



# ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020





# YOU ARE IMPACTING CITY SCHOLARS

Some may describe the 2019-2020 school year as “unprecedented,” “challenging,” “tumultuous,” and the list goes on. As we ended the school year and began anew, we see progress, transformation and are encouraged by the tenacity and strength of Emerald Academy scholars, faculty and staff.

Because of your commitment to academic excellence, we were able to shift quickly to virtual learning last spring and implement continued choice in fall 2020 with in-person and distance learning options. Through generous community support, we were able to move to 1:1 technology and ensure every family had access to the internet.

So yes, even though we have felt the burdens brought on by 2020, we still look back on the year with gratitude and celebrate all that has been accomplished. We hope through these pages you see the impact of your dedication to city scholars and know you are changing their trajectory each and every day.



Steve Diggs  
President, Emerald Charter Schools

Emerald Academy's mission is to prepare urban scholars for the college of their choice and community leadership.

# OUR MISSION



# OUR GOALS

## ***Long-Term Goal***

- By 2025, Emerald Academy will be a reward school, as measured by Tennessee's revised accountability system.

## ***Near-Term Goal***

- We will perform in the top half of all Knox County elementary and middle schools.

# OUR VALUES

## ***High Expectations***

- We believe everyone can achieve.

## ***Excellence***

- We keep learning so we can be the best.

## ***Respect***

- We treat others the way we want them to treat us.

## ***Teamwork***

- We work together.

## ***Commitment***

- We press on, even when it gets hard.

# WHAT SETS US APART?



## *College Prep Focus*

Emerald Academy is Knoxville's first and only free, public charter school. It opened in 2015 and serves kindergarten through eighth grades. It is a college-preparatory school focused on preparing scholars for high school and the college of their choice. Each classroom is named after a Historically Black College or University, SEC university, or Ivy League school.



## *1:1 Technology*

Each scholar receives a technology device in the form of a Google Chromebook to allow for a personalized and responsive learning experience. These devices also make it possible to quickly pivot to distance learning in the event that it is necessary.



## *More Time Learning*

By having a longer school day and school year, scholars who attend Emerald Academy from kindergarten through eighth grade receive nearly two additional years of education compared with a traditional public school.

# PREPARING FOR THE

# SCHOLAR'S FUTURE



Jayden Bryant is a sophomore at L&N STEM Academy who is using the foundation he received at Emerald Academy to achieve his dreams.

Jayden attended Emerald Academy from sixth through eighth grade and then transitioned to L&N STEM. He works hard in class, volunteers with the Student Government Association and plays on the school ultimate frisbee team.

"Emerald Academy did a good job getting me ready for high school. The academics prepared me, including the honors math classes, and the teachers I had were amazing," Jayden said.

With college packages beginning to arrive in the mail, Jayden plans to study psychology. "I want to be a therapist. I see people stressed during the pandemic, and I want to help people who need it."

Jayden's parents, La'Tasha Smith-Bryant and her husband, Chris Bryant, say they are pleased at the preparation Emerald Academy gave Jayden. They also have two current Emerald Academy scholars - Ja'Shonna, 12, and Ethan, age 6. "I love the community and the work ethic at Emerald Academy. They encourage the scholars to see themselves as successful, with kindergarteners who are already talking about college. Our 12-year-old already has a college plan," said La'Tasha.

Jayden is undoubtedly an emerging community leader. A skilled break dancer, he is captain of the dance team at his church, Eternal Life Harvest Center. And as a longtime Boy Scout, he will begin working on his Eagle Scout service project next year, in which he hopes to incorporate his passion for dance.

"The scholars have their minds set on leadership and going beyond the status quo. Jayden has a passion for dance. He is finding the avenues to advance that. When he doesn't see the avenues, he is making them," said La-Tasha.



Learn more at [emeraldacademy.org](https://emeraldacademy.org) about how scholars like Jayden are preparing for high school and the college of their choice.

# A PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE



Two things stand out each day to Emerald Academy School Director Lauren Moore: “That we have the opportunity for scholars and their families to be on a continual path of improvement, and everyone is working really hard to meet each scholar’s needs, especially during the pandemic.”

Director Moore has a lifelong passion to serve urban schools and teach literacy.

Raised in Knoxville, she earned her teaching degree at Carson-Newman University. She taught at two urban Knox County schools and earned her master’s degree as a literacy specialist at Columbia University’s Teachers College.

Moore joined Emerald Academy’s faculty prior to the school opening in July 2015. She was drawn because of its dedication to excellence for inner-city scholars. “I felt Emerald Academy was aligned with my values and would be changing the trajectory of scholars’ lives,” she said.

She served in various teaching and leadership roles, and in January 2020, became School Director.

**“EVERYONE IS INVESTED IN OUR MISSION OF GROWING SCHOLARS INTO COLLEGE-BOUND LEADERS. AS OUR EIGHTH-GRADE SCHOLARS ARE GOING INTO HIGH SCHOOLS, THEY HAVE ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO THEM THEY MIGHT NOT HAVE HAD PREVIOUSLY,” SHE SAID.**

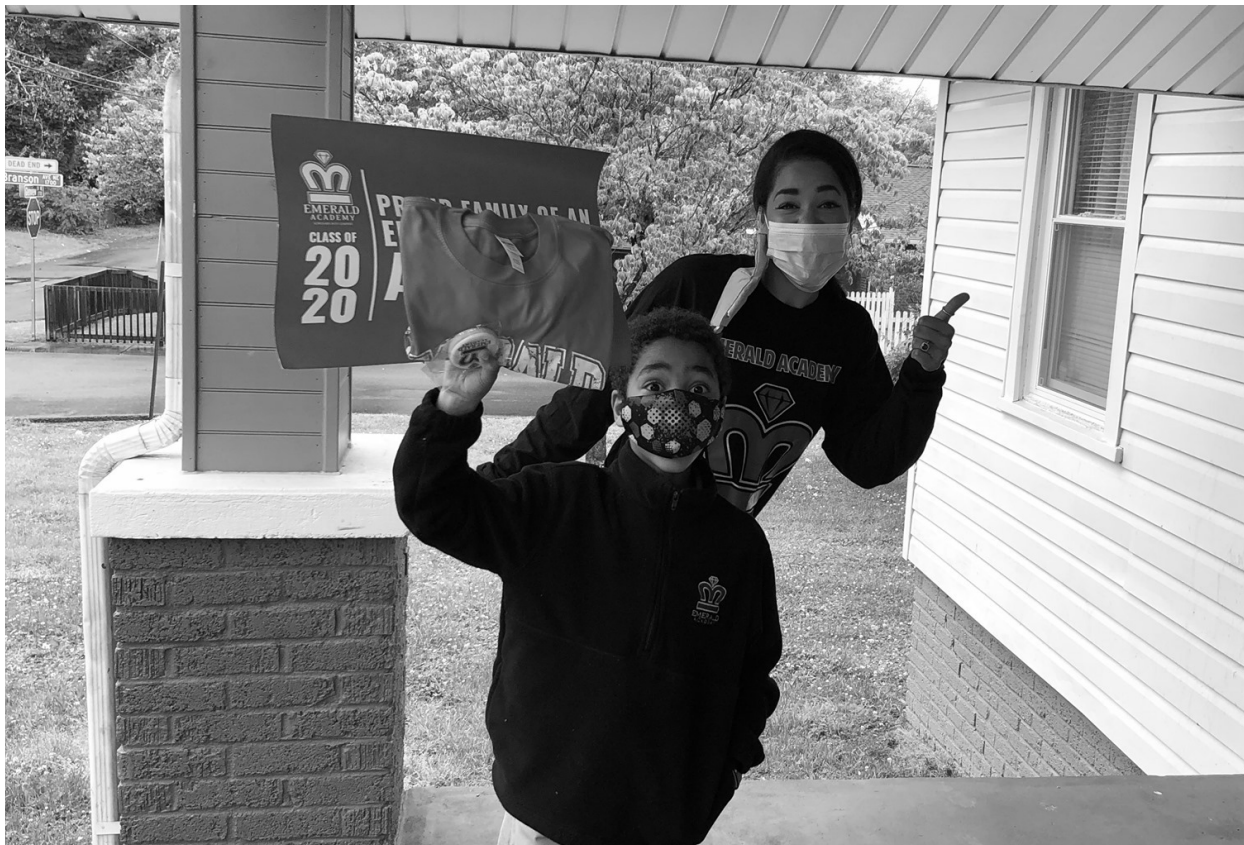
She remains excited about the school’s mission and serving urban scholars. Moore’s team continually monitors each scholar’s progress, both in-person and virtual learners, and she helps her faculty ensure scholars achieve academic success.

# KEEPING A COMMITMENT

In March 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact Tennessee, Emerald Academy transitioned to virtual learning. Staff and faculty rallied to ensure that every scholar had the tools and resources necessary to continue learning. As the school year concluded, staff traveled throughout the city to eighth grade scholars' homes to celebrate and recognize their achievements.

**“I am especially grateful for the faculty and School Director Lauren Moore, who go out of their way to make themselves available and have especially done so since March. I applaud Emerald Academy for continuing classes this past spring virtually, and despite many challenges, the scholars' learning was not interrupted.”**

-Dr. Keith E. Lindsey, Parent of a 7th Grade Scholar



# WORKING WITH KEY PARTNERS

The new school year launched on August 10, 2020 with additional safety and wellness protocol.

The school is staffed by a full-time nurse and school counselor who work with Cherokee Health Systems and provide support to the health and well-being of our scholars, and Ionogen is an innovative, non-toxic cleaning product used at Emerald Academy that has been critical to help mitigate COVID-19.



*Keisha Shervington, back, is the school counselor, and Ashley Brown, front, is the school nurse. Both work at Emerald Academy through a partnership with Cherokee Health Systems.*

# ACHIEVING ACADEMIC SUCCESS: AT HOME AND ON CAMPUS

Tymier and Curtis Johnson love that their two oldest children, Ziya and T'kiyron, are Emerald Academy scholars. But when a new baby arrived in fall 2020, they chose virtual schooling for third grader Ziya and first grader T'kiyron.

"I wanted to keep the baby healthy," said Tymier, now the mother of five. "I wasn't sure I could do virtual learning with a newborn. But the teachers have been excellent, and the children are learning well."

The Johnsons love being involved in their children's school day, and as virtual scholars, they follow the normal routine, using supplies furnished by Emerald Academy – a Chromebook, pencils, paper, books, backpacks and headphones.

Tymier said the children have responded well, and she likes that teachers pay attention to children's learning styles.

"My daughter loves music. She was learning about the continents, and her teacher had a song about continents. My daughter learned all the continents by that song." And T'kiyron, a quick thinker with a hands-on learning style, learns using objects like cubes and coins in math class.

She said teachers during virtual learning have been very supportive. "T'kiyron's teacher has done a great job of making sure scholars are having fun and that they are understanding the work, too. Ziya's teacher supplied a homework checklist. She also offered her phone number in case we needed anything."

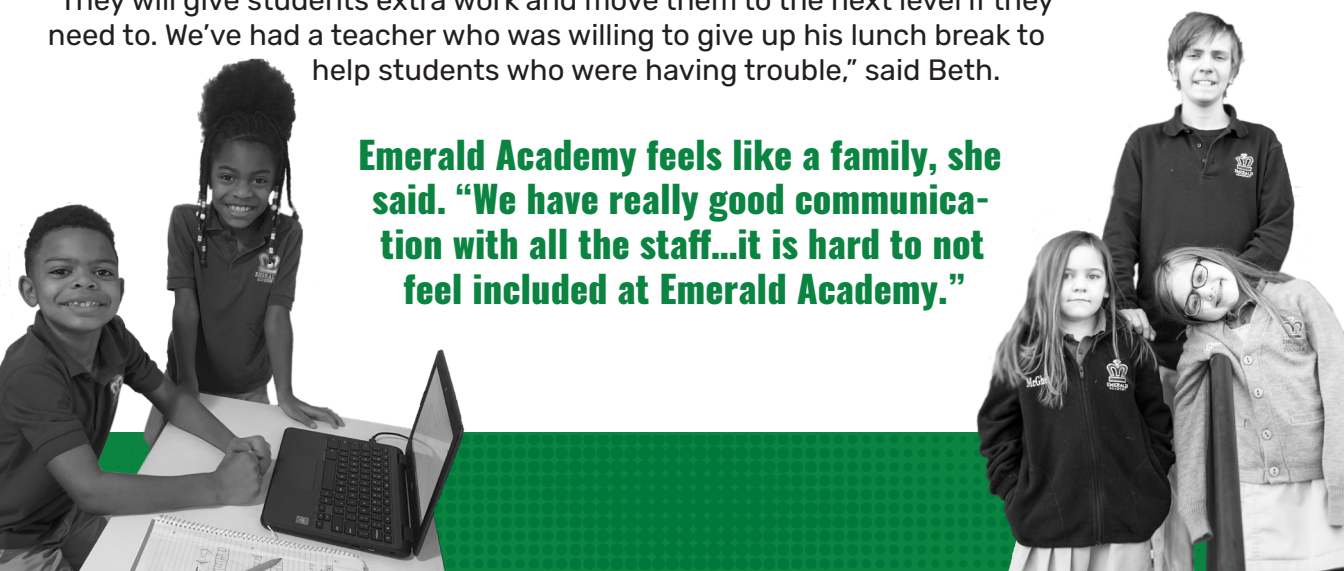
For Dustin and Beth McGhee, they chose to send their three scholars back for on-campus learning.

Eighth grader Gabriel, second grader Alyssa, and first grader Alayna attend class in person. "Sending them to school felt like a no-brainer," said Beth. "If you tell the girls they can't go to school, they break down and cry. The staff has done a really good job of taking precautions to keep everyone safe."

"There is no problem when it comes our children being challenged," said Dustin. He and Beth approve of the heavy emphasis on reading at Emerald Academy, as well as activities like math club, reading club, and the "Book It" program.

"They will give students extra work and move them to the next level if they need to. We've had a teacher who was willing to give up his lunch break to help students who were having trouble," said Beth.

**Emerald Academy feels like a family, she said. "We have really good communication with all the staff...it is hard to not feel included at Emerald Academy."**



## 2019-2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

**Total Revenue** **\$5,032,908**

**Public Funding** \$4,400,988

**Contributions** \$623,050

**Other** \$ 8,870

**Total Expenses** **\$5,114,927**

**Personnel** \$3,817,058

**Transportation & Services** \$551,393

**Supplies and Materials** \$527,281

**Depreciation** \$182,664

**Miscellaneous/Other** \$36,531

*At June 30, 2020, fiscal year-end, Emerald Charter Schools' assets included \$806,075 in cash and accounts receivable.*

## EMERALD CHARTER SCHOOLS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Randy Gibson  
Dr. Kala Gray  
Ed Hedgepeth  
Dr. Keith Lindsey**

**Tim McLemore  
Sanford Miller  
Alvin Nance  
Janene Nordin**

Steve Diggs, President  
Emerald Charter Schools





# EMERALD CHARTER SCHOOLS

1014 Heiskell Ave  
Knoxville, TN 37921  
865.637.3227

[emeraldcharterschools.org](http://emeraldcharterschools.org)