



Our Impact *Midyear 2017*

Breakthrough Silicon Valley

Highlights:

Leadership Transition: We welcomed our new executive director, John Hiester, on May 15.

Class of 2017: An impressive 98% of our graduating seniors gained admittance to four-year institutions and soon begin an exciting new chapter. For financial reasons, three chose to begin at a two-year college, underscoring the economic reality our students face.

Design Thinking and Computer Science: We added Design Thinking to our after-school curriculum during the spring semester, followed by our pilot Computer Science Academy this summer.

The Individual Approach: As we continue our planned expansion to 600 students by 2018, a key priority is maintaining the individualized approach that is one of our hallmarks.

John brings a wealth of talent, experience, and personal passion to lead BSV into our next phase: as we prepare to serve 600 students in 2018 while fine-tuning our model for long-term sustainability, and looking beyond, to formulate our next strategic plan.

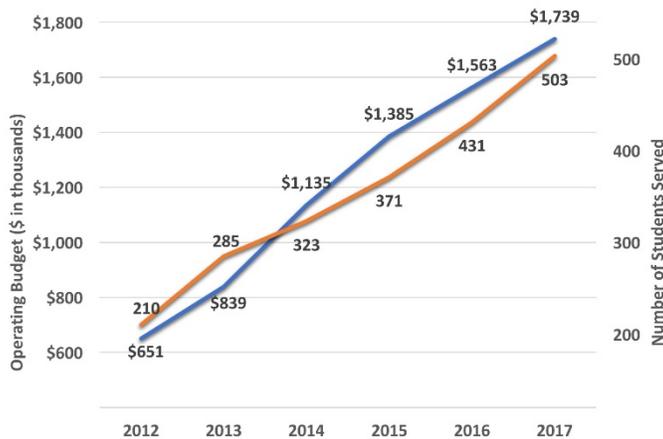


Executive Director John Hiester

Over a 15-year career, John has devoted his professional life to educational equity and helping young people realize their full potential – the last six years, at Year Up, an organization preparing low-income young adults for career success. Most recently, he served as director of operations and strategic planning for Year Up Bay Area.

Welcome John!

After a rigorous nationwide search conducted with executive recruitment firm, CommonGood Careers, effective May 15, our Board of Directors appointed John Hiester to succeed Melissa Johns, who left at the end of January to join Silicon Valley Children’s Fund. Melissa led Breakthrough through five years of significant program expansion and funding growth.



Breakthrough Silicon Valley Class of 2017

Class of 2017

While nationwide, low-income students face significant barriers on the path to college, our recent graduates are beating the odds. 98% of the BSV Class of 2017 were admitted to four-year institutions this spring, from

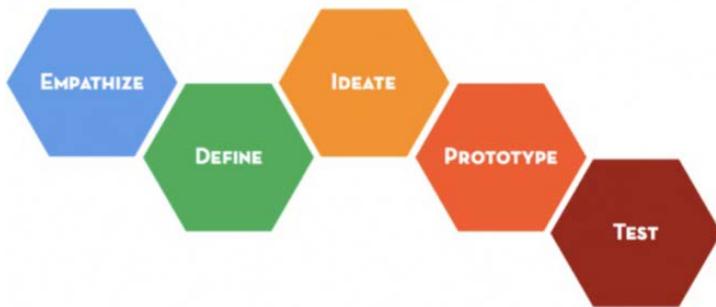
“When we, as a society, step up and commit to providing real educational opportunities to those who most need them, the benefits are real, measurable, and game-changing for everyone. This is work I’ve been involved in for almost 15 years. I just can’t imagine doing anything else.”

- Executive Director John Hiester

What constitutes a comfortable living wage elsewhere can be barely enough to scrape by here...but just enough to reduce a student's financial aid package.

California campuses like UC Berkeley, UCLA, Santa Clara University, and San Jose State to those further afield, such as Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Oberlin College, Johns Hopkins University, and a host of others.

We are incredibly proud of our students, who continue to impress college officials across the nation. Still, this admission season gave us pause. Three seniors chose to begin at a two-year college due to affordability issues with their four-year options, underlining the tremendous financial challenges our students face – which are further magnified by the high cost of living in the Bay Area. What constitutes a comfortable living wage elsewhere can be barely enough to scrape by here. To make matters worse, that wage can be just enough to reduce a student's financial aid package. Moving forward, our challenge will be to widen the funding search for students who face significant out-of-pocket expense due to insufficient financial aid. No student should have to walk away from attending a four-year college because of affordability.



Design Thinking and Computer Science

At BSV, we're continually refining our program to better prepare our students for the dynamic Silicon Valley workplace. With that goal in mind, this spring, we added Design Thinking to our 8th grade after-school curriculum. Students learned to apply the innovative principles to real-world challenges such as "How might we get middle school students engaged in being eco-friendly?" following the design cycle from brainstorming to proposing a solution. Games and other hands-on activities helped bring widely-used Silicon Valley creative processes to life for our eager young professionals-to-be.

And in July, our pilot high school Computer Science Academy made its debut. Over two exciting weeks, students were introduced to computer science concepts and mastered the basics of HTML and CSS – all while creating digital content of the most relevant sort for this age group: video games of their own design. Career exposure through lunchtime chats with tech professionals helped students who are passionate about STEM, but have limited exposure to career opportunities, visualize a future in the field.



College Readiness Manager Bryan Tomlinson with BSV student, Jennifer

The Individual Approach

At Breakthrough, we support our students from the pivotal "tween years" to the doors of higher education and beyond. Your investment helps us assemble a team of dedicated professionals who care deeply about our students' success, building partnerships that empower our young charges and their families. Each student receives the individualized guidance he or she needs at each crucial juncture: academic support, college counseling, career exposure, leadership development, and more. We focus on long-term strategies versus short-term interventions; our students graduate strong in key academic areas as well as "soft" skills like self-advocacy, collaboration, communication, and positive risk-taking. As we expand to serve 600 students by 2018, your support has never been more important to maintain this needs-based approach – a BSV hallmark with proven results.

Thank you for helping us ensure that bright, determined students who might otherwise fall through the cracks, instead, are opening their own doors to college degrees and professional careers.