



# BANNEKER HIGH SCHOOL

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**Principal**  
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Dr. Ava Debro  
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## FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES BENJAMIN BANNEKER HIGH SCHOOL OF FULTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

**TO THE DULY ELECTED BHS SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL**

Cherrye Bess, President  
Duke Bradley, III, Ph.D., Principal

Ms. Bess,

Respecting the authority of the Banneker High School Governance Council, I hereby submit a non-exhaustive summary of budget recommendations for fiscal year 2017-2018.

This document details key aspects of Banneker's overall financial plan -- though subject to change pending your review.

Respectfully Submitted,

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DUKE BRADLEY, III, PH.D.  
Principal

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TO: Banneker High School Extended Community

FROM: Duke Bradley, III, Ph.D., Principal

CC: Dara Wilson, Area Superintendent, South Learning Community  
Brannon Gaskins, Area Executive Director, Achievement Zone

DATE: May 15, 2017

RE: **(NON-EXHAUSTIVE) BANNEKER HIGH SCHOOL BUDGET  
SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES, FY '18**

## MEMORANDUM

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There is no doubting that Banneker High School is in the midst of significant institutional change. By nearly every measure, that change is positive, consistent, and clearly trending towards dramatic transformation. Although the proof points of Banneker's growth are directly correlated to the hard work of our faculty and staff, the deep commitments, both financial and otherwise, that Fulton County Schools have made in Banneker are also worthy of mention.

Evidence of our improvement is signified by steady rising graduation rates, student performance increases in most Milestones tested subject areas, and substantial reductions in suspensions and other exclusionary practices. These uncontroverted statistics are extraordinary considering the school's standing in each aforementioned category just 5 years ago. To that end, we have already increased our momentum for success. We will, however, no longer judge ourselves against a period of time in our school's history that led to the turnaround efforts currently in motion.

Further, Banneker's recent success does not simply come from analyzing traditional school performance indicators. It comes mostly from our constancy of leadership and the organizational discipline with which we have implemented several research-based school reform strategies. Indicators of this sort are typically not intensely focused on when assessing school turnaround. Usually, there is greater reliance on objective, quantitative measures – accompanied by comparisons to schools with similar demographics.

### Looking Ahead

In SY 2018, we will press forward by creating a new narrative for ourselves. We will be a school that serves as a model for effective teaching, stellar organizational leadership, and positive school culture - each fueled by a passionate commitment to unlock the promise and potential within each of our students. As Principal of Banneker High School, my immediate goal is to sustain the programs, the design, and the human capital that have enabled our current growth and improvement. Additionally,

through our recent multi-million dollar School Improvement Grant, we will also distinguish ourselves from other schools. Banneker will become a school acting as a catalyst to the revitalization efforts underway in our own community, and will do so by producing students who are prepared to transition into emerging industries in the South Metro area of Atlanta. We will also maintain a corresponding interest in making certain that students gain access to competitive colleges and universities.

In closing, this memo is intended to summarize how some of our fiscal priorities for SY '18 will enable this vision. It is also intended to engage our larger school community in a way that ensures vision articulation and transparency of action. More plainly, I hope to inspire the collective confidence of our school stakeholders concerning the planned use of fiscal resources.

### Strategy Articulation

At a high level, our approach to budget design has been to focus on two overriding priorities: 1) Maintaining essential personnel, and 2) Providing adequate support for our students to ensure that they have every opportunity to be successful.

### Personnel

Banneker High School places a premium on securing an exemplary corps of teachers who are capable of executing our school-wide instructional priorities. We also value staff members who demonstrate the indispensable competency necessary for school turnaround which we have identified as belief that all students can achieve at high levels. Over the past few years, high rates of teacher attrition have substantially compromised this objective – consistent with national trends for chronically low performing schools. Despite our loss of human capital, Banneker has successfully replenished our teacher corps with new talent. These new additions to our school community have individually and collectively contributed meaningfully to our work.

- *Teach for America:* Notwithstanding the fantastic teacher corps that we've assembled (many of whom are longstanding Banneker stalwarts), we have made investments in alternatively trained teachers from the national program Teach For America (TFA). TFA has produced Banneker teachers and alumni including: Ms. Jallow (Teacher, Biology); Ms. Ojofeitimi (Teacher, ELA); Ms. LaMont (Professional Learning); Mr. Griffin (Model Teacher Leader); Ms. Hurt (Professional Learning); Ms. Mingo (Teacher, JA-MBA); Ms. Lane (Teacher, JA-MBA); and Ms. Lucas (Teacher, Mathematics). These passionate young educators have added value to our school and as a consequence, we will continue our relationship with TFA for the upcoming school-year.

Our proposed budget appropriates approximately \$32,000 to fund existing corps member and to add others as may be necessary. The monies appropriated are paid directly to the organization to cover external professional development in addition to other incidentals.

- *Americorps:* Through Banneker's Federal School Improvement Grant (SIG), we will launch a new STEM Academy in 2017-2018. To ensure quality implementation, and to also make sure that the program is distinctive, Banneker will work in partnership with AmeriCorps to provide content area tutors to work alongside the teacher of record. Although the monies

for AmeriCorps teachers will come through the SIG Grant, our financial commitment for their services is worth mentioning

### **Support Staff**

*Graduation Coach:* Over the past five years, Banneker has experienced a sharp and steady increase in graduation rate. In 2017, Banneker had the highest percentage of growth in graduation rate among the 16 traditional comprehensive high schools in Fulton County Schools. We attribute these successes to a special initiative launched in 2017, but also to the coordination of this program by our Graduation Coach. Although typically not included in our traditional school-wide organizational model, Banneker will continue to maintain a graduation coach so as to signal our concern and seriousness about the steady growth of our school-wide graduation rate. [Renewed Position]

*Registrar/PAII:* Banneker currently employs Professional Assistants who execute a variety of support and clerical duties. However, we do not make full use of an Attendance Clerk – as we should. While attendance continues to be a struggle, and a barrier, we believe, to completing the arc of cultural transformation, we will employ an Attendance Clerk who will implement a series of innovations purposed to improving student attendance, monitoring, and reporting. [New Position]

### **Special Programs**

Extended Learning opportunities for Banneker students are vital to their success. Annually, our students take advantage of Night School, Saturday School, and virtual classes – collectively representing the special programs that supplement their normal course of study. For the 2017-2018 school-year, we will renew our commitment to sustaining these programs through a financial investment that will ensure their presence and long-term sustainability. [Deeper Investment]

### **Priority Investment**

#### *Expanding Support for Teachers and School Leaders*

As a corresponding priority to ensuring a fully staffed roster of highly qualified teachers, we believe that it is vitally important to continuously invest in teachers' growth and development. Last school year, Banneker partnered with *Opportunity Culture* – a national organization that helps to provide alternative leadership opportunities for high performing teachers while also enabling support and mentoring for lesser experienced teachers who have not yet reached their full potential.

For the 2017-2018 school-year, we will continue working with Opportunity Culture – committed to making similar financial investments consistent with those from the previous year. More importantly, programs like Opportunity Culture, we believe, inform various other organizational points of interest around the support, preparation, development, and retention of staff members at Banneker. [Innovation Marker]

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