



Billings Educational Academy Case Statement for New School Building



Billings Educational Academy
For Knowledge and Intellectual Development

Contents

A Letter from the Executive Director	Page 1
Overview	Page 2
Who We Are/Our Educational Philosophy	Page 2
The Capital Campaign	Page 3
How Will We Pay for It?	Page 4
Letter of Support	Page 5
Think of the Kids	Page 6
Testimonials	Page 7
Donor Pledge Form	Page 8



A Letter from the Executive Director / Founder

Having a holistic approach to education is one of the principles of alternative schooling. There needs to be a learning environment where children who think “outside the box” and have “fallen through the cracks” can learn and succeed without frustration. When looking at the whole child, his strengths and weaknesses, there is no expectation for a “one size fits all” environment.

Billings Educational Academy began sixteen years ago on a shoestring budget. The school is guided by the principle that if a child doesn't learn in the way that we teach him, we must teach him in the way that he learns. The school relies on parent participation and community involvement and focuses on child-centered learning and individualized instruction. In this safe and secure environment, learning becomes fun!

BEA has changed the lives of many young people. Students who were typically withdrawn, uncomfortable around others and struggling academically turned themselves around after being here for awhile. Many of these young students with some form of autism, mostly Asperger's, have gone on to college to earn a degree and one has even received her master's degree. These students live on their own and lead productive lives, and give back to the community.

With continued support from the community, Billings Educational Academy will be able to expand our program to serve more of these incredibly intelligent young people. The proposed new school building will be much larger to ensure an environment conducive to effective learning.

Please consider supporting BEA in our capital campaign. Your tax- deductible donation will go a long way in helping to perpetuate an investment in alternative education.

Sincerely,

Margo Haak
Founder and CEO



“BEA has changed the lives of many young people. Students who were typically withdrawn, uncomfortable around others and struggling academically turned themselves around after being here for a while.”

Overview

The BEA Board of Directors, teachers and parents have begun a \$600,000.00 capital campaign. The amount raised so far has reached \$413,193.97. The goal of the capital campaign is to build a new school that will be larger and able to serve many more students in an alternative setting. It will be cost efficient, empowering Billings Educational Academy to continue serving the Billings community for many years to come.



Who We Are

BEA helps children with higher-than-normal intelligence, who are not succeeding in the traditional school system, find the tools they need to succeed in school and in life. The children are allowed to progress at their own pace, which helps them discover their ability to learn.

When they leave BEA, they have attained the skills required to flourish in public school, higher education, employment and all their future endeavors.

Our Education Philosophy

BEA is a 501(c)3 non-profit alternative school founded in 2001. In 2017-2018, BEA plans to welcome students in its new building and will continue its tradition of individual academic interests and inquiry, along with hands-on activities and the arts. Teachers, parents and students will work collectively to maintain BEA's dynamic atmosphere of respect, involvement and exploration.

“Since I have gone to Billings Educational Academy, I have become a lot better at learning. I was doing OK before, but now I can do so much more than I could before....I am happy at this school and it works for me, and that’s what really matters.”—E. H.

Total Building Budget		
Item	%	Total
Land	18%	\$110,000
Permits / Engineering	1%	\$10,000
Excavation / Foundation	7%	\$40,000
Building Construction	52%	\$310,000
Paving	5%	\$30,000
Furnishings	4%	\$25,000
Education Materials	3%	\$20,000
Playground	5%	\$30,000
Contingencies	5%	\$25,000
Total	100%	\$600,000

The Capital Campaign

In August 2014, Billings Educational Academy (BEA) purchased a 20,000 square-foot parcel of land on the West End of Billings for the purpose of building a new school. The purchase was made possible by a generous donation from the Wrightson Fund, established by the late Jim Wrightson, (left) who taught for 32 years in Billings Public Schools and was a long time volunteer teacher at BEA.



The new school building will aid in the continued financial stability and long-term sustainability of the school. Currently, BEA leases a 3,200-square-foot building for \$2,680 per month. This new school building will allow the BEA to move into a 4,600-square-foot building, tailor-made to meet the needs of students. In addition to eliminating the monthly rent expense, which would make more funds available to benefit students, BEA will increase its student capacity by 50 percent.

The new Wrightson Education Center will offer a modern atmosphere conducive to a whole life learning experience. Centrally located in the Billings area, the new facility will incorporate separate areas for group learning activities, classrooms, as well as specialized classrooms for computer skill development, music, art and a spacious study and library.

How Will We Pay For It?

Billings Educational Academy hopes to raise funds from the following sources:

Sources of Support		
	%	Goal
Foundations / Grants	52%	\$270,000
Individual Donors	24%	\$165,000
Corporations	24%	\$165,000

How Will Our Finances Be Affected?

Construction of the new school building will allow the BEA to eliminate its annual rent of over \$30,000. Eliminating this expense will allow the BEA to devote more funds into our mission of educating children who have not been thriving in the traditional school system, as well as a scholarship program for low-income families.



Timeline

Billings Educational Academy hopes to begin construction of the new school building by the end of 2017 and to offer classes in the new building by early 2018.

“Coming to school at Billings Educational Academy has been a life-changing experience for me. At BEA I have a lot of friends.”—N. G.

Letter of Support

I have served as the Director of the Eastern Yellowstone Special Services Cooperative for the past 29 years. During that time, I have watched a burgeoning emergence of students on the Autism Spectrum. Our public schools struggle to understand these students and to develop effective programming for them. It takes a uniquely gifted teacher to work successfully with these children and young adults. The public schools have a few such gifted teachers, but the rigors of our educational institution compound the many factors which make public school so difficult for these students and the adults that endeavor to serve them. Indeed, for many of these students it seems impossible for them to navigate our public schools.

For a significant number of such students, Margo Haak and the Billings Educational Academy has filled the void and made success possible for otherwise failing - sometimes dangerous - students. When I sit in meetings with hurting and often angry parents, and the frustrated school staff who cannot design successful programming for students on the spectrum, I find myself increasingly asking these teams to consider the possible placement of these kids at the BEA. Over these last three decades, several of our schools have come to rely on Margo and her team of volunteers to literally salvage the lives of many of our most challenging students, and the lives of their family members. Truly, many of these families are in crisis when their children rage at attending public school. To see the tenor of the family dynamics change and see students who have been so filled with rage find calm and success under Margo's programming is remarkable. Margo is gifted with these children, and her academy is unique in educating these students in a quiet, calm and nurturing setting.

I cannot say enough about the "magic" that occurs at the BEA. I would strongly encourage your support and validation of this wonderful program.

—Leonard Orth, Director of Eastern Yellowstone Special Services Cooperative

"Mrs. Haak has proven that dreams can come true. She has hope and ambition not only for herself, but for her students. I like how she pushes me to the best of my abilities. I think everyone should have a teacher like Mrs. Haak. I feel so lucky to be a student with a teacher as remarkable as her."— L.H.

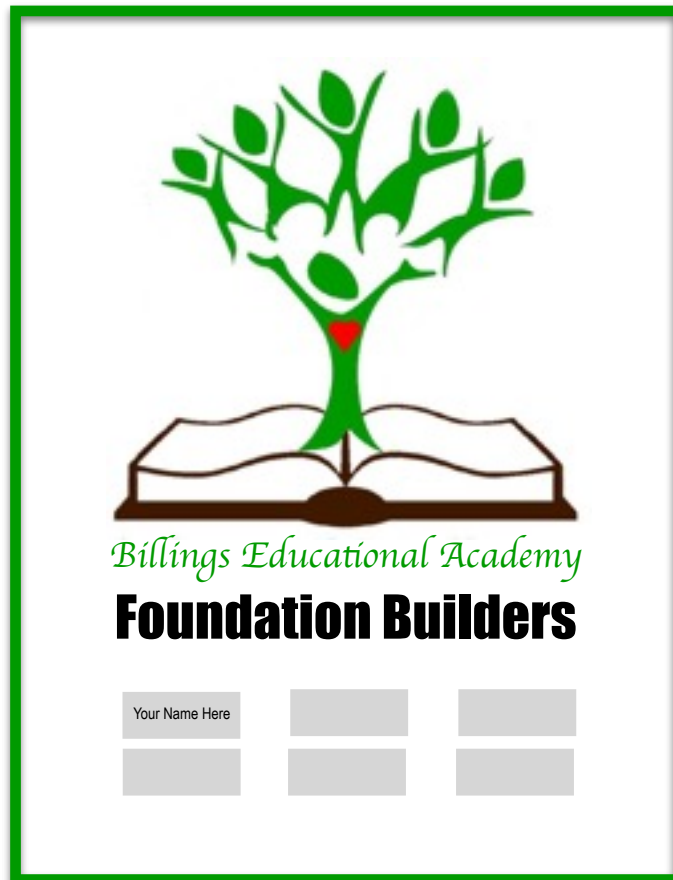
Think of the Kids!

Billings Educational Academy (BEA) has been transforming lives of young people for over a decade. You can take part in changing lives of youth by being a Foundation Builder for Effective Education!

Elite recognition is available for the first 50 sponsors to donate \$1,000 or more for the new building.

BEA Foundation Builders Benefits:

- Permanent recognition in the new school entrance display
- Recognition in the Billings Educational Academy newsletter & website
- Personalized plaque honoring you as a First 50 Foundation Builder



Naming opportunities are available on an individual basis. Contact us for details.

BEA is a 501(c)3 organization and your donation is tax- deductible to the extent the law will allow.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of BEA students now and into the future!

Testimonials

“What I liked about BEA was not sitting in a class for an hour with 20 to 30 other kids while the teacher just lectured at you. Here, I really felt like I learned what was being taught versus just repeating what the teacher said.

The teachers got to know each of us and our learning styles and taught us how we learned best. They helped me be more confident as a student.

“I got my undergraduate at Rocky Mountain College with a major in art and a minor in history. I am now attending grad school in Portland, Oregon, for a Master’s in Library and Information Science.”

—Caitlin Alweis, BEA Graduate

“When our grandson was ready to enter first grade, we felt he needed to be in a school where the teacher would understand his challenges and educate him accordingly.

“Being a student in the BEA is no doubt one of the best experiences he has had in his 22 years. There he learned the 3R’s, plus many social skills. He still speaks of his time there and visits periodically.

“Whatever level of learning your child is (challenged, average, or highly intelligent), we recommend enrolling them in this school.”

—Dolores and Duane Wald

“My daughter attended the BEA when she was in the seventh grade. I was so thankful to have an alternative placement where she felt safe and supported on a daily basis. Even though she has now graduated from high school, she still considers the BEA as a safe haven. When she began her first job, she would often take her lunch to the BEA during a midday break. I think her behavior speaks volumes about the level of



acceptance she felt at the school. Margo’s patience is unmatched. I remember the first day we walked into the BEA. My daughter said, “I can go here; they have a cat.” She now works as a vet’s assistant. I am so grateful for the BEA.”

—Virginia Bryan

Donor Information

Name: _____

Billing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Gift / Pledge Information

I want to support BEA students as an exclusive Foundation Builder for Effective Education!

Choose a pledge option:

- My pledge will be a one time / monthly / quarterly / yearly gift. *(circle one)*
- I will send a check now. *(payable to Billings Educational Academy)*
- Please charge my credit card on _____ *(specify date)*
Name: (as it appears on card) _____
Card Number: _____
Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____
Signature: _____
Amount: \$ _____
- I would like more information. Please contact me. *(use donor information above)*

Donor Signature(s)

Donor Recognition

(First 50 donors of \$1,000 or more receive permanent recognition on the donor wall prominently displayed in the new school.)

Name used for recognition

I wish to remain anonymous

Mail your pledge to:

Billings Educational Academy
P.O. Box 22592
Billings, MT 59104

BEA is a 501(c)3 organization and your donation is tax- deductible to the extent the law will allow.

