

## TRIUMPH GULF COAST, INC. PRE-APPLICATION FORM

Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. ("Triumph Gulf Coast") has created a pre-application process to provide initial consideration of eligibility for potential ideas of projects or programs that may seek an award of funding. Applicants are required to participate in the pre-application process. Notwithstanding the response from Triumph Gulf Coast on the pre-application form, an Applicant may still elect to submit an Application.

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

**Name of Individual/Entity/Organization:** The Seaside School, Inc.

**Proposal Title:** Dream Big Walton County

**Amount of Triumph Funds Requested:** \$16,580,000

**Total Estimated Project Cost:** \$68,145,000

**Brief Description of Individual/Entity/Organization:** Established in 1996, The Seaside School, Inc. (Seaside Neighborhood School) was created to address the middle school educational needs in South Walton. In 2013, the school expanded to include a high school, Seacoast Collegiate High School (SCHS), to meet the local demand for college preparatory education. As Florida's oldest continuously operating public charter school, it now serves over 500 students in grades 5-12. The middle school is located in Seaside, while grades 9-10 attend classes at Northwest Florida State College's (NWFSC) South Walton Campus. Students in grades 11-12, enrolled in SCHS dual enrollment, commute to NWFSC's Niceville campus. SCHS has graduated 304 students who have earned over 18,000 college credit hours, saving their families over \$1.8 million in tuition. The Seaside School confidently highlights the following achievements:

1. **Top Rankings:** According to the Florida Department of Education Report Card (2022-2023), the Seaside School was ranked as the #1 combination public charter school in Florida and the 8th overall public school. The school ranks in the top 2 percent of public middle schools and the top 6 percent of public high schools in Florida, and Seaside School has received an "A" rating for 21 consecutive years.
2. **SCHS Class of 2024 Success:** We proudly celebrate our 57 dual enrollment graduates who excelled in high school and college coursework. Thirty-four of these graduates earned an associate degree from NWFSC simultaneously with high school graduation. All SCHS graduates were admitted to colleges and universities across 26 states, earning over \$3 million in scholarships and completing over 40,000 volunteer hours.

These extraordinary results stem from the school community's concerted effort to prioritize student success and continuous improvement. The Seaside School ensures that students can excel and achieve their full potential by maintaining high academic standards, equipping and empowering teachers, and providing robust support systems.

### Contact Information

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**Names of co-applicants, partners or other entities, organizations that will have a role in the proposed project or program:** The success of our project is deeply rooted in the strength of our partnerships. The Seaside School, Inc. has a robust collaboration with NWFSC, which will provide staffing and expertise to SCHS leadership. This partnership will enhance dual enrollment opportunities in South Walton, benefiting our students and all future Walton County dual enrollment high school students, traditional college students, and adult learners. In developing this pre-application, we worked closely with the team at NWFSC to deepen our partnership and ensure our vision and goals come to fruition. Additionally, we incorporated the needs of the Walton County School District to create a comprehensive and inclusive initiative.

## **REQUIRED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Need**

In today's rapidly evolving economy, educational attainment and skills are more important than ever for individual success and community prosperity. However, Walton County and its population face significant barriers to achieving education and specialized skill sets beyond high school. According to the Florida College Access Network (2023), Walton County's degree attainment rate trails behind the state of Florida's degree attainment rate by more than 10 percentage points (34.5 percent compared to 44.9 percent, respectively). Addressing Walton County's higher education desert is critical to fostering equitable educational opportunities, providing skills-based training, and economic development.

Aligning educational programs with local demand is essential for equipping students with durable life skills and critical industry competencies that meet the needs of the local economy and community. This strategy enhances employability, supports economic development, and fosters community resilience. According to Florida Commerce, Okaloosa and Walton counties are projected to see double-digit growth in high-skill, high-wage jobs in business administration and computer-related fields over the next eight years. Federal Reserve Economic Data indicated more than half of Walton County residents are housing-burdened, spending over 30 percent of their income on rent or mortgage. This contributes to a shortage of young professionals who remain in the area to live in, care for, and develop their local community.

### **Proposed Project**

SCHS and NWFSC are collaborating to establish a dual enrollment and workforce education center at NWFSC's South Walton County campus. To that end, NWFSC approved a 40-year ground lease agreement with Seaside Schools, Inc. to transform the NWFSC-South Walton campus. This partnership intends to offer all the classes needed for Walton County high school students to earn postsecondary credentials with in-person instructors and online course offerings. This partnership will increase dual enrollment opportunities and enhance SCHS's capacity to increase high school enrollment by expanding an adjacent building.

In addition to the Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree, students will have access to an Associate in Science (A.S.) degree in Computer Information Technology with a specialization in Artificial Intelligence that will prepare them for immediate entry into the job market. Jobs in computer technology are growing faster than average, and workers in occupations related to this A.S. degree can expect to earn between \$52,000 and \$82,500 in their initial years after graduation, according to FloridaCommerce employment projections (2023).

SCHS and NWFSC will also nurture the next generation of business entrepreneurs through the A.S. in Business Administration. In Workforce Development Area 2, workers in related occupations earn between \$58,011 and \$91,104, according to FloridaCommerce projections (2023). Furthermore, completing the A.S. degree qualifies students to enter upper-division university programs in accounting, finance, management, marketing, and business economics.

Embedded certificates and industry certifications will also be available to students through the school's expansion; sample certifications may include Entrepreneurship and Small Business (INTUT002), Master Entrepreneurship Certification (INTUT003), CompTIA A+ (COMPT001), CompTIA Security+ (COMPT008), and Certified Internet Web (CIW) Java Script Specialist (PROSO017), Web Developer (ISOGR004), WordPress (ISOGR005), and Python Coding (ISOGR003).

The college facility and the Accelerator will be open to students from all Walton County high schools and others seeking college-level courses and workforce training. Featuring over 80,000 square feet of educational space, the center will include classrooms and lab spaces for both SCHS and NWFSC. This will include the opportunity for external academic and life skills programming through project partners or other local, regional, and national organizations—one such opportunity being Seaside's Dream Big initiative, which will empower students to become college- and career-ready individuals equipped with key durable life skills and academic excellence needed to excel in any path they choose.

The second component involves the creation of the Accelerator, a versatile building designed to serve both traditional and non-traditional students and working professionals. It will offer a range of educational programs, including leadership development, industry certification bootcamps, teacher education, professional development, and business seminars. Additionally, the Accelerator will function as a workforce and business think tank and incubation center, fostering public and private partnerships, and supporting business and community leaders and entrepreneurs.

This project will be the catalyst for any Walton County resident to have direct access to college classes, resulting in the following outcomes.

- **Enrollment.** By 2028-2029, SCHS will increase its enrollment from 245 to over 550 students (124 percent increase) and expand its graduating cohorts from 57 to 150 students (163 percent increase). Additionally, the number of dual enrollment students will increase from 120 to 300 (150 percent) annually over the next five years.
- **A.S. Degrees.** By the 2026-2027 school year, the project will enroll a minimum of 40 students per grade-level cohort in the A.S. in Computer Information Technology or Business Administration programs. Using the current graduation rates, over 90 percent of these students will complete the A.S. degree program each year. SCHS aims to have 95 percent of completers employed or continuing their education within six months of high school graduation.
- **A.A. Degrees.** Enrollment in the A.A. degree program is projected to grow from 57 to over 100 students per cohort by 2028-2029, with the number of A.A. degrees awarded annually increasing from 34 to more than 80.
- **Certifications.** By 2029, industry certification attainment will increase from 100 to about 800 (700 percent increase) annually through coursework and acceleration camps.
- **Community Training.** The Accelerator building will host professional training events, conferences, job fairs, and networking events, engaging over 4,000 community members and professionals annually.

### Funding

The Seaside School, Inc. is requesting \$16,580,000 from Triumph Gulf Coast to develop and expand projects at our campus located at 109 Greenway Trail, Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459. The proposal’s total budget over five (2024-2029) years is \$68,145,000, with approximately 66 percent of funds earmarked for construction, 26 percent for personnel, and 8 percent for equipment and development.

Approximately \$10,000,000 in Triumph funds will be allocated to cover the construction of the Accelerator along with classrooms and laboratory spaces essential for delivering academic and workforce instruction. We anticipate \$3,700,000 of funds will support personnel including CTE, technology, success coaches, and enhanced STEM teaching staff. Lastly, \$3,000,000 will be used to cover equipping and furnishing the Accelerator and new classrooms and laboratory spaces.

We have identified a diverse range of matching fund sources to ensure our proposed project's successful implementation and sustainability. The total estimated matching funds amount to \$53,231,000. These sources will demonstrate our commitment and capacity to leverage external support and ensure the project's financial stability.

Matching Source	Amount	Matching Source	Amount
State Appropriations	\$9,500,000	Florida CAPE Funding	\$2,231,000
Seaside School Foundation, Inc.	\$13,400,000	Local Capital Improvement Revenue	\$13,300,000
Florida Educational Funding Program	\$14,800,000		

### Impact

The proposed project represents a bold and comprehensive approach to transforming Walton and surrounding disproportionately affected counties. Increasing the number of high school graduates remaining in our community is essential to bolster local economic development and diversification. During the project period, students are expected to earn over 350 associate degrees and attain slightly more than 3,000 industry certifications—credentials that increase their lifetime earnings, improve their economic and social mobility, and provide them pathways to employment.

Through this project, we will enhance the local workforce by addressing current and future skills gaps and ensuring local businesses have the talent they need to recover and grow. The Accelerator will serve approximately 12,000 individuals over the project period, delivering long-term positive impacts to Walton County and the region. The project’s focus on high-growth industry clusters will diversify the local economic base, enhancing economic stability. With the support of this grant, we are committed to being the catalyst for greater change in the community.

### Timeline

The Dream Big Walton County project is designed to deliver significant economic impact in the shortest amount of time. We aim to be the global model for developing young, bright professionals. Construction and renovation will commence

immediately, with Dream Big Programming launching in Fall 2024 with expanded staffing, professional development, and the purchasing of key equipment. By Fall 2025, the SCHS campus is expected to expand fully, with enrollments beginning in the first A.S. degree. The South Walton college campus expansion is anticipated to be complete by Spring 2026 with the opening of the Accelerator. By Fall 2026, full dual enrollment and staffing will be in place. New certifications will come online as early as 2024, producing new workforce certificates by the end of the calendar year.

**Please Select the Proposal’s Eligibility Category(s)**

Pursuant to Section 288.8017, Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. was created to make awards from available funds to projects or programs that meet the priorities for economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties. The disproportionately affected counties are: Bay County, Escambia County, Franklin County, Gulf County, Okaloosa County, Santa Rosa County, Walton County, or Wakulla County. See, Section 288.08012.

1. From the choices below, please check the box that describes the purpose of the proposed project or program (check all that apply):

- Ad valorem tax rate reduction within disproportionately affected counties; Local match requirements of s. 288.0655 for projects in the disproportionately affected counties;
- Public infrastructure projects for construction, expansion, or maintenance which are shown to enhance economic recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the disproportionately affected counties;
- Grants to local governments in the disproportionately affected counties to establish and maintain equipment and trained personnel for local action plans of response to respond to disasters, such as plans created for the Coastal Impacts Assistance Program;
- Grants to support programs that prepare students for future occupations and careers at K-20 institutions that have campuses in the disproportionately affected counties. Eligible programs include those that increase students’ technology skills and knowledge; encourage industry certifications; provide rigorous, alternative pathways for students to meet high school graduation requirements; strengthen career readiness initiatives; fund high-demand programs of emphasis at the bachelor’s and master’s level designated by the Board of Governors; and, similar to or the same as talent retention programs created by the Chancellor of the State University System and the Commission of Education, encourage students with interest or aptitude for science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medical disciplines to pursue postsecondary education at a state university or a Florida College System institution within the disproportionately affected counties;
- Grants to support programs that provide participants in the disproportionately affected counties with transferable, sustainable workforce skills that are not confined to a single employer; and
- Grants to the tourism entity created under s. 288.1226 for the purpose of advertising and promoting tourism and Fresh From Florida, and grants to promote workforce and infrastructure, on behalf of all of the disproportionately affected counties.

**Please Select the Priorities this Proposal’s Outcomes will Achieve**

1. Please check the box if the proposed project or program will meet any of the following priorities (check all that apply):

- Generate maximum estimated economic benefits, based on tools and models not generally employed by economic input-output analyses, including cost-benefit, return-on-investment, or dynamic scoring techniques to determine how the long- term economic growth potential of the disproportionately affected counties may be enhanced by the investment.
- Increase household income in the disproportionately affected counties above national average household income.

- Leverage or further enhance key regional assets, including educational institutions, research facilities, and military bases.
- Partner with local governments to provide funds, infrastructure, land, or other assistance for the project.
- Benefit the environment, in addition to the economy.
- Provide outcome measures.
- Partner with K-20 educational institutions or school districts located within the disproportionately affected counties as of January 1, 2017.
- Are recommended by the board of county commissioners of the county in which the project or program will be located.
- Partner with convention and visitor bureaus, tourist development councils, or chambers of commerce located within the disproportionately affected counties.