



**Response to Charleston County School District
Solicitation for Interest**

Submitted by:
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SECTION ONE

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Group Type:

BES is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to identify and prepare excellent leaders to transform education in their communities. From school founders and executive directors, to operations leaders, deans of students, and directors of curriculum and instruction, BES trains leaders to build schools, to ensure their schools excel, and to sustain their results over time. BES (previously Building Excellent Schools, and originally the Massachusetts Charter School Resource Center) has been leading this work across various capacities since 1993. Through our flagship program, the BES Fellowship, and the Follow On Support we offer to leaders in the early years of school operation, BES is committed to ensuring schools start strong and sustain excellence over time.

We are grateful for the opportunity to submit this response to the Charleston County School District's Solicitation for Interest and thank you for your consideration.

Bios of Key Staff Who Will Lead this Work:

Aasimah Navlakhi, CEO

Aasimah Navlakhi is the Chief Executive Officer of BES, where she previously served as Communications Director and then Chief of Staff. During her time with BES, Aasimah has seen the organization scale considerably, growing its operating budget by 125%, expanding its flagship Fellowship from 12 to 18 school-founders per year, and building out five additional leadership development programs that reach



more than 250 leaders annually. Before joining BES, Aasimah led marketing and communications at BNED LoudCloud in Dallas, TX. She began her career as a speech and performance teacher in her hometown of Bangalore, India, where she trained students in the art and science of effective communication. Inspired by the adults in her life who underscored the value of education, hard work, and being open to diverse perspectives, Aasimah earned a Bachelor's degree in Economics, Politics, and International Studies from Warwick University in Coventry, England, and a Master's in Journalism from the Newhouse School at Syracuse University in New York. In 2017, she was selected as an Education Pioneers fellow. Having experienced firsthand the life-changing power of great schools, Aasimah is committed to ensuring that all students receive an excellent education and have equal opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive.

Paul Adler, Senior Director of Follow On Support

As Senior Director of Follow On Support, Paul Adler provides continued high-impact, mission-driven Follow-on Support to BES leaders and BES schools in their planning year and first two years of operation, and works with BES Fellows during their training year. Paul served for six years as the founding Principal of Achievement First Brooklyn High School. He led the first three graduating classes to college readiness, with all students being accepted to four-year colleges, and he led the school to be ranked in the top third of 29 schools in the Achievement First network for academic performance. Previous to Paul's work as Principal with Achievement First, he was a Teach For America Corps member, teaching seventh grade math in Compton, California. Paul received a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Teachers College Columbia University, a Master of Arts in Teaching in Mathematics Education from Harvard University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Quantitative Economics from Tufts University.

Stephanie Patton, Senior Director of the BES Fellowship

As Senior Director of the BES Fellowship, Stephanie provides high-impact, mission-driven training and coaching to ensure high-capacity leaders can design, found, and lead high-performing charter schools. Prior to working at BES, Stephanie served in a network leadership role at Excel Academy, supporting the growth of Excel's principals. Stephanie joined Excel in 2007 as a science teacher before moving into the role of Dean of Students. In 2011, she founded Excel Academy Chelsea and served as Principal through 2015, leading the team to successfully educate the first four years of students, and preparing the inaugural class of students to matriculate into Excel Academy Charter High School. A 2010 recipient of the Sontag Prize in Urban Education, and Teach for America – New York City Alumna, Stephanie received a Master of Science in Teaching from Pace University and Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience/Psychobiology from Connecticut College.

These team members, along with other Directors of Leadership Development at BES, would support the training of one or more school leaders in the Charleston County School District so they can improve student well-being and academic success.

Philosophy Regarding Education and Student Achievement:

BES believes that an excellent school:

1. Prepares all students for success in college and careers.
2. Fosters a culture that celebrates academic and personal achievement and growth.
3. Is structured, joyful, and organized around core values.



4. Ensures all teachers are knowledgeable, engaging, and committed to results.
5. Uses rigorous curriculum that leads students to master critical habits, skills, and content.
6. Leverages data from frequent assessments to propel student growth.
7. Maximizes learning time through an extended school schedule and efficient operations.
8. Communicates clearly and regularly with families about student progress.
9. Encourages the input and participation of families and community members.
10. Has a well-trained, engaged board focused on academic and fiscal accountability.

BES believes that an excellent school leader:

1. Believes that all students can, must, and will achieve at high levels.
2. Builds, equips, and inspires an effective, mission-driven team.
3. Is a visionary who sweats the details.
4. Studies effective schools and leaders and implements proven practices.
5. Leads a school that reflects and responds to the needs of its community.
6. Ensures equitable supports for learners of all backgrounds, needs, and abilities.
7. Holds themselves and their team accountable for results.
8. Seeks out, and takes full advantage of, leadership coaching and support.
9. Invests in the growth and development of a leadership bench.
10. Advocates effectively on behalf of the school in the community at large.

Leadership Matters. Effective leaders are fueled by ambition and a desire to make significant change. The voice and presence of a leader must motivate and inspire in order to meet the audacious goals of an organization. Moreover, it is a leader's capacity to instill and maintain confidence that makes or breaks a team's ability to carry out its mission. The best leaders are striking in their ability to communicate, negotiate, and persuade. They do not play it safe, and they are unafraid to navigate the waters that are deemed too treacherous. A leader is faced with the impossible, and wonders what is so impossible about it. From business, to government, to the military, to schools, strong organizations rest on the shoulders of strong leaders. Leadership matters.

BES recognizes that excellent school leaders may be few and far between, but also knows there is a critical set of tools and competencies that can be taught so leaders can build and sustain a school that will excel academically and prepare students for success. Over the past two decades, BES has developed programs that provide the training and learning experiences leaders need to do just this.

When teachers are unencumbered with the day-to-day challenges of their school's operations, they can focus on the bottom line: giving their students an excellent educational experience in the classroom. This is why strong leadership is the answer to some of our greatest challenges in educating children to succeed in school and beyond.

At BES, we recognize that leaders need to be supported and challenged in the right way at the right time – and that one's leadership journey is never complete.



Instructional Materials Used in Schools:

BES Fellows select the instructional materials they will use in their schools after completing training sessions as part of the BES Fellowship on standards and high-quality instructional materials. BES does not mandate schools use a certain curriculum. This ensures the school selects the materials that will meet the unique needs of the students they serve and best reflect the mission and educational philosophy of the school. However, all instructional materials BES leaders select and/or design are rigorous and standards-based, aligned to or exceeding the state's standards or Common Core State Standards. BES also reviews and vets Fellows' summer training and professional development to ensure they will be able to effectively coach their teachers toward using these materials and supporting their students.

SECTION TWO

Number and Size of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Schools:

Of important note, BES is not a Charter Management Organization and thus does not manage schools directly once the BES Fellows we have trained open these schools. Rather, the core of our work is to **train and support** individuals seeking to lead excellent schools (whether by designing and founding them, replicating them, or sustaining them after a leadership transition). BES trains approximately 250 leaders per year.

BES works closely with its Fellows who have designed and founded schools – through 1:1 coaching, continued leadership development, and small group workshop intensives – to ensure the school is meeting its goals, culture is strong, and students are making demonstrable progress on assessments.

Among the schools founded by BES Fellows are:

- 61 elementary schools
- 66 middle schools
- 19 high schools
- 31 schools that are a combination of either elementary/middle or middle/high

Across the country, schools founded by BES leaders educate over 55,000 students, 90% of whom are students of color, 78% qualify for free or reduced lunch, 16% are English language learners, and 14% are students with special needs.

Location of Schools:

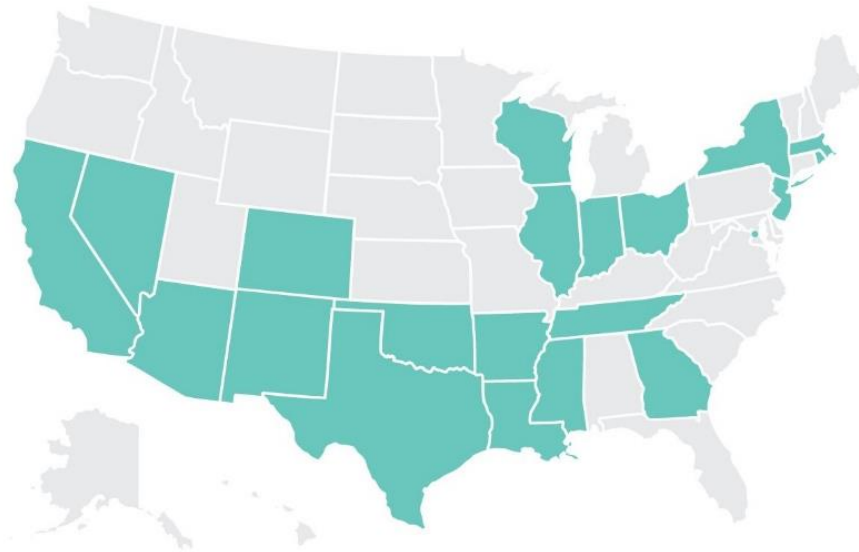
Schools founded by BES Fellows are located in 45 cities across 21 states and Washington D.C.

These cities are:

Albuquerque, NM; Atlanta, GA; Aurora, CO; Baton Rouge, LA; Boston, MA; Buffalo, NY; Cambridge, MA; Camden, NJ; Chelsea, MA; Chicago, IL; Clarksdale, MS; Cleveland, OH; Colorado Springs, CO; Columbus, OH; Denver, CO; Fall River, MA; Hayward, CA; Houston, TX; Indianapolis, IN; Jackson, MS; Jefferson Parish, LA; Las Vegas, NV; Lawrence, MA; Little Rock, AR; Los Angeles, CA; Lynwood, CA; Marlborough, MA;



Memphis, TN; Milwaukee, WI; Nashville, TN; New Orleans, LA; New York, NY; North Adams, MA; Oakland, CA; Phoenix, AZ; Raleigh, NC; Richmond, CA; Sacramento, CA; Salem, MA; San Antonio, TX; San Francisco, CA; San Jose, CA; Springfield, MA; Tulsa, OK; Washington, DC; and Woonsocket, RI.



Map of states where there are schools founded by BES Fellows.

Academic Achievement and Growth:

Overall, approximately two-thirds of schools founded by BES leaders outperform their local counterparts in the surrounding district on state assessments.

Among the 69 schools founded by BES leaders that took the NWEA Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments last year, 81% of schools had at least 50% of students meeting or exceeding their growth targets from fall 2018 to fall 2019 in math and 70% of schools had at least 50% of students meeting or exceeding their growth targets from fall 2018 to fall 2019 in reading.

Student Retention Data:

Between the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school year, on average 3.5% of students at schools founded by BES Fellows were retained in the same grade.

Proven Turnaround Experience with Improving Academic Achievement; Climate/Culture Indicators; Teacher Recruitment/Retention; and Parent/Community Engagement:

BES supports schools in their planning year and first two years of operation (and often beyond) through Follow On Support (FOS). The mission of FOS at BES is to challenge and support each founder during these critical years to effectively deliver on the school’s mission and vision and achieve its ambitious goals.



FOS consists of:

- Leadership coaching for the three years after the Fellowship ends: planning year, year one of the school, year two of the school;
- Continuance of training and guidance to prepare the Fellow to effectively and run a high-performing school; and
- A mix of coaching activities: visits to the school, weekly coaching calls, webinars, document review, and video feedback.

We foresee supporting one or more leaders in Charleston through trainings as part of our Fellowship as well as coaching through FOS.

Students entering schools founded by BES Fellows typically begin the year below grade level – and often are several years behind. BES’s goal for schools in their first two years of operation (when they receive dedicated coaching support from BES) is that any student who begins the year below the 50th percentile will demonstrate 1.5 years of growth, and any student who begins the year above the 50th percentile will demonstrate 1.25 years of growth.

The charts below outline BES’s goals for school leaders during the planning year and first two years of operation on improving academic achievement, climate/culture indicators, teacher recruitment and retention, and parent/community engagement.

Planning Year

Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three	Quarter Four
1. Leader establishes self as skilled project manager to drive multiple priorities simultaneously. 2. Leader immerses in residency and aggressively builds needed skillset by getting frequent feedback from BES coach. 3. Leader attracts top talent by creating a clear plan with a diverse array of communication and networking strategies	1. Leader effectively hires talent that is a strong culture and instructional fit for school. 2. Leader effectively recruits students to ensure healthy budget. 3. Leader creates Academic Rallying Cry and culture goals with metrics for the year.	1. Leader articulates clear vision and rationale for every second of day and documents all systems for vision. 2. Leader sets expectations for staff with rationale to ensure strong instruction and adult culture and memorializes in handbook. 3. Leader finalizes summer PD that prepares every teacher to lead high	1. Leader is ready to execute PD at a high level by rehearsing sessions with BES coach. 2. Leader plans every second of student orientation and prepares team to execute at a high level. 3. Facility is set up to support strong culture systems that support academic goals.

		expectation classroom on day one of school.	
Ongoing parent and community engagement			

Year One of Operation

Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three	Quarter Four
<p>1. Leader leads strong summer PD that invests team in mission, Rallying Cry, and equips teachers to deliver on culture and instruction.</p> <p>2. Leader effectively coaches teachers on taxonomy to ensure consistently strong classroom culture by week six.</p> <p>3. Leader explains, models, and reinforces the “bar” for every stakeholder in every part of the school.</p>	<p>1. Leader diagnoses instructional trends and creates a data-based action plan to move academic results.</p> <p>2. Leader runs weekly or bi-weekly data meetings to ensure all teachers move students towards Rallying Cry.</p> <p>3. Leader keeps “ear to the ground” regarding staff culture and successfully manages performance of high performers and underperformers.</p>	<p>1. Leader adjusts or resets weak systems for strong start to the new year.</p> <p>2. Leader effectively recruits talent for Y2 using the school as a marketing tool and 90% of staff is hired by May 1.</p> <p>3. Leader creates dated and accountable readiness plan for following year regarding Y2 Rallying Cry, curriculum, enrollment, systems, budget, etc.</p>	<p>1. Leader effectively manages talent by non-renewing weak staff and developing Y2 leaders.</p> <p>2. Leader reflects on EOY data to make informed adjustments to Rallying Cry, curriculum, and interventions for Y2.</p> <p>3. Leader creates thorough summer work plan for him/herself, leadership team, and operations to ensure strong Y2.</p>
Ongoing parent and community engagement			

Year Two of Operation

Quarter One	Quarter Two	Quarter Three	Quarter Four
<p>1. Leader develops one to two team members to take significant ownership in school and are able to execute on leader’s vision.</p> <p>2. Leader plans and executes high-quality summer PD and onboarding.</p>	<p>1. Leader uses systems for distributed leadership to ensure all team members are implementing vision of school.</p> <p>2. Leader effectively coaches, or coaches another leader to coach, teachers</p>	<p>1. Leader creates clear vision for grade level and department structures for Y3 and develops team members to take ownership of these structures.</p> <p>2. Leader starts readiness process for following year</p>	<p>1. Leader effectively manages talent by non-renewing weak staff, developing Y3 leaders, and aggressively recruits for remaining vacancies.</p> <p>2. Leader reflects on overall performance of the school and sets</p>



<p>3. Leaders effectively coach teachers, ensuring they are holding a high bar for culture.</p>	<p>ensuring they are holding a high bar for academic rigor.</p> <p>3. Leader diagnoses instructional trends and create a data-based action plan to move academic results.</p>	<p>regarding hiring, facilities, enrollment, systems, budget, calendar for Y3, etc.</p> <p>3. Leader has short- and long-term facilities plans in place.</p>	<p>goals for next year.</p> <p>3. Leader plans summer work time for him/herself, leadership team, and operations to ensure strong Y3.</p>
<p>Ongoing parent and community engagement</p>			

Experience Generating Annual Budgets and Financial Projections:

As part of the BES Fellowship, leaders participate in rigorous trainings on budgeting, financial modeling, and fiscal management for their schools. Fellows take a pre-test to assess their skills and understanding prior to beginning the training, so that it can be customized to meet their needs. BES has also developed a list of “quick tips” about making budget assumptions and the rationale behind them that we have developed over the 20+ years of supporting leaders to generate annual budgets. During the trainings, Fellows also review the budgets of over a dozen schools founded by former BES Fellows to help them build their own budgets.

Once schools are open, Fellows continue to receive coaching from BES staff in the first and second years of operation (and beyond as requested) to ensure the school stays on track financially.

Evidence of Fiscal Soundness of Existing Schools:

BES does not directly manage the schools founded by BES Fellows, but we do support them extensively during the training year and Follow On Support years to ensure they build and train a founding board that will govern the school effectively and ensure it remains fiscally sound. BES has a dedicated Director of Leadership Development whose exclusive focus to support Fellows is board governance.