



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Shelbi Young

syoung@cegroupinc.net

(210)-365-1501

Essence Preparatory Public School Takes a Unique Approach to Educating San Antonio's East Side Students

San Antonio, Texas (December 18, 2023) – Entering its second year of operation, Essence Preparatory Public School continues to challenge the status quo of public education through its community-based holistic approach to students' academic, mental, physical, and emotional development.

While the East Side PK-8 charter school adheres to all TEKS curricula and assessments, Essence Prep deviates in its approach to instruction by supporting a rigorous academic curriculum with Social Emotional Learning, Project-Based Learning, Enrichment Programs, Response to Intervention, and Social-Emotional Support. The school elevates children's sense of self and concept of identity by referring to them as "scholars" rather than "students."

San Antonio's newest charter school was a dream come true for Founder and Superintendent Akeem Brown, a Brooklyn native who has made a career for himself in San Antonio's education and government sectors. While working as a senior management analyst for San Antonio's Office of Eastpoint, Brown watched the predominately African American and Hispanic East Side students struggle to excel after high school graduation. The former New York teacher was determined to tackle the root of the issue by opening a PK-8 public charter school that would equip all scholars, regardless of their race, ethnic background, or home zip code, with equal opportunities for educational success.

Every detail that has gone into the creation of Essence Prep – from fundraising to hiring to curriculum development – has been a part of a tight-knit, grassroots movement. Brown explains the reason for intentionally seeking out native East Siders when building his team, "We have faculty and staff whose families have been in the East Side for four or five generations. They've seen the consequences of inadequate education and they're eager to fight for the next generation's right to succeed. That fight starts with public education."

Essence Prep's "RISE" values (Responsibility, Intellectual Investment, Service, and Excellence) describe the vision for its approach, beliefs, and culture. The school is dedicated to developing leading "agents of change," in their communities, by preparing scholars for high



school, college, and beyond through rigorous academics, intentional character development, and encouragement of community involvement. Students are encouraged to act as change agents through weekly projects that require them to use problem-solving skills and critical thinking to develop solutions to community-based problems.

“Empowering Essence Prep scholars to be agents of change within their communities allows them to address local challenges that they experience firsthand, informs them of their transformative potential, and instills a sense of ownership and pride in our scholars that we hope will generate a cycle of impactful change for San Antonio’s East Side neighborhoods.” – Founder and Superintendent of Essence Preparatory, Akeem Brown.

The charter school frequently encourages its scholars to take advantage of opportunities that their community offers to them. In partnership with the San Antonio Ballet School, all kindergarten through second grade Essence Prep scholars are offered [free ballet courses](#). This partnership makes Essence Prep the only PK-8 school in San Antonio offering the American Ballet Theatre curriculum as part of their K-2 core classes. Adopting the only ballet curriculum recognized by the U.S. Department of Education provides many physical and mental benefits to Essence Scholars, such as proper posture, muscle development, flexibility, and positive impacts on mental health, confidence, and cognitive and communication skills.

The school’s commitment to maintaining communication is apparent through its active social media channels and engaging [website](#). From a [Facebook profile](#) with images of scholars dancing, learning, laughing, and venturing on field trips; to an [Instagram](#) that communicates about school and family events, costume days, and staff birthdays; to a [YouTube video](#) introducing their staff backed by the “Family Matters” opening theme song, Essence Prep intentionally creates enjoyable, invitational, and personable content for its prospective and current scholars and families. Parents will be happy to hear that Essence Prep and its teachers are expected to communicate weekly with parents via [Classtag](#) or class newsletters.

Essence Preparatory Public School originally opened in August of 2022 and has served 149 kindergarten – fifth grade scholars in its temporary space at St. Benedict Catholic Church. The school will move into a new 65,000-square-foot building off SE Loop 410 in January 2024. It will add a grade level yearly until it reaches eighth grade and will be able to accommodate up to 1,080 students.

The community is invited to a ribbon-cutting ceremony and tour of the new building on Saturday, January 20th at 10 AM. The school will then host the Dreamweek Essence Gala – a black-tie fundraising event – that evening at The Red Berry Estate at 6:30 PM. More information on the gala and tickets can be found [here](#). To learn more about Essence Preparatory Public School, visit their website: <https://www.essenceprepsa.org/>. For media interviews please reach out to syoung@cgroupinc.net.