

**Cover Sheet**

<b>Date of Application:</b>	
<b>Primary Contact Person Name:</b>	<b>Primary Contact Person Title:</b>
<b>School District(s) Name:</b>	<b>Charter School or School(s) Name(s):</b>
<b>Charter School, Primary School, or School System Address:</b>	<b>Area Code and Telephone Number of Primary Contact Person:</b>
<b>Email Address of Primary Contact Person:</b>	<b>State Board Region:</b>
<b>Charter School or School District Superintendent Name:</b>	<b>Charter School or School District Superintendent Email Address:</b>

## 1. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Global Scholars Academy (GSA) is a Title I, free, K-8, public charter school, located in Central Piedmont area of North Carolina; GSA is its own local education agency and an extended day, year-round program. GSA's mission is to improve the educational outcomes and overall life chances of Durham, NC young people who are at the greatest risk of failure academically and in other walks of life due to significant social, economic, and educational challenges in their family, neighborhood, and community environments. We strive to cultivate resilience-building behaviors and create equitable opportunities for the young people we serve to thrive and prosper. We aim to level the playing field for our young people through educational practices and interventions that are culturally responsive, flexible, and cater to unique needs.

GSA's current enrollment is 220 students. We are a 100% minority population; the racial breakdown is 54% African American, 45% Hispanic, and 1% multiethnic. The gender breakdown is 54% female and 46% male. More than 83% of our total population is receiving free and reduced lunch; 15% require exceptional education services; and 19% are English Language Learners.

At least 50% of GSA students have endured emotional or behavioral trauma early in life – we recently have been able to deploy additional resources to better identify these students. Further, the degree of these instances is more severe than originally known. Last year, we saw more severe cases of physical abuse, runaways, homelessness, and poor emotional health manifesting into physical illness than ever before. Approximately 25% of our students have been recommended to our therapy partners for evaluation.

GSA's student population is more likely to:

- suffer from major mental and/or physical health problems that impede learning, daily interaction in the school setting, and social functioning in other walks of life.
- be predisposed to engage in high-risk behaviors, which stemmed from their routine exposure to negative neighborhood, family, school, and peer influences.
- be reading substantially below grade level and performing poorly in nearly all of the core academic subjects as well.
- have talents, especially in the arts, that are often unrecognized and/or undervalued in the public school system.

For the young girls at GSA in particular, our counseling program reports:

- 10-15% have disclosed exposure to some level of sexual violence (this percentage could be higher considering the sensitive nature and hesitancy or fear to disclose).
- 20-25% point to racism as their primary reason for seeking guidance.
- 30-35% struggle with the community dynamics and bridging relationships between cultures and upwards of 90% claim to be subjected to bullying and violence in the home/community.

These types of non-academic stressors, and the high percentage of our students they affect, create an ongoing need for GSA to cultivate and promote a healthy school by supporting mental wellness, school nutrition, and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment – all in an effort to protect our students' health, wellbeing, and capacity to learn. Our entire faculty and staff are highly engaged and committed to the execution of lessons and activities encouraging students to adopt healthy practices regarding complete wellness. Their enthusiasm is led by our Nutrition Director, Physical Education Teacher, and Counselor, the lead stewards of our Health and Wellness Policy. Needs assessments are ongoing and in conjunction with continuous feedback and input from our school resource officers and the Durham Police Department.

Given GSA's specific mission and the demographic of students and families that we serve, GSA spends close to \$200,000 per year on mental health and wellness programming and support. This includes personnel salaries and benefits (a full-time counselor, a support staff member who splits time between counseling support and testing, a physical education teacher, school resource officers, and nutrition director), health supplies, psychological services, whole-family education programming, and other complementary intervention services.

If selected as a grant recipient, we are proposing, in priority order, a second full-time counselor, a full-time school social worker and full-time school nurse. The volume of challenges our students are dealing with require additional support to effectively manage and prevent.

If appropriate mental health interventions are not instituted, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to produce positive educational outcomes for our students. We want to not only increase access to resources but also proactively drive better lifestyle choices - we want our students to choose holistic wellness habits that enable them to be academic athletes, social athletes, and life athletes.

## 2. PROGRAM NARRATIVE & EXPECTED OUTCOMES/IMPACT

GSA proposes to expand its counseling program to include two counselors dividing upper and lower grades and delivering scholars that are able to thrive and flourish socially, emotionally and academically in the 21st century. The counseling program will be formatted to live into the core values school's core values, Protection, Affection, Correction, and Connection, providing deliberate curriculum and programming under each pillar and in alignment with the North Carolina Professional School Counseling Standards. The additional counselor will team with the current counselor to:

- Develop goals and a strategic implementation plan in collaboration with school-wide personnel, being the chief advocates for curriculum integration, responsive intervention, and custom student planning.
- Steward innovative, culturally responsive programming such as Career Week, Health and Wellness Night, Parent Empowerment Meetings, Dinner with Dads, among others, in an effort to support the Standard Course of Study.
- Develop more rigorous tracking and monitoring tools and prepare formal share-outs of ongoing analysis in an effort to continuously adjust and maximize support systems offered by GSA.

If awarded funding to support a Social Worker and Nurse, their work will also be school mission and North Carolina Professional Standards guided:

- Our school Social Worker will primarily provide assistance and resources within the following areas: health and dental services, food services, women's health, vision care, housing and homelessness, transportation needs, financial assistance, behavioral health assistance and various support groups. They would also lead in-house truancy court and help families find resources to help with transportation or housing which is an ongoing issue each year with tardies and absences resulting in missing work and poor grades.
- Our school Nurse will not only support our students with medical administration as needed but also ongoing training of school-wide faculty and staff to assist students with serious physical and mental illnesses that can impede their education.
  - GSA currently has 3 students challenged by seizures.
  - Lice prevention and treatment is an issue each year sending several students home to miss many days of school for treatment.
  - Currently, vision and hearing screenings are contracted out for students requiring EC services.
  - Lastly, the nurse will help manage suicide prevention and intervention. GSA has had many students over the past few years admit to suicidal thoughts and/or attempts.

All initiatives outlined above and below fall squarely into the State Professional Standards demonstrating leadership, an understanding of diverse backgrounds, comprehensive and integrated programming, academic reinforcement and continuous elevation based on lessons learned.

The aforementioned predispositions and challenges our students are faced with are derivatives of the fact that many of our students reside in neighborhoods characterized by high rates of persistent and concentrated poverty, joblessness, and a range of other social ills. GSA's approach to holistic wellness programming is grounded in research mirroring our student population. We know not all young people who grow up in socially and economically disadvantaged families and neighborhoods that are bereft of mainstream avenues of social and economic mobility end up a failure but some actually succeed against the odds. We reject the "everything is wrong with you and we are going to fix it" deficit model that characterizes or undergirds much of the community-based work with young people of color. Instead, our work reflects two evidence based determinants of success: 1) engagement in a mediating institution in the local community that encourages pro-social behavior and discourages anti-social or dysfunctional behavior (e.g. The Boys and Girls Club, YMCA or YWCA); and 2) connections to a diverse network of individuals and institutions outside of the local neighborhood that serve as "bridges" to the social and economic mainstream for vulnerable people --- what is referred to in the research literature as bridging social capital.

Below in another evidence based statistic supporting our whole child approach:

- Roeser et al. (1999) examined how academic functioning is affected by poor mental health due to frequent negative emotions and cognitions and poor academic motivation in children in the eighth and ninth grade. Their data showed that the students with positive mental health and high academic motivation were those with the best grades, and that poorly motivated students with frequent negative emotions and thoughts were those with the worst grade point averages. *Rüppel, Florian & Liersch, Sebastian & Walter, Ulla. (2015). The influence of psychological well-being on academic success. Journal of Public Health. 23. 15-24. 10.1007/s10389-015-0654-y.*

Furthermore, after reviewing test scores from last year, 20-25% of our population show a correlation between significant emotional stressors and lower test scores. One student in particular, who complained of a difficult home situation on EOG test day, received a 1 score on their test. On retake test day, only a couple of weeks later but under much less duress, that student scored a 5.

The GSA Mental Health and Wellness program will promote positive reinforcement, a commitment to reducing non-academic stressors to create capacity to learn, an emphasis on pro-social behavior and connecting our students to people and experiences that encourage freedom to discover success and a fulfilling life.

Our Health and Wellness Committee meets regularly to monitor the effectiveness of our strategies and brainstorm and build new programming in a continuous effort to elevate our offerings. Our full-time additional counselor will allow GSA to better identify school-wide trends and individual needs, reduce behavior issues, and support academic success with greater curriculum integration, more effective home reinforcement, and stronger community ties resourcing our students and families in a bigger way. Quantitative metrics include:

- Grow number of program offerings for whole family support systems by 50%
- Develop a new auditing tool to identify student population trends and inform strategic tactical plans to proactively drive positive trend shifts.
- Provide 2 – 3 additional resources to teach students and families how to cope with trauma.
- Reduce negative behavior reports during the school day by at least 25%.
- Increase parent engagement by 25% using program attendance and qualitative metrics.
- Greater number of minor behavior cases handled in house with counseling versus referral

GSA currently partners with Medicaid in a variety of ways. Mental health referrals are steadily increasing with our students. Many scholars are referred to outside agencies or centers for therapy, psychological evaluation or treatment. Family Medicaid covers some of these costs allowing GSA to provide these resources at no burden to the students or their families. GSA partners with the Aya Center for therapy referrals and behavior referrals – this is common for students who exhibit negative, disruptive or dangerous behaviors in school. Having various resources and centers as partners is critical in targeting specific treatment.

The administration collaborates with the counseling program and Health and Wellness Committee to leverage employee benefit providers to also support our students and families. Our benefits partners have participated in on-site health fairs and provided support for our annual Health and Wellness nights.

The Managing Director, will support marketing and promotion of current and new programming among the school community and broader neighborhood encouraging larger family engagement in our students learning and community support for our students. Various wellness topics and highlights will be featured on our GSA website, weekly GSA School Newsletter, our GSA Facebook page and on Class Dojo, a virtual classroom community. Standard school calendar events will also be used as forums for sharing wellness information. This will include our monthly Parent Empowerment Meetings, an event used to provide parents with tools, resources, and strategies to reinforce classroom learning at home, Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences, a connection point to discuss individual student progress and Dinner with Dads, an event encouraging paternal engagement. GSA will also provide wellness education using telephone messages, handouts, brochures, presentations and other marketing collateral. Content across the aforementioned mediums will include event postings, reminders and recaps, among other information. Parents and students will be involved in the planning and execution of events and, of course, be the primary benefactors of the content.

The Head of School will enforce curriculum integration. A portion of the morning will be set aside to review character education, increase global perspective, stretching and mindfulness exercises, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and School Creed, and to recognize birthday and other school celebrations and announcements for the day. This will reinforce routine and teach the students to expect a comprehensive approach to all subject matter to include wellness practices. Further, counselors will collaborate with school staff to develop short information lessons, activities and collateral material to be used in the classroom making it easy to execute the wellness curriculum and drive engaged participation.

Lastly, GSA will continue our work with Bridges2Success, K-12 Education Reform Idea Lab, to provide staff development training in the area of culturally responsive teaching strategies and to target GSA students with emotional and behavioral problems that impede learning. Through individual and group counseling, targeted students and their

families will develop coping strategies to deal with such issues as grief and loss, separation and divorce, drug addiction, and anger management. The program also will help GSA staff develop skills required to buffer and insulate students when stressful events occur in their lives. Training will build skills and competencies for GSA staff in managing classroom behavior, building social and cultural capital as well as developing positive narratives for GSA students, and creating a culture of success at GSA.

Some of our existing programming that we are looking to expand and new innovative programming we would be able to launch with an additional full-time resource include:

- GSA holds **Parent Empowerment Meetings**, a monthly touchpoint with parents allowing GSA to tackle whole family topics, reinforce school policies, and cover hot topics. It is imperative we drive an engaged parental unit which we believe can be accomplished by helping alleviate family stressors and embedding GSA families in a diverse, effective network of community bridging institutions that address nonacademic stressors that can adversely affect GSA students' learning.
- **Dinner and Dialogue with Dads**, is a series that facilitates paternal engagement with sons and daughters giving custodial and non-custodial fathers an opportunity to be involved in their child's education, cultivate meaningful relationships with their children, and create an attitude and environment that sets themselves, their families and their children up for success. Currently this program runs quarterly and covers general topics such as how to help your child with reading comprehension or positive parenting outlooks. We are looking to increase the program frequency and deepen the content.
- **Soft Skills Training**, program for young men and women to learn and practice those non-cognitive skills required for success.
- **Intergenerational Connectivity and Mentorship Programs**, a series of moderated conversations to provide perspective and encourage the sharing of old and new experiences across generations in an effort to build progressive but historically sound futures.
- **GSA Bi-Annual Health and Wellness Fair**, to be held each Fall and Spring bringing parents, students, faculty and staff, and community partners together to participate in an interactive event to discuss key health and wellness issues affecting our population and ways to work on healthy habits as a family. The event features local businesses, rotating activity modules (jump rope, aerobics, yoga, and walking), and a presentation on mental, physical and nutritional health and its impact on child development and academic success.
- **Wellness Conversations** and activities that support the dismantling of negative health trends among African American and Hispanic populations and include discussions around common age-appropriate emotional challenges such as social media, teen pregnancy, drugs/alcohol associated with peer pressure, violence/abuse in the home, and positive relationship building.
- **Career Planning**, immersing our students in environments where minorities are grossly underrepresented but can be found thriving. Providing exposure to minority entrepreneurs, head on addressing of opportunities and challenges facing minorities in business, branding yourself, cultivating good ideas, presentation skills, and a Launch Fund to support program outputs.

GSA's network of community collaborators is the heart of what makes GSA's model unique and effective. GSA integrates an innovative model of strategic partnerships and research-based practices, and involves parents and caregivers in ways that contribute to the health and success of students *and* the broader community. GSA is also the only laboratory school in North Carolina focused on developing teachers who can meet the unique needs of vulnerable youth and encouraging holistic student achievement through personal health, academic, and entrepreneurial education. We have demonstrated success in creating and building networks of leadership organizations and cultivating those relationships to deliver a host of leverageable academic, social and cultural enrichment activities anchored in a multi-disciplinary school day and leading to more positive student outcomes. Currently, GSA has partnerships with the Kenan Charitable Trust, the Tabitha Foundation, some small investments from companies like Johnson & Johnson, as well as in-kind support from all of the Triangle area universities, and several community organizations and local chapters of national outreach organizations such as the Links, Inc. in support of mental health and wellness.

It is critically important that we create more opportunities for students, who otherwise wouldn't be exposed, to gain an early understanding of the role health and wellness plays in combatting various medical conditions, such as diabetes, particularly those that disproportionately affect the communities represented by our student population. Additional people resources are often the bottleneck in expanding offerings. As a grant recipient, GSA is certain it will be able to drive greater impact related to health and wellness and school safety.

**Template for Proposed Budget**

<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Requested Funds</b>	<b>Other Funds</b> (match not required)	<b>Total Cost</b>
<i>(example request: \$73,110 for one SSW &amp; one SN)</i>			
<i>School Social Worker, salary</i>	<i>\$42,000</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>\$47,000</i>
<i>School Social Worker, benefits</i>	<i>\$6,110</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$6,110</i>
<i>School Nurse, salary</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>	<i>\$31,000</i>	<i>\$51,000</i>
<i>School Nurse, benefits</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$6,630</i>	<i>\$6,630</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>			

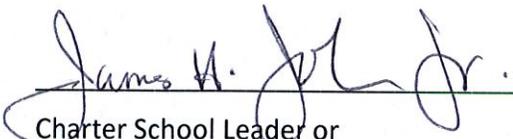
Assurance Page

The partners agree to the below-listed activities.

- Provide administrative supervision and support to foster success of the program.
- Work cooperatively with North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and grant partners in monitoring and evaluating the program to meet reporting requirements.
- Ascertain that members of the partnership follow applicable federal and state laws to promote equal opportunity for all participants without regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, political affiliation, or national origin.
- Attest that all funds will be used to develop and implement program described in the application and approved.
- Establish fiscal control and accounting procedures for proper disbursement of and accounting for program funds.

  
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Primary Contact Signature

  
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Date

  
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Charter School Leader or  
School District Superintendent Signature

  
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Date