March 13, 2020

Dear BTSV Community,

I hope that you and your families are doing well during this uncertain and difficult time. I’m writing to give you an update on Breakthrough Silicon Valley’s responses to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, and our efforts to keep our students and the community safe while continuing to support our students’ education.

BTSV prioritizes the health and safety of our students, our staff, and our community, and recognizes the part we all play in helping to slow down the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). We will continue to monitor the situation and work to keep you all informed as our responses shift.

Our support of Breakthrough students and families will remain strong, however, the way we deliver our support and engage with our community will change significantly for the coming weeks.

After reviewing the most recent guidelines from the CDC, State of California, and Santa Clara County, we have made the following decisions, which will take effect Monday, March 16, and will extend at least through Friday, April 10:

- Both BTSV offices, at Hoover Middle School and the Franklin-McKinley School District, will be closed starting on Monday, March 16 through Friday, April 10.

- Staff will be working remotely during this time and will be available to support students, families, and to engage with partners via video chat, text, or phone call.

- Following recommendations from health authorities, we will seek to reduce face-to-face meetings during this time.

- Whenever possible, in-person programming (such as group advising, workshops, 1:1 advising and tutoring) will be shifted to virtual platforms such as webinars, video conferences, conference calls, and 1:1 check-ins via text and phone calls.
• We have decided to cancel our Majors and Careers workshops with 9th grade students and volunteers, scheduled for March 18 and 19, and will seek alternative methods to ensure our students benefit from the learning that this workshop delivers so well.

• Our 7th grade After School Program will be suspended through April 10, with tentative plans to resume in May.

• BTSV is ready to loan out Chromebooks to students to ensure they can stay connected to our services remotely.

• We have postponed plans for a Spring Friendraiser and will seek to hold this event over the summer. Stay tuned!

These changes do not represent a slowing-down of our programs, but a ramping-up to deliver our programs in new and creative ways. Our team is already hard at work making sure that the class of 2020 crosses the finish line strong on their way to college, and that all of our students and families are supported through the ambiguity they are experiencing.

I thank all of you for your partnership and support. You ensure that our support for Breakthrough students will continue through this unique challenge for our community.

Thank you!

John Hiester
Executive Director, Breakthrough Silicon Valley