



Contact: Candie A. Price, MACE, MPR
New Schools for Alabama
205-549-3214
candie@newschoolsforalabama.org

New Schools for Alabama selects second cohort for its School Founders Program

BIRMINGHAM, July 1, 2020 – New Schools for Alabama has selected Anthony Oliver and Ruben Morris as the second cohort of its School Founders Program, a highly-selective yearlong fellowship for aspiring charter school founders in Alabama. Oliver has been an educator and leader in Tarrant, Vestavia, Jefferson County and Birmingham City Schools, and has served as the founding Executive Director at Breakthrough Birmingham. Morris has been an educator and school leader in Birmingham, Alabama and Denver, Colorado and currently serves as Program Director of Build Up-Ensley.

To be eligible, applicants for the cohort had to be on track to apply for a 2022 school opening. For this cycle, two Fellowship opportunities were available. New Schools for Alabama Executive Director, Tyler Barnett, said, “We are only in the second year of this program, yet we continue to see strong local applicants who have bold visions to improve the education of students in their communities. The Selection Team and I believe that the Fellows in this cohort have what it takes to launch truly innovative, high-performing schools for Alabama kids who may be looking for another option.”

“I’m excited about this opportunity, and specifically, the chance to learn more about the Diverse by Design school model, which will be a key component of the charter school. This model intentionally brings students together from different demographics [i.e. race, gender, socioeconomic status], to foster and model an environment of collaboration, acceptance and understanding, which will ultimately propel our students to become agents of change throughout their lives,” said Oliver.

Morris is slated to open Alabama Aerospace and Aviation High School, a school that will integrate aerospace aviation into its academic courses. “The School Founders Program is an incredible chance for me to learn as much as I can, while also giving me the time to build strong relationships within the community and with parents well before the launch of the school. Our school will provide students the opportunity to engage in multidisciplinary projects, enroll in dual-credit courses with local colleges and universities, and work in apprenticeships with local aerospace industry firms leading to industry recognized credentials,” Morris stated.

New Schools for Alabama recruits, selects, and trains promising leaders to launch new, high-quality charter schools around the state. The program provides technical assistance during the charter application and startup process, assistance with navigating Alabama-specific regulatory requirements, and a full-time administrative residency in a high-performing charter school network in another state. Additionally, fellows receive a one-year stipend to cover salary and fringe expenses as well as travel and other accommodations necessary to support Fellows in their full-time commitment to the launch of a new school.

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About New Schools for Alabama

New Schools for Alabama is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, public charity organization created to serve kids in Alabama. The organization supports the growth of excellent public charter schools in Alabama to ensure that every child has access to a quality public education. Additionally, New Schools for Alabama recruits high-caliber leaders to establish new schools in underserved communities and fosters a policy environment that supports the growth of excellent charter schools in high-need areas throughout the state. For more information go to www.newschoolsforalabama.org

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