridge, Mims, Rogers & Smith

Brian Hamilton

Trillion Communications Corp.

Charles Jackson

Auburn University - Montgomery

Maria Kennedy

The Daniel Foundation of Alabama

Miho Kubagawa

StepMojo

Jan Miller

University of West Alabama

Jeremiah Newell

ACCEL Day & Evening Academy

Richard Perry

DuPont

JJ Wedgworth*

University Charter School

*EX-OFFICIO

OUR TEAM



ShaElla Askew
Social Media Associate



Tyler Barnett
Chief Executive Officer



Jackie Bretl
Director of Leader Development



Mike Brown
Chief Schools Officer



Melanie Haynes
Director of Accounting



Jane Ivey
Special Projects Manager



Michelle Locke
Finance Manager



Candie Mitchell-Price
Director of Community Engagement



Russell Raney
Chief Finance Officer



Chris Reynolds
Senior Advisor



Gail Smitherman
Senior Accountant



Adrienne Stallworth
Accountant



Natalie Tucker
Chief of Staff

OUR GRANTEES

BY THE NUMBERS

2 Grant Programs / **3** Years in Motion / **16** Grant Awards Made



\$18.32
MILLION IN TOTAL
GRANTS
AWARDED

\$17.5 M IN CHARTER SCHOOL
PROGRAM GRANTS

In 2019, New Schools for Alabama was awarded a \$25 million US Department of Education Grant. This funding allows us to support the growth of at least 15 high-quality charter schools by awarding startup grants of up to \$1.5 million each on a competitive basis.

To date, we have made 16 awards for a total of \$18.32 million in funding for excellent new charter schools serving economically disadvantaged students in Alabama. The following represents our grantees to date:



SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES SERVED	YEAR OPEN	AWARD
i3 Academy	Birmingham	K-5	2020-21	\$1,500,000
Davis Elementary Conversion Charter	Montgomery	K-5	2021-22	\$1,500,000
ACCEL Day & Evening Academy Middle School	Mobile	6-8	2021-22	\$1,500,000
Breakthrough Charter School	Marion	K-12	2021-22	\$1,500,000
LIFE Academy	Montgomery	K-8	2021-22	\$1,500,000
Magic City Acceptance Academy	Birmingham	6-12	2021-22	\$1,500,000
Empower Community School	Bessemer	K-8	2022-23	\$1,500,000
Bellingrath Middle Conversion Charter	Montgomery	6-8	2022-23	\$1,500,000
Aerospace & Aviation High School	Bessemer	9-12	2022-23	\$1,500,000
Freedom Preparatory Academy	Birmingham	K-8	2024-25	\$1,500,000
Nixon Elementary Conversion Charter	Montgomery	K-5	2022-23	\$1,500,000

NSFA LEADING THE WAY



We recruit, select, and train **high-caliber individuals** as they launch **new, high-quality charter schools** around the state. Through our fellowship programs, we nurture **highly effective academic, ethical, and engaging leaders.**



Our commitment to nurturing a high-quality Alabama charter sector allows NSFA to provide school founders **full-service support** with the application and startup process along with **expert training** on research-based skills aligned to leadership competencies.

SCHOOL FOUNDERS FELLOWSHIP

This program is:

- full-time
- full stipend
- for selected leaders positioned to submit a quality charter application

Over the course of a School Founders fellowship, leaders will receive a combination of:

- intensive coaching
- cohort-based workshops
- visits to high-performing, innovative schools
- leadership development focused on character and instructional leadership, supporting highly effective academic, ethical and engaging leaders
- 342 hours of in-person professional development aligned to support the technical and adaptive competencies needed for a successful launch

2022 SCHOOL FOUNDERS FELLOWS

**LaDedra
D. Frazier**
*Montgomery, AL
Cohort 1*



**Miriam
Moore**
*Birmingham, AL
Cohort 2*



**Dr.
Mary C.
Holloway**
*Montgomery, AL
Cohort 1*



**Dr.
Calandra
Sales**
*Birmingham, AL
Cohort 2*



SCHOOL FOUNDERS PROGRAM



The School Founders Program is a highly selective, yearlong fellowship for aspiring charter school founders in Alabama. We recruit, select, and train high-caliber individuals—preparing them to submit charter applications during their fellowship year—and ultimately positioning them to launch new, high-quality charter schools around the state.

Fellows receive hands-on development in the following mission-critical areas:

1. School Design
2. Character Development
3. Instructional Leadership
4. Organizational Leadership
5. Operations & Finance
6. Board Development

COMMITMENT	PROGRAM LENGTH	STIPEND	COHORT
Full-time	12 months	\$115,000	Four

Our commitment to nurturing a high-quality Alabama charter sector allows NSFA to provide school founders full-service assistance with the application and startup process, along with expert training on research-based skills aligned to leadership competencies. We focus on developing our leaders in six mission-critical areas: **school design, curriculum evaluation and selection, instructional development, organizational leadership, operations and finance, and board development.**

RECRUITMENT GOALS

- Engage an applicant pool where **90% of candidates are Alabama natives, residents, or have communal ties** to proposed neighborhoods.
- **Actively engage 30 potential candidates**, resulting in 24 submitted applications.
- Continue to recruit an applicant pool where **75% of leaders reflect the racial demographic of their proposed school.**
- **100% of Founding Fellows will have Executive/School-based leadership experience.**

ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

- **100% of Founding Fellows will successfully complete the 12-month fellowship** and submit a high-quality charter application.
- **100% of Founding Fellows will receive charter approval** from the local or state authorizer within 12 months of submission.
- **100% of Founding Fellows will launch within 12 months** of receiving an approved charter.



ASPIRING FOUNDERS PROGRAM

ASPIRING FOUNDERS FELLOWSHIP

Our *Aspiring Founders fellowship* is a *new* addition to NSFA’s leadership development offerings. The Aspiring Founders fellowship identifies up-and-coming educational leaders who, with an additional year of training, demonstrate the potential to submit a high-quality charter application within 3 years. This program creates a leadership reserve in Alabama while deepening the knowledge and skill sets of the next generation of school founders.

COMMITMENT	PROGRAM LENGTH	STIPEND	COHORT
Part-time; fellows remain in their current roles	12 months	\$10,000	Four

Aspiring Founder Fellows benefit from a 12-month cohort experience while remaining in their current roles and receive a part-time stipend for their training. Throughout this fellowship, workshop-style learning opportunities are accompanied by three school visits to high-performing, innovative schools.

PROGRAM GOALS

→ **100% of Aspiring Founders will successfully complete** the 12-month fellowship.



REPLICATION FELLOWS PROGRAM

REPLICATION FOUNDERS FELLOWSHIP

The Replication Founders fellowship is being established to both meet the needs of the growing charter school sector and the individual needs of soon-to-be charter networks by strengthening the executive leadership skills of their selected school founders.

These fellows are:

- selected by their charter network while working full-time within their school
- planning to lead the launch of their network's next school

COMMITMENT	PROGRAM LENGTH	STIPEND	COHORT
Variable; fellows are selected by their charter network	12 months	\$40,000	Four

While the identified Replication Fellows are employed by their host network, New Schools for Alabama will provide a part-time stipend to the host network to offset the cost of the fellow’s development.

PROGRAM GOALS

- **100% of Replication Fellows will successfully open a new campus** within 12 months of completing the fellowship.



OUR PARTNERS

Adams & Reese

Alabama State Department
of Education

A-Game

BES

Black Alabamians for Education

Bloomberg Philanthropies

BlueHub Capital

Brand Neue Co

Centerpoint Education

EBSCO Industries

Ed Board Partners

EdFarm

Hope Credit Union

Hope Leadership Academy

James Milton and Sallie R. Johnson
Family Foundation

K12, Inc.

TEAM WORK. DREAM WORK.



At New Schools for Alabama, we are proud to be making significant progress toward delivering on our mission and achieving our goals. But we are not there yet. To build an organization that will have a lasting impact on improving educational opportunities for kids in Alabama, we fully recognize that we need the help of our partners. Without you, none of this is possible.

Lumen Impact Group

Max & Lorayne Cooper Foundation

National Alliance for Public
Charter Schools

National Charter Schools Institute

Nick and Jo Anne Gaede

Protective Life Foundation

School Food Wellness Group

Technology Lab

The Charter School Growth Fund

The City Fund

The Daniel Foundation of Alabama

The Goodrich Foundation

The Kern Family Foundation

The Louis Calder Foundation

US Department of Education

OUR VALUES IN ACTION

PARENT LETTER

My name is ShaElla, and I'm a parent of a student at Alabama Aerospace and Aviation High School. I am sharing with you my experience as a new charter school parent.

My daughter Deidra was always an honor student. She loved reading and critical thinking activities and excelled in her studies. However, when Deidra began middle school, things changed for her. Middle school can be tough emotionally, mentally, and physically for many children—and for Deidra, it was no different. While Deidra's confidence in herself began to drop, her insecurities rose. Going into high school for Deidra, I knew a change needed to happen—but little did I know the solution was in my face!

It wasn't easy at first:

I have always heard about charter schools in the state of Alabama, but it was in a negative light. I like to form my own opinion of things, so when I did research, I needed clarification on why people would view charter schools as a negative option for their children. When I was hired as a contractor by New Schools for Alabama, I learned more about charter schools and why it's essential for the state of Alabama.

Summer was ending, and I still needed a plan for Deidra. Again, the answer was obvious. New Schools for Alabama partnered with founder Ruben Morris to open Alabama Aerospace and Aviation High School in the fall of 2022. This school was a perfect option for us because we live in Vance, which is close to Bessemer.

Deidra had reservations about the focus of the school, which is Aviation. We were able to speak with On'Draya Green, the current principal, to

answer any questions that we had about Deidra attending this school.

We have been delighted with our decision.

Since starting at this school, Deidra's confidence and behavior at home have improved dramatically. She still maintains good grades, but I can tell that she's being challenged more at this school. The school is terrific with communication, parent collaboration, and ensuring that children feel welcome with extracurricular activities. This choice is one of the best decisions I have made for my child. For any parent considering an Alabama charter school for their child, I recommend that they speak with the school's leadership and ask all questions that they have. I also recommend that they include their child in the research process. You want to ensure that any school is an excellent fit for you and your child.

I would say be ready and willing to make sacrifices for your children's education—these school leaders are prepared and willing to do what's necessary for your child to succeed if you are ready.

SHAELLA ASKEW
*Alabama Aerospace
and Aviation High School*



PARENT SPEAKING OUT

We also spoke with another charter school parent of Alabama Aerospace and Aviation High School, Mrs. Shalonda Rodgers. Rodgers also met with Mrs. Green to ask questions to determine if the high school was a great fit for her incoming 9th-grade son. She said,

"The curriculum and small classes sold me and my husband. We wanted him to make the decision so he will be comfortable at his school. The dual enrollment option is what he likes and graduating with his pilot's license was the cherry on top."

Mrs. Rodgers also noticed a change in her child's behavior. She noted that he's becoming more vocal, showing an interest in various activities, being more excited about going to school, and talking about what he does in school when asked by his parents.

She heard about Alabama Aerospace and Aviation High School from her sister-in-law. Her daughter attends I3 Academy, another charter school in Birmingham, and they love it! It made the decision much easier. She loves the way the school communicates with parents. She receives emails about what's going on in school, and the school also launched a parent website with all the information she needs. She has no complaints but hopes they add more extracurricular activities as they grow.

For parents considering an Alabama charter school, she recommends visiting the school and talking with the staff and teachers. She also recommends doing thorough research to ensure it would fit their child well.



New Schools for Alabama’s Charter School Parent Voice Network (Parent Voice) is an advocacy group of parents and guardians whose children attend Alabama public charter schools.

By working together, Parent Voice members can help shape the future of their children’s charter schools and that of the Alabama Charter school sector.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the Parent Voice initiative is to unify Alabama Public Charter School parents; support them with programs, training, and/or resources; and empower them to advocate for their children on the local and state level. NSFA is committed to supporting charter parents through:

- 1. Relationship Building**
- 2. Resources and Programming**
- 3. Advocacy and Legislative Training/Awareness**

GOALS

- To have **one parent from each school** complete the Parent Voice Fellowship each year.
- To have at least **30 or more parents actively involved** in the Parent Voice Lead and Learn virtual sessions, in-person community events, and Parent Voice Facebook group.
- To have a pool of at least 5–10 parents that will be available to attend legislative sessions, write op-eds, or otherwise advocate for the Alabama charter school sector.
- To have parents from all Alabama public charter schools involved in retelling the positive stories of our Alabama charters via our "Change the Perception, Change the Narrative" ongoing Parent Voice social media campaign.
- To have **one (or more) Parent Voice participant(s) to create a separate entity** for parent advocacy—for example, Alabama Lift.
- In alignment with the NSFA Board's Strategic Priorities, Parent Voice is on track with the following goal: To have organized a geographically diverse network of parents and community members supporting and advocating for charter schools periodically through various platforms, including print and digital media, social media, events, and legislative visits.



PARENT VOICE

PROGRAMMING

Lead and Learn Sessions

These three sessions are parent education sessions, using outside experts or experts from the parent population. The experts lead programs focusing on topics (e.g., child development, school governance, funding, and education reform/advocacy) that help prepare parents to serve in their schools or communities on behalf of their students and/or the charter sector.

In-Person Parent Recruitment and/or Parent Coffee Hour

NSFA will attend each school's Open House or Back to School event to recruit parents and engage face-to-face. If a school has not been visited due to scheduling conflicts, NSFA will sponsor a coffee hour for the Parent Association that already exists at each school to help foster congenial relationships with the parent population and to recruit more parents to be involved in Parent Voice. Parent Voice Fellows will help coordinate Open House and/or coffee hour at their school.

In-kind Donations

Periodically, NSFA will donate supplies and/or resources directly to schools for parents and teachers as part of our community engagement commitment to our schools.



Parent Voice Facebook Group

The Parent Voice Facebook Group serves as a way to keep parents engaged and is a place to post important updates relating to the program and charter school information.

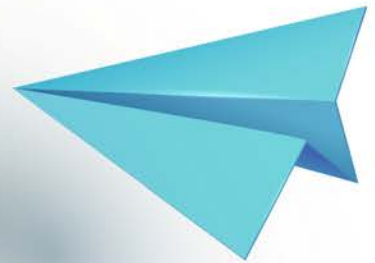
Parent Voice Fellowship

Each cohort will consist of 1 parent from each school.

SEPTEMBER–APRIL

Fellowship consists of:

- Advocacy training (virtual) - 1 session
- School funding training (virtual) - 1 session
- Support for charter schools (state legislative hearings, local charter hearings)
- One parent organization visit (Georgia or Memphis)
- Attend 7 of 9 monthly sessions, includes Lead and Learn Sessions (virtual) and Charter Conference
- Fellows will help plan Open House or Coffee Hour for school's parent association meeting
- Fellows will actively recruit parents in their school to join Parent Voice group and activities
- Stipend at end of fellowship (\$1,000)



BACK OFFICE SERVICES PROGRAM

The back office program is a fee-for-service option we make available to Alabama Charter Schools. For schools that choose the back office option, we support them by providing accounting and operational services typically found at a school system's district office. We provide full accounting and payroll services for the schools participating in the back office program. In addition to daily accounting functions like processing purchase orders, paying invoices, and maintaining payroll, we also prepare monthly and annual financial statements, along with preparing and presenting the annual budget. We also support each school with their federal and child nutrition programs applications and ongoing compliance.

The "why" of the program is simple. We provide high-quality financial and operational services at a cost that is much less than a single charter school would be able to replicate internally. We also have a team with years of Alabama K-12 and Alabama State Department of Education experience, who understand the nuances and compliance requirements unique to Alabama. The ALSDE requires significant financial compliance from charter schools, and our team works to ensure each school remains fully compliant.

The NSFA back office team is made up of individuals with years of specific experience in a variety of areas. We have full-time NSFA staff assigned to the back office program as well as contracted services.

Russell Raney – CFO

Melanie Haynes – Director of Accounting

Adrienne Stallworth – Accountant

Gail Smitherman – Senior Accountant

Contracted services include:

Chris Reynolds – Senior Advisor

Joslyn Reddick – Federal Programs Partner

Steve Marshall – Payroll Specialist

Daniel Stallworth – Payroll Specialist

Jan Swiderski – Payroll Specialist

School Food Wellness Group – Food Service Partner

The schools currently in the portfolio are:

LIFE Academy – Montgomery

Magic City Acceptance Academy – Homewood

Breakthrough Charter School – Marion

Alabama Aerospace & Aviation High School – Bessemer

Empower Community School – Bessemer

LEAD Academy – Montgomery

We had three schools in the portfolio one year ago, and due to our success with them, and the quality of our team, we have doubled the number of schools we serve in a year. When we took over the initial three schools' back office work, they were months behind in accounting records and were out of compliance with the ALSDE. We have worked to bring all of their accounting records up to date and to help them become compliant with the ALSDE. We have also worked with them to build better internal controls and accounting practices, which has led to more accurate and timely financial data.





NEWS SCHOOLS FOR ALABAMA

WWW.NEWSCHOOLSFORALABAMA.ORG