

CELEBRATING

TEN

YEARS

ROCKETSHIP
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**YEAR IN
REVIEW 2016-17**



Preston Smith, Co-Founder and CEO of Rocketship Public Schools

(Photo by Alison Yin '06/AP Images for Carolina Alumni Review)

Ten years ago, we opened our first Rocketship school in a church in downtown San Jose. We launched that first school with a bold mission and a steadfast conviction that all children can achieve success in school and life. We knew what was possible in public education. But we didn't know if we could recruit enough parents to give our new, unproven school a chance.

160 families signed up to send their students to our first Rocketship school. Those founding parents were the backbone of our school that year. Looking back now, I think they believed more fully in the promise of Rocketship than any of us thought was possible. When a stifling heat wave sent the thermostat in our AC-free classrooms through the roof, we worried that parents would leave. They didn't. When our computer servers kept crashing and kicking our Rocketeers off their digital learning programs, we worried that parents would complain that our classrooms were a far cry from the 21st century learning environment they were promised. They didn't. Our parents understood that change takes tenacity. They understood that Rocketship was more than an innovative idea to rethink elementary education. They understood that Rocketship is a collective of parents, teachers, leaders, and students working together to transform the future for their community.

Those founding families are now watching their Rocketeers head off to college.

The choice they made ten years ago undoubtedly changed the trajectory of their child's life. But their choice to take a chance on our new school also launched a movement that has grown to impact the lives of over 15,000 students across 16 schools nationwide.

We've made a remarkable impact in our first ten years, but Rocketship is still a work in progress. Just like the Rocketeers we serve, we never stop learning. We never stop thinking about how we can better serve our students, develop our talent, and support our parents to exercise their power as advocates for equity and excellence in public education.

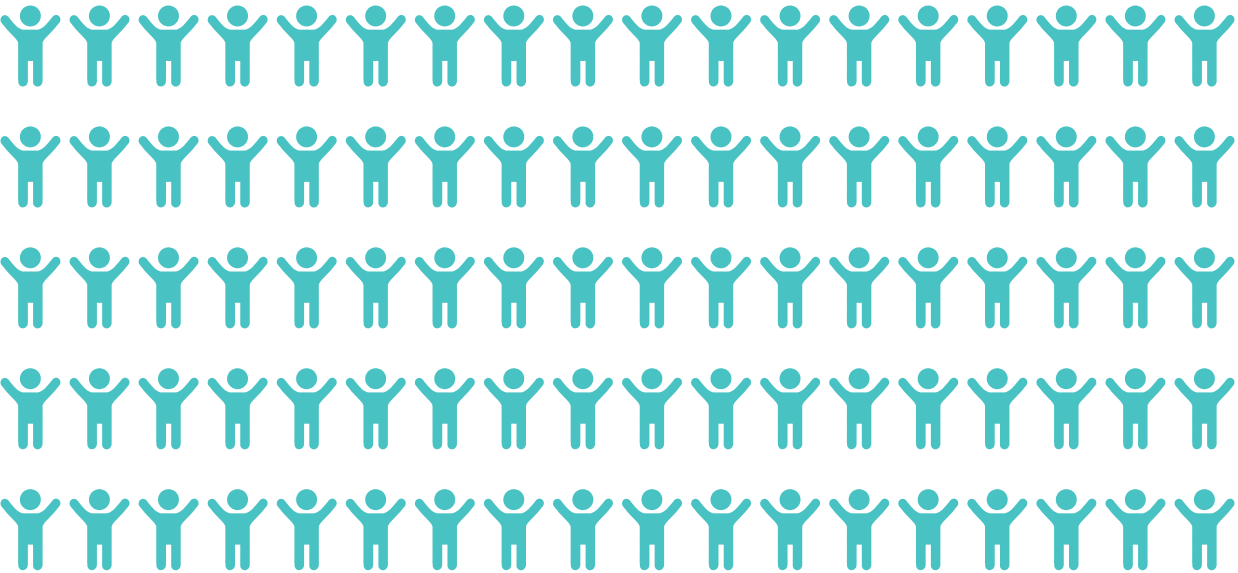
And while much has changed in our first ten years, we remain as committed to the promise of public education as ever before. Public schools are the backbone of our democracy and the foundation of the American dream. Do we need to continue to push to revitalize public education? Absolutely. We all must work together and continue to build a more inclusive, accountable, and equitable system for public education in our nation.

High-performing public schools are the agents of change our communities and country needs now more than ever. Rocketship's first ten years provide powerful proof of what is possible in public education. But we are just getting started. Our collective of parents, teachers, leaders, supporters and students are catalyzing a movement to transform the future for underserved communities across our country.

At Rocketship Public Schools, we are unleashing potential.

Preston Smith, Co-Founder & CEO

10 YEARS 16 SCHOOLS LAUNCHED OVER 15,000 STUDENTS SERVED



CONTENTS

- 10 [Network Results](#)
- 20 [Talent Development](#)
- 26 [Parent Power](#)
- 32 [Regional Results](#)
- 40 [Financials & Supporters](#)

SERVING COMMUNITIES IN NEED

7,884 Rocketeers



Socioeconomically
Disadvantaged



English
Learners



Hispanic or African
American

Our Theory of Change **IN ACTION**

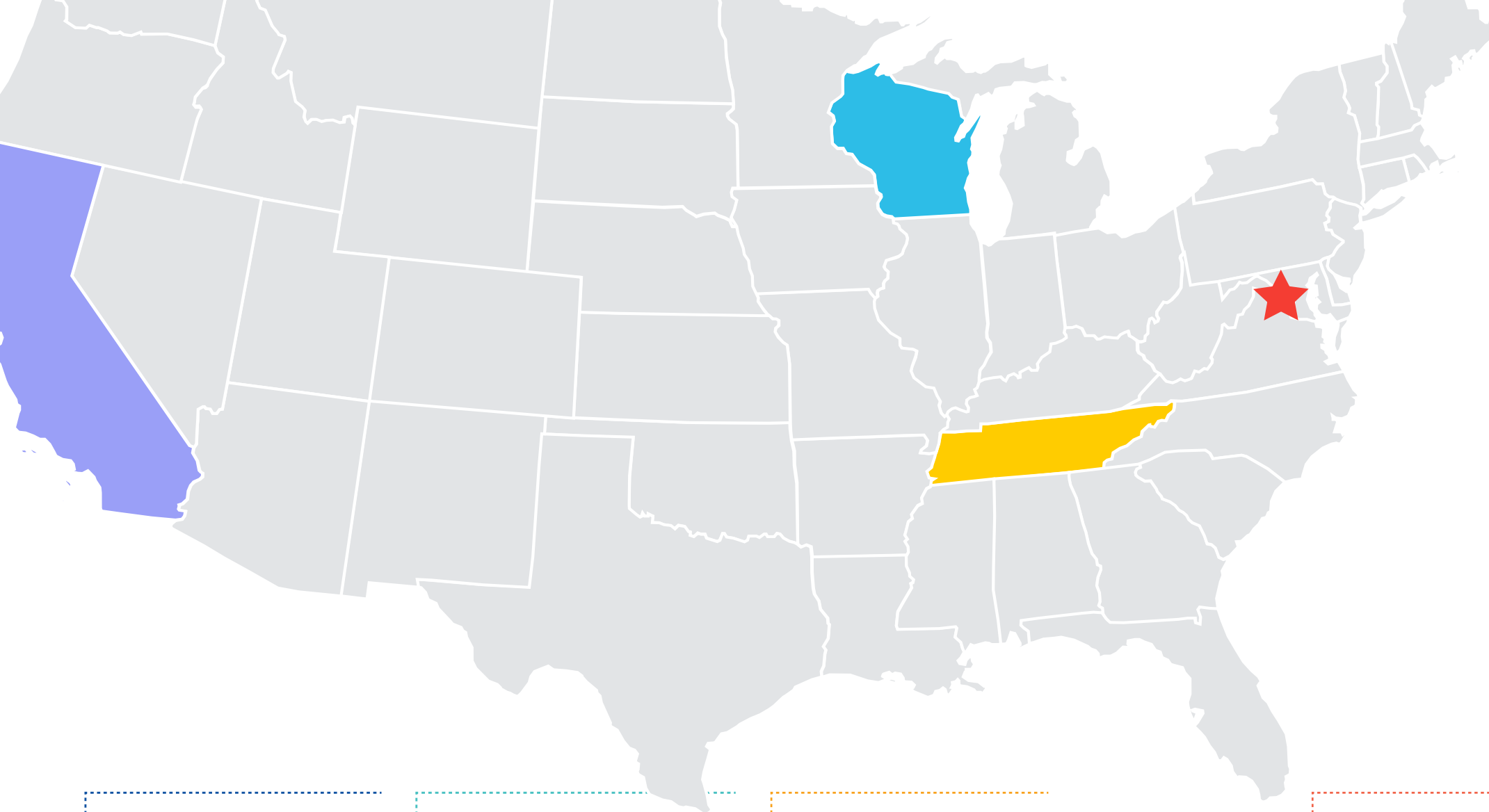


Over the last ten years, a lot of parents, funders, and partners have encouraged us to open middle schools and high schools. It's definitely tempting. It's hard to watch our Rocketeers leave us in fifth grade and wonder what will become of their future. But for us, it comes down to the difference between transforming our public school system versus building a parallel system. We believe a self-contained K-12 system undermines our ability to engage parents beyond the classroom and create parent demand for equity in public education.

By focusing exclusively on elementary school, we demonstrate to our parents what is possible in public education from the moment their child enters the formal education system. And by deeply engaging our parents in their child's education and our school community, our parents become powerful advocates for their students and their communities. They learn to hold leaders accountable, demand political attention, and harness the power of their voice to enable high-quality public school systems to thrive in their own community.

In San Jose, the parent-led movement we catalyzed in our first ten years helped open an additional 7,000 middle school and high school seats from high-performing networks like KIPP, Summit Public Schools, and Alpha Public Schools. Together, we've transformed San Jose into one of the nation's highest performing urban charter sectors. A recent report by Stanford's Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) showed that, "Two urban charter sectors, New York City and South Bay, stand out for providing positive gains for their students in both math and reading...Continuous enrollment in these charter sectors can be expected to result in steady movement up the state's distribution of academic achievement."

Our Rocketeer parents changed the ecosystem of public education in San Jose. Our impact in our first region is a powerful demonstration of our theory of change in action. And it gives us great confidence that we can catalyze movements that transform the quality of the entire public education ecosystem in every region we serve.



Building a National NETWORK

• ROCKETSHIP LAUNCHES.

In a church in downtown San Jose with makeshift classrooms, seven fearless teachers and 160 courageous Rocketeers and families open the doors at Rocketship One.

2007

2008

• THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION,

the City of San Jose, school districts, charter schools, business leaders and community organizations come together to launch SJ2020, a joint initiative to eliminate the achievement gap in San Jose by the year 2020. Rocketship wins approval to dramatically expand its network of high-performing elementary schools.

2009

2010

• ROCKETSHIP TAKES FLIGHT

beyond California. Rocketship Southside Community Prep opens in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with over 300 Rocketeers—one of the largest ever school openings in the city with the nation's longest running school choice program.

2013

• IN THE FIRST YEAR OF ROCKETSHIP'S

first school in Tennessee, Rocketship Nashville Northeast achieves the second highest academic growth score among all 73 public elementary schools in Nashville.

2014

2015

• **SRI INTERNATIONAL**, an independent, non-profit research institute, completes a three-year study on the performance of Rocketeer graduates in middle school. The study followed nearly 2,000 students in seven San Jose middle schools and found that Rocketeer alumni are a full year ahead of their classmates in math and reading after the first and second year of middle school.

2016

2017

• **ROCKETSHIP ONE** moves to a permanent school facility and is renamed Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary after a powerful education advocate and community leader in San Jose, the late Father Mateo Sheedy of Sacred Heart Parish.

• **OUR FOUNDING ROCKETEERS** prove that demographics do not define their potential. Rocketship Mateo Sheedy crushes the California state assessment, scoring as high as Palo Alto Unified School District—home to one of the nation's wealthiest zip codes.

• **THE ROCKETSHIP BAY AREA NETWORK** stands at eight schools in San Jose, serving nearly 5,000 students. Rocketship achieves financial sustainability in the Bay Area, schools operate solely on public revenue.

• **ROCKETSHIP PARENTS** organize first ever Mayoral Candidate Forum. Over 1,200 parents turn out to exercise their power and ask candidates running for public office about how they plan to address the region's achievement gap.

• **ROCKETSHIP RISE ACADEMY** at the Ruth Rales Campus launches as the single largest opening in Washington DC's twenty-year history of charter schools. In their very first year, Rise Rocketeers score in the Tier 1 category—the highest performance ranking for DC Public Charter Schools.

• **IN THE FIRST TEN YEARS**, Rocketship impacts the lives of over 15,000 students. Founding class of Rocketeers from Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary graduate high school and head off to college.



Maya Diaz

Rocketship Mateo Sheedy, 2007–2010
University of California—Berkeley, Class of 2021



Ten years ago, I started third grade at a brand new school. Looking back now, that is when it all started. That is when I started thinking about college, dreaming about my future, and dedicating myself to reach my goals. That is when I got on the path that led me to where I am now—a freshman at the best public university in the nation: The University of California—Berkeley.

My path to college wasn't easy. Only one person in my family graduated high school. Nobody in my family even applied to college or knew what it would take to get accepted. But way back when I was just nine years old, my family put me on the path to college when they enrolled me in Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary.

This was the very first year of the very first Rocketship school. Our school was in a church in downtown San Jose with makeshift classrooms and no air-conditioning. A brutal August heat wave made for a memorable start of school that year. But what I remember most about my time at Rocketship is my teachers and what they taught me.

Ms. Guerrero taught us to understand the struggles of the Latino community. We read books like "Breaking Through" by Francisco Jimenez and discussed immigration and deportation in class. Most of us came from immigrant backgrounds yet we did not understand how this could affect our futures. Ms. Guerrero spoke candidly, giving us the space to engage with important social issues even at a young age.

Mr. Nadeau always challenged us to achieve more than we thought possible. We had reading groups based on our individual achievement levels and he made sure that I was always "growing my brain." The individual attention I received in his classroom raised my expectations of myself as a student and as a person.

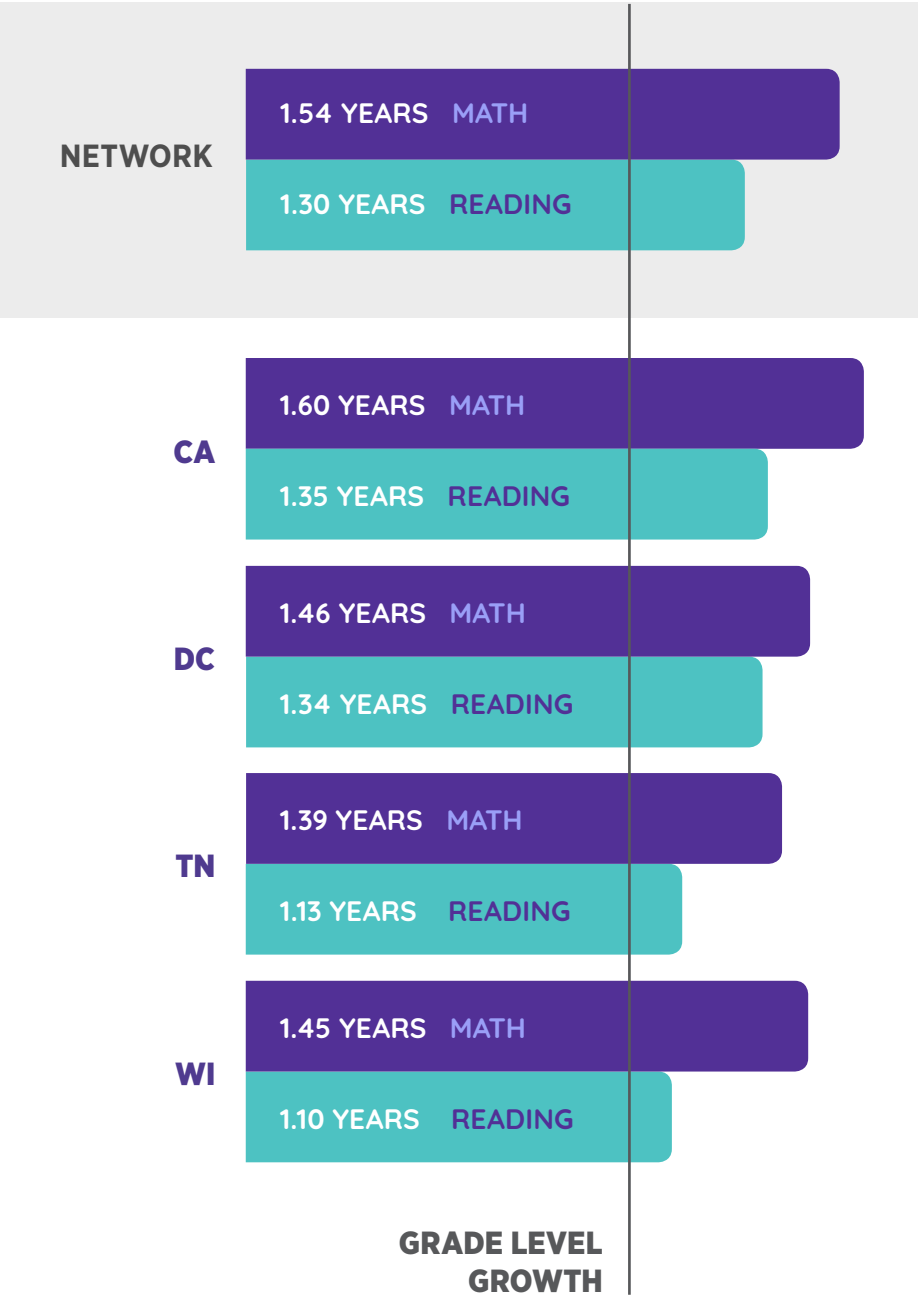
Every single day, my teachers instilled in me the expectation that I was going to college and worked with me to accomplish that goal. Normalizing the very idea of going to college is essential to help kids that come from families and communities that don't talk much about college or naturally expect their kids to go to college.

In third grade, I dreamt of being the first in my family to go to college. Ten years later, I'm making that dream come true. UC Berkeley will give me unrivaled educational opportunities, new challenges, and exposure to new people and new environments to help me pursue my next dream—to become a journalist. I want to combine my passion for social equity and writing, using my education to tell stories that inform and improve my community. As Ms. Guerrero showed me, there is value in being socially conscious of your surroundings because it can ensure the protection of more vulnerable people. There is power in words, in inspiring others, and in telling untold stories. I want to show young kids from my neighborhood, and from neighborhoods I've never even been to, that they too can look beyond their circumstances and set high expectations for themselves, just like me.

First Year Rocketeers are

NARROWING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

AVERAGE FIRST YEAR GROWTH



Every year a student spends in an underperforming school is another year they fall further behind their college-bound peers. Eventually those gaps become insurmountable. That is why Rocketship opens multiple grade levels in year one and continues to backfill students every school year. Of course, we do not expect to close academic gaps that accumulated over several years of prior schooling in a single school year at Rocketship. But we do expect major gains in academic growth that narrows the gap that separates them from their college-bound peers.

In the 2016–17 school year, our first year Rocketeers achieved remarkable gap-closing results in every region. By growing well over a grade level in a single school year, they are gaining solid ground on their college bound peers.

Moving Majority From Behind

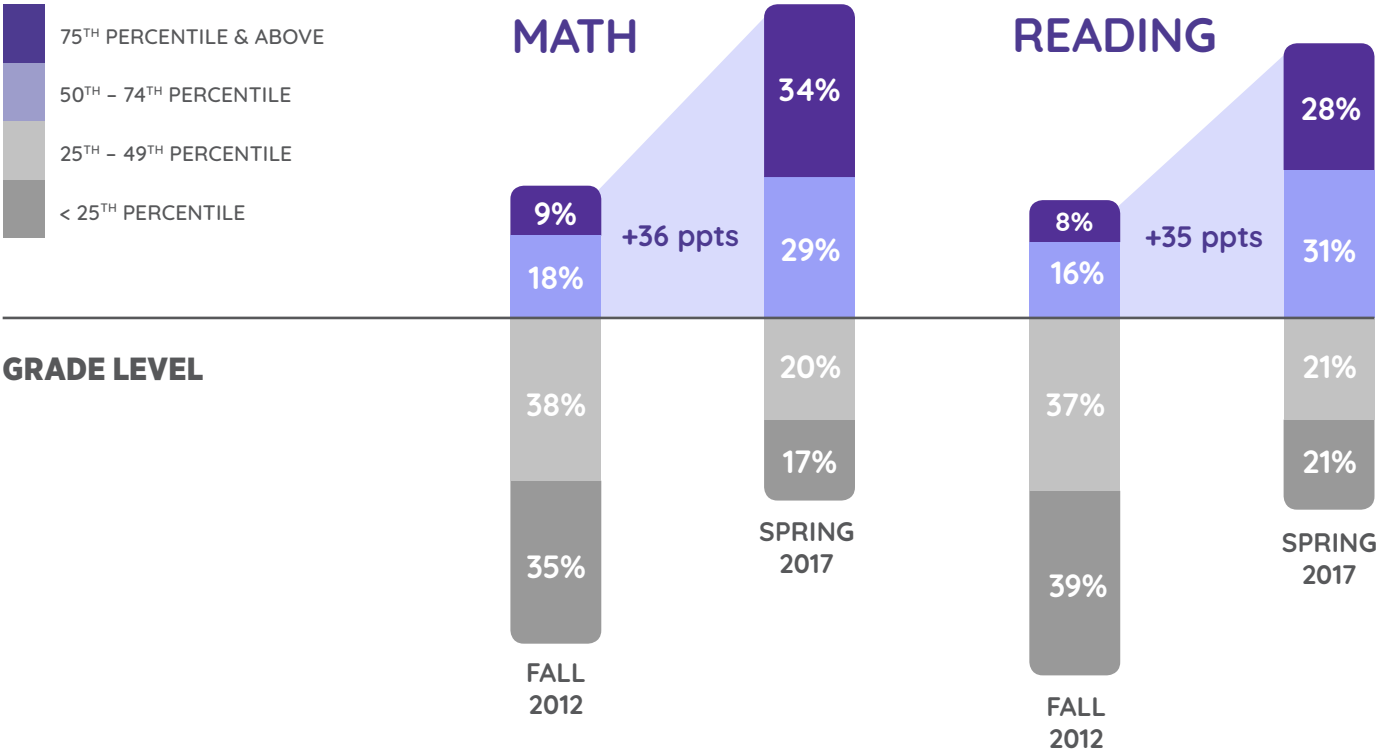
TO AHEAD

The majority of our students start at Rocketship well behind grade level. We commit ourselves to getting every Rocketeer on the college and career-ready path by the time they move on to middle school. After five years, a strong majority of our Rocketeers graduate at or above grade level.

The chart on this page shows achievement results for over 700 Rocketeers who began with us in Fall 2012 and were still with us in Spring 2017. In Fall 2012, just 26% of Rocketeers were at or above grade level in math. By Spring 2017, 62% of that same cohort of Rocketeers were at or above grade level. In reading, only 24% of our students started 2012 on grade level. By Spring 2017, 59% were on the college-bound path. Although we still have far more to accomplish to get every Rocketeer on the path to a better life, we are inspired by the extraordinary progress our teachers, families, and students are making.

ROCKETEER ACHIEVEMENT FROM FALL '12 TO SPRING '17

Shows the growth of 700+ Rocketeers over five years at Rocketship



Source: NWEA MAP is a nationally-normed assessment used by more than 7,400 schools and districts throughout the world. Rocketship students take the MAP assessment in the fall, winter, and spring.

Source: NWEA MAP Quartiles, Fall 2012 & Spring 2017.

“My parents emigrated from Mexico when I was one. Neither of them understood American schools or how to advocate for better options. But when I stumbled on Rocketship, I found teachers who showed me how to push through tough academic and personal situations to succeed.

THE MINDSET I DEVELOPED AT ROCKETSHIP IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IS HELPING ME PURSUE MY DREAM TO BECOME A PALEOBIOLOGIST.

I am a freshman at Bowling Green State University this year, where I am majoring in paleobiology. Paleolithic life and paleontology were things that held my interest as a child and still fascinate me today. The idea of giant lizards roaming our planet millions of years ago is mind-blowing. I want to spend my career out in the field, working with fossils on dig sites and putting my science skills to work in a creative way.

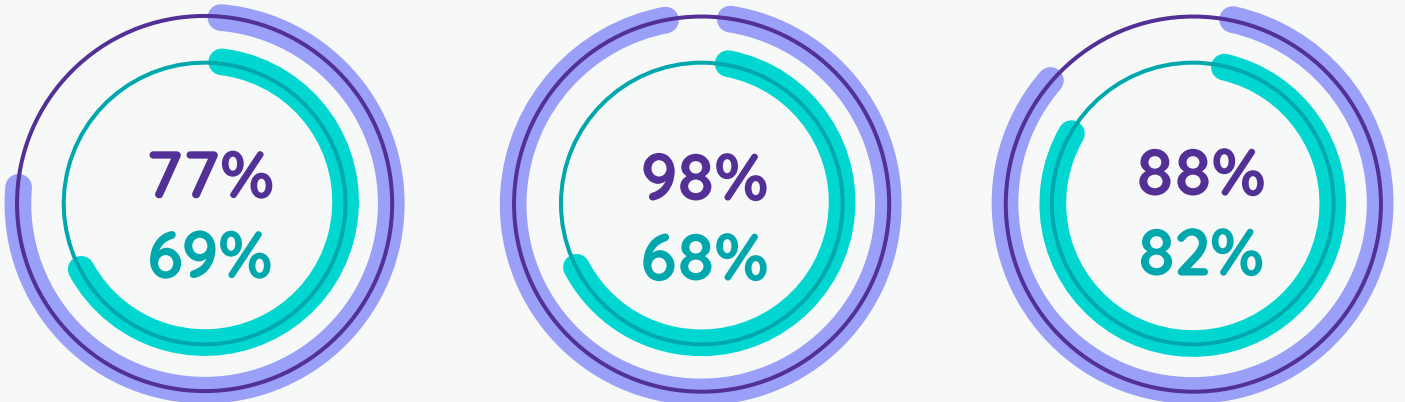
I know that I have already made my family so proud by coming this far. Most kids in my neighborhood don't make it to college. But getting to college is just the beginning of my story. I still have a lot of work ahead to achieve my dream. Thanks to the mindset I learned way back in third grade—to be persistent in my pursuit of excellence—someday I'll get to spend my days digging in the dirt.”

Carlos Martinez
Rocketship Mateo Sheedy, 2007–2010
Bowling Green State University, Class of 2021

Rocketeers are **BEATING THE ODDS**

We believe all children deserve the right to dream, to discover, and to develop their unique potential—no matter what zip code they were born into. Yet three in four students from low-income families are behind grade level by fourth grade. These are the families Rocketship is committed to serving. That is why we pay close attention to the performance of our schools in comparison to similar students in local districts. To ensure we are on the path to delivering an excellent education we must first measure our performance against the schools our Rocketeers would otherwise attend.

**PERCENT OF ROCKETSHIP CLASSES OUTPERFORMING
SIMILAR STUDENTS IN LOCAL DISTRICTS IN 2016–17**



GRADE 3

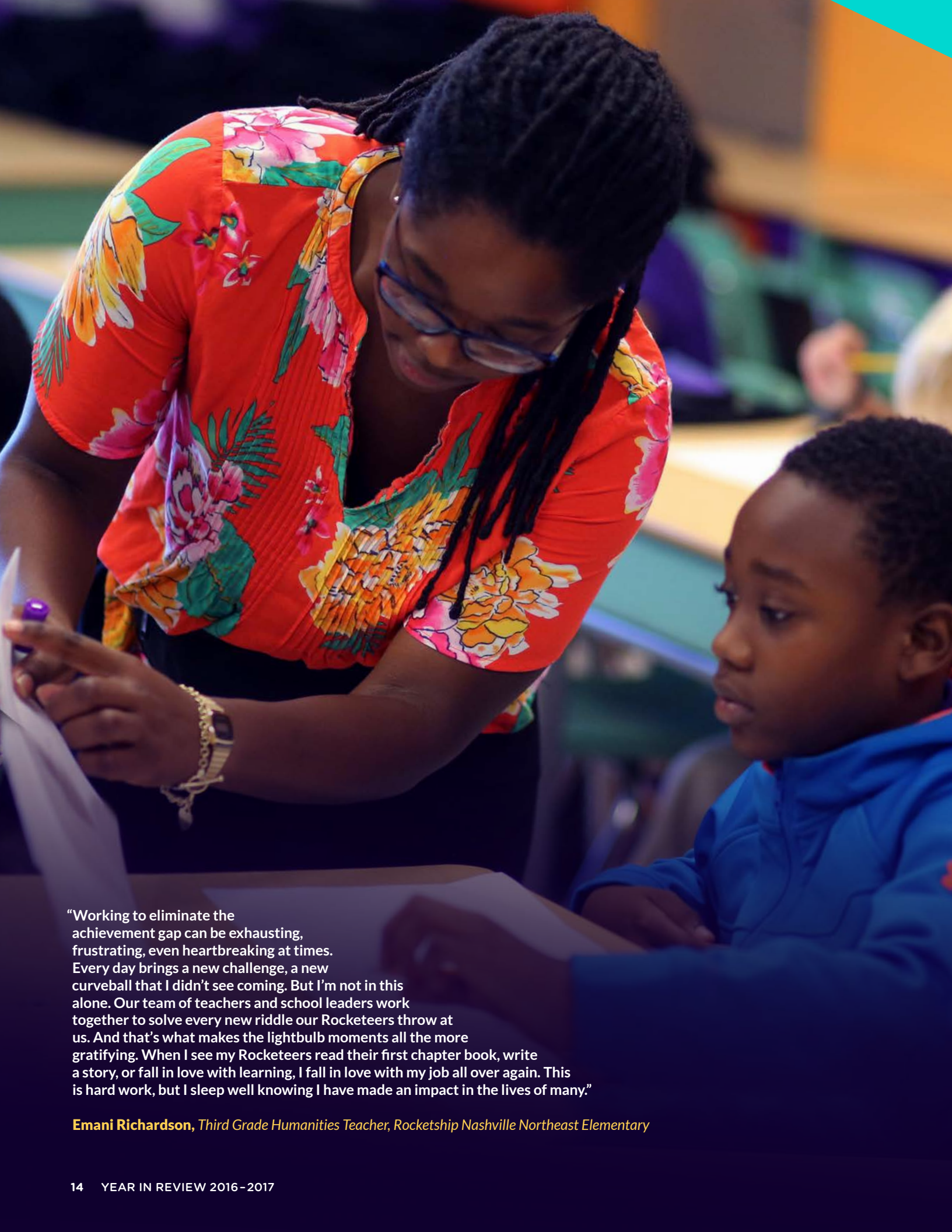
GRADE 4

GRADE 5


MATH


**ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ARTS**

Source: Analysis of publicly reported 2017 state assessment results for socioeconomically disadvantaged students in the regions and local districts Rocketship currently serves. Data from Rocketship includes 48 third grade classes, 50 fourth grade classes, and 17 fifth grade classes.



“Working to eliminate the achievement gap can be exhausting, frustrating, even heartbreaking at times. Every day brings a new challenge, a new curveball that I didn’t see coming. But I’m not in this alone. Our team of teachers and school leaders work together to solve every new riddle our Rocketeers throw at us. And that’s what makes the lightbulb moments all the more gratifying. When I see my Rocketeers read their first chapter book, write a story, or fall in love with learning, I fall in love with my job all over again. This is hard work, but I sleep well knowing I have made an impact in the lives of many.”

Emani Richardson, Third Grade Humanities Teacher, Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary



It Won't Be Easy, But It Will Be **WORTH IT**

“My daughter Aja was held back in first grade, struggled in second grade, and was recommended to test for learning disabilities in third grade. She was just getting passed along from teacher to teacher, never getting the personal attention she needed. I had enough. I needed to try something different so I enrolled her in this brand new school called Rocketship Sí Se Puede.

At first, it was a huge shock to adjust to the homework and high expectations. When I told her teacher I didn’t think that Rocketship was right for Aja she said, “Give me a chance, it will get better, I promise you.” Reluctantly, I said okay.

That choice changed our lives.

Aja blossomed at Rocketship Sí Se Puede. Her teachers gave her the personal attention she needed, built her confidence, and helped Aja to understand to learn from failure. And they taught Aja joy, especially at Launch every morning.

When Aja graduated from Rocketship and moved on to middle school, she was ready. I remember her fifth grade teacher was amazed that Aja knew how to brainstorm before writing. “I didn’t learn how to do that until college,” her teacher told me. My daughter was well beyond her non-Rocketship peers.

My daughter is now a senior in high school, on the high honors list. She was recently invited to Stanford to job shadow a genetic counselor and now is shadowing at a hospital to explore medicine. She wants to major in genetics or some other medical science and hopes to attend John Hopkins, Stanford, or University of California – Berkeley. Aja will be the first to go to college in our family. And it all started with the choice we made to move her to Rocketship Sí Se Puede when she was in third grade.”

Ramona Jaramillo, mother to Aja Ota and Lyness Ota, both Rocketship Sí Se Puede alumni

SRI Education™
A DIVISION OF SRI INTERNATIONAL

[A three year study by SRI Education](#) found that our Rocketeer graduates are a full year ahead of their classmates in math and reading after their first and second year of middle school.

SECRETARY KING VISITS ROCKETSHIP

On December 1, 2016, Rocketship had the honor to host United States Secretary of Education John B. King, Jr. Appointed by President Obama, Secretary King is an inspiring and proven leader who knows what it takes to run a high-performing public school network in underserved communities.

To showcase our dynamic model in action, we brought Secretary King to a second grade humanities classroom to understand our rotational model. Watching Secretary King join a small group of Rocketeers involved in a literature circle and student-led discussion was incredible. Our commitment to meet the unique learning needs of all students while also ensuring that our Rocketeers could guide their own learning and achievement was obvious in that room and Secretary King was thrilled to participate.

Professional development is core to our work at Rocketship, so we stopped by a Common Planning Time (CPT) session with Secretary King. CPT is a daily block of time dedicated to professional development, data analysis, and lesson planning. Secretary King watched a video reflection exercise with a team of first grade teachers. Each teacher watched a video of him or herself teaching, reflected on their practice, and received detailed and constructive feedback. Sitting down with the teachers, asking questions, and putting himself into the exercise, Secretary King saw firsthand why Rocketship is earning a reputation as the place where good teachers go to become great.

We concluded with a parent discussion. Secretary King talked to parents about the importance of our annual home visits, and how much they value our open-door policy, where parents are welcome in our school and their Rocketeer's classroom all day, every day. In closing the discussion with Secretary King, he turned to second grader Katelyn and asked what one word best described what Rocketship means to her. Katelyn took a moment to thoughtfully consider the question. She turned, and with a matter-of-fact nod of the head answered, "excellent."

As we walked out, Secretary King remarked, "I was blown away by your students' deep engagement in their learning and discussion."

We were honored to host the Secretary and to share the story of our mission and a movement that Secretary King himself helped inspire.

"I was blown away by your students' deep engagement in their learning and discussion."

John B. King, Jr.
U.S. Secretary of Education
2016 - 2017



“Daniel came to us last fall, unable to write his own name or use the toilet, and refusing to talk to anyone. In first grade, he was new to our school and very wary of our staff, his peers, and Launch. But Daniel’s parents were excited by our Specialized Inclusion Program (SIP) which provides additional supports to our Rocketeers with more severe learning disabilities, so we had daily contact about his progress and kept at it.

Initially, Daniel could not be left alone. But in a few months, after countless hours establishing routines and building trust, things began to change. Daniel began to gain confidence. I would put my hand over his and we would trace letters to write out his name. Soon, Daniel insisted that I take my hand away and he do it himself. Daniel made quick progress—writing his first name then his last—as we used a sticker chart for motivation. Daniel’s behavioral issues melted away and he became excited about school.

The key to his success was, and still is, a true partnership with his parents. Daniel’s parents know him best. They helped us to understand what motivated him and what held him back. His parents have since become regulars at Rocketship Southside Community Prep.

By the end of the school year, Daniel was potty trained, did not need any para support in the classroom, and was out of the SIP program. Daniel loves talking, reading, and telling time. He now spends the majority of his day in general education classrooms where he continues to embrace every new challenge as a chance to grow stronger.”

Ally Von Ruden
Education Specialist,
Rocketship Southside Community Prep



Rocketship Classrooms Serve All Students

7.9% Special Education Population

Last year, we served over 600 students with moderate-to-severe learning needs across our network. But rather than isolate and further stigmatize these students, we operate a **meaningful inclusion** model that ensures all our students with disabilities have daily access to our general education environment. This means all students with disabilities spend at least half of their day in general education classrooms, with the vast majority spending over 80% of the day in the general education environment. With this inclusive approach, our students with disabilities are exposed to the same Common Core-aligned instructional program as their typically developing peers. By coupling our meaningful inclusion model with individual supports including small group co-teaching and individual instruction, we help all Rocketeers achieve ambitious academic and social outcomes.

Our students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) achieved 1.34 years of growth in math and 1.25 years of growth in reading last year.



400 HOURS

OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Per Teacher Per Year

"At Rocketship, you never stop learning. From on-going coaching to endless opportunities for collaboration to school-wide and regional trainings, Rocketship has invested in my professional development. My coach supports me in planning and executing rigorous, engaging lessons that fit into a logical scope and sequence. My colleagues help me analyze student achievement data to assess mastery of objectives and progress toward big goals. As a result, I have taken on more responsibility within my school community and elevated my teacher and leader practice."

Corey Lewis, Third Grade STEM Teacher, Rocketship Rise Academy

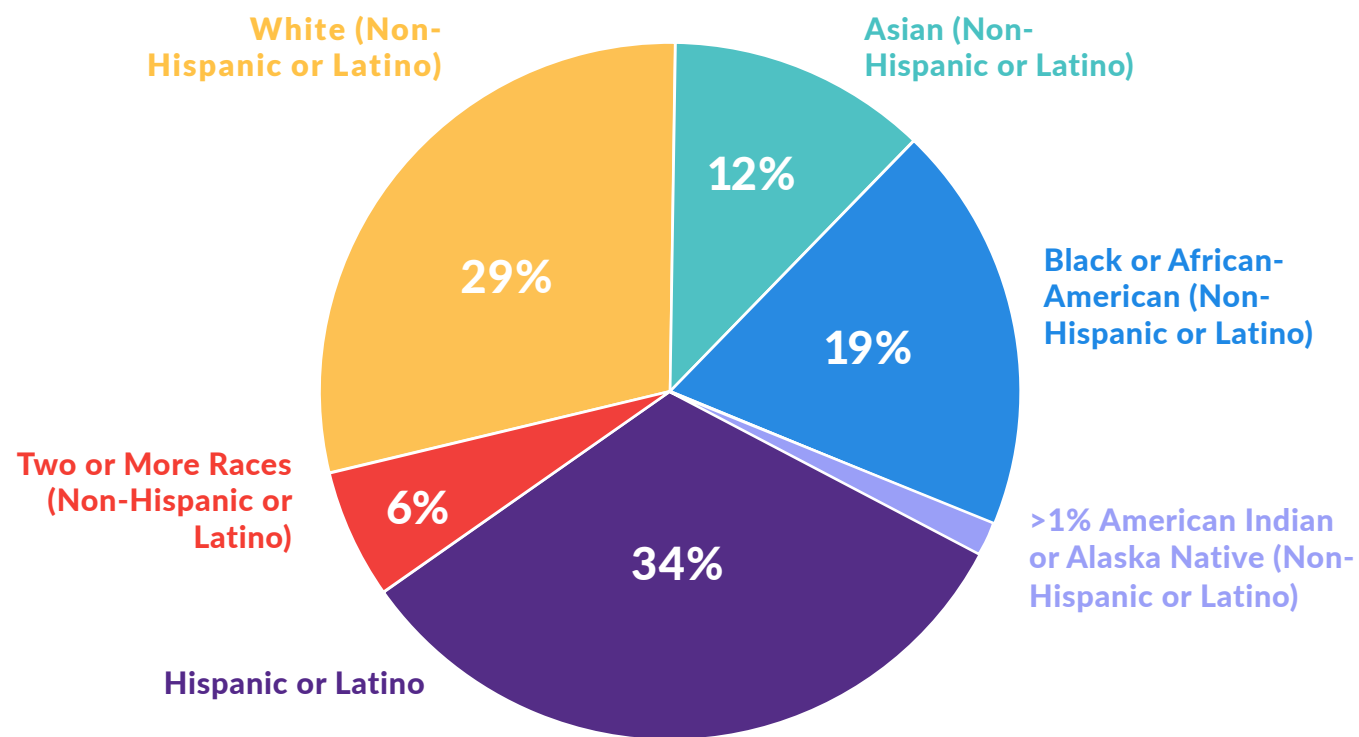
Together, we are redefining and elevating the role of teaching for the 21st century.

Building a More Diverse, Equitable, and INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

If we are going to create a more just and equitable society, we must build and support organizations that prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion.

At Rocketship, our mission compels us to create an inclusive organizational culture that addresses systemic inequities. It starts with respecting and valuing individual differences and examining our own biases regardless of our background. But we also must strive to create a more diverse workforce that brings different perspectives, ideas, and talents to our work. A more diverse Rocketship will help us create stronger relationships with the families and communities we serve which will lead to better outcomes for our Rocketeers. Our commitment to creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization starts with transparently publishing our workforce diversity data.

Rocketship Workforce Diversity



Source: Voluntary disclosure of race and ethnicity for all Rocketship staff in the 2016–2017 school year.

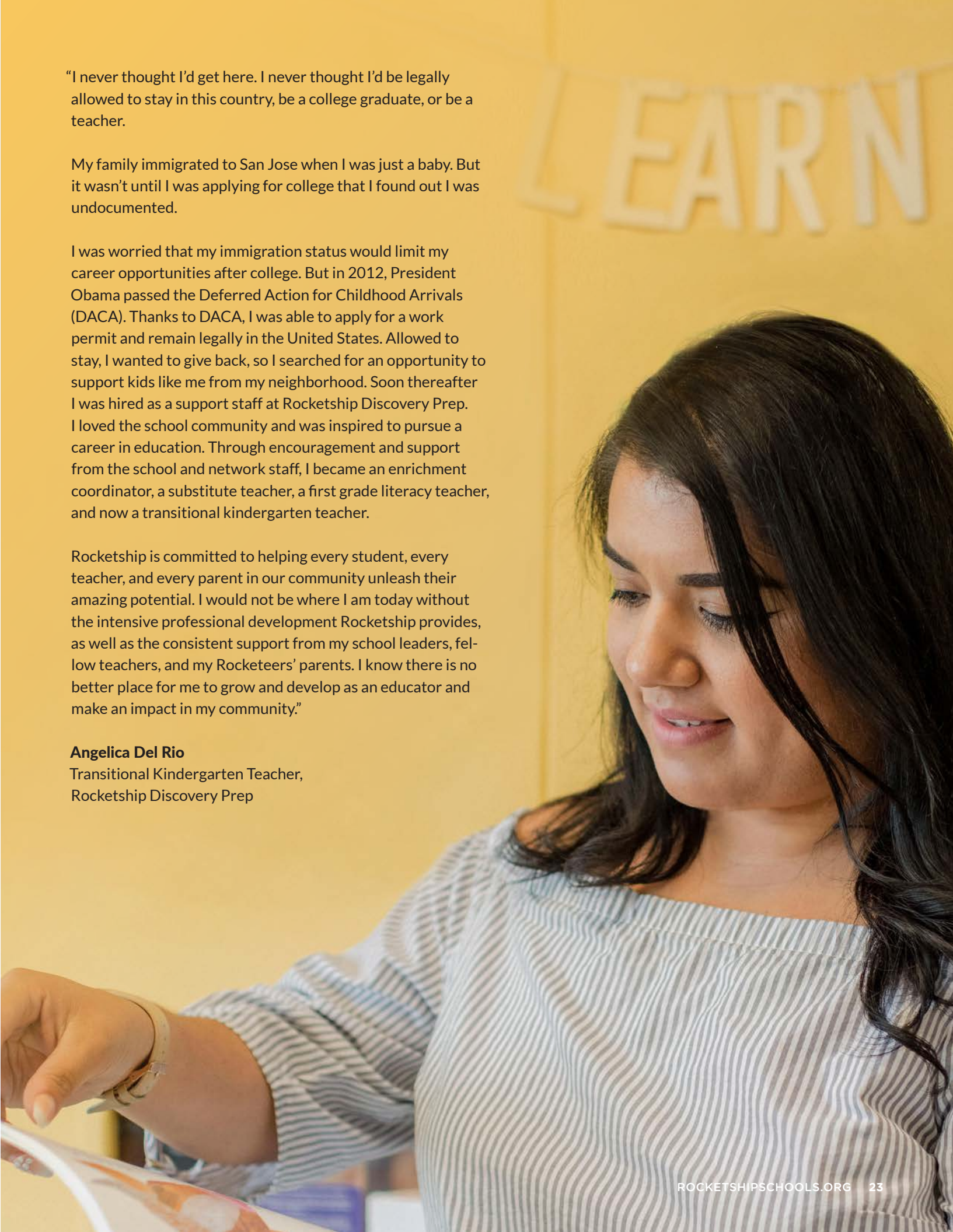
“I never thought I’d get here. I never thought I’d be legally allowed to stay in this country, be a college graduate, or be a teacher.

My family immigrated to San Jose when I was just a baby. But it wasn’t until I was applying for college that I found out I was undocumented.

I was worried that my immigration status would limit my career opportunities after college. But in 2012, President Obama passed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Thanks to DACA, I was able to apply for a work permit and remain legally in the United States. Allowed to stay, I wanted to give back, so I searched for an opportunity to support kids like me from my neighborhood. Soon thereafter I was hired as a support staff at Rocketship Discovery Prep. I loved the school community and was inspired to pursue a career in education. Through encouragement and support from the school and network staff, I became an enrichment coordinator, a substitute teacher, a first grade literacy teacher, and now a transitional kindergarten teacher.

Rocketship is committed to helping every student, every teacher, and every parent in our community unleash their amazing potential. I would not be where I am today without the intensive professional development Rocketship provides, as well as the consistent support from my school leaders, fellow teachers, and my Rocketeers’ parents. I know there is no better place for me to grow and develop as an educator and make an impact in my community.”

Angelica Del Rio
Transitional Kindergarten Teacher,
Rocketship Discovery Prep





BRING IT **HOME**

I was the first teacher to ever visit Jacey's home. Joining Rocketship in fourth grade, Jacey was a brand new student whose family had never had a home visit. Her mom was nervous to have me in their home as she'd never hosted a teacher before and didn't quite know what to expect.

When I arrived at Jacey's house, the entire family was waiting for me. Dad, mom, older sister, and younger brother all gathered to greet me, offered me a cold glass of water, and enthusiastically ushered me into their home. They showed me pictures of their family, told stories about Jacey, and bragged about her awards and beautiful drawings. But Jacey and her family also showed me a new side of my student: that she is a gifted artist and a visual learner. Artwork of all kinds lined their walls, opening up my eyes to how Jacey learns through drawing and how she interprets the world around her.

Every fall, Rocketship teachers visit the home of every student we serve. This annual ritual is a cornerstone of our ability to personalize the learning experience for our Rocketeers and deeply engage parents in their student's progress. By changing the dynamic from parent in a teacher's classroom to teacher in a parent's home, we are able to develop much deeper ties with parents that carry into the school year and beyond.

Home visits help our teachers understand all sides of their students. I enjoy going on home visits because it gives me a chance to connect with my students and families in a more personal setting. We spend most of our time in an academic environment talking about content and skills but sometimes we just need the opportunity to

talk to the student and families about their interests, what they like to do as a family, and to learn about them as people. The relationships I build with my families form the foundation of my ability to personalize the learning experience for each and every Rocketeer in my class. The families don't just see me as the teacher, they see me as a partner who shares their commitment to ensure their child thrives in school and life.

As I got up to leave, Jacey's mother hugged me and thanked me for visiting their home. In that moment, our partnership for the year ahead took root. Her mom was extremely excited for Jacey to be in my class after this visit because she felt comfortable knowing her daughter had a teacher who cared deeply about her. And I left Jacey's home with a much richer understanding of my student and her family. By looking at the photos and talking with Jacey's parents, I learned that they're completely invested in their daughter's education and want to partner with me in getting Jacey on the path to college. Since that visit, I've worked with Jacey to use art and visual learning to understand new concepts, and I've continued to strengthen my relationship with her mom.

Walking away from that warm, smiling family, I was once again reminded of how these personal relationships build the foundation for larger change. Together, we are not just changing the lives of our students—but we are changing entire communities for the better.

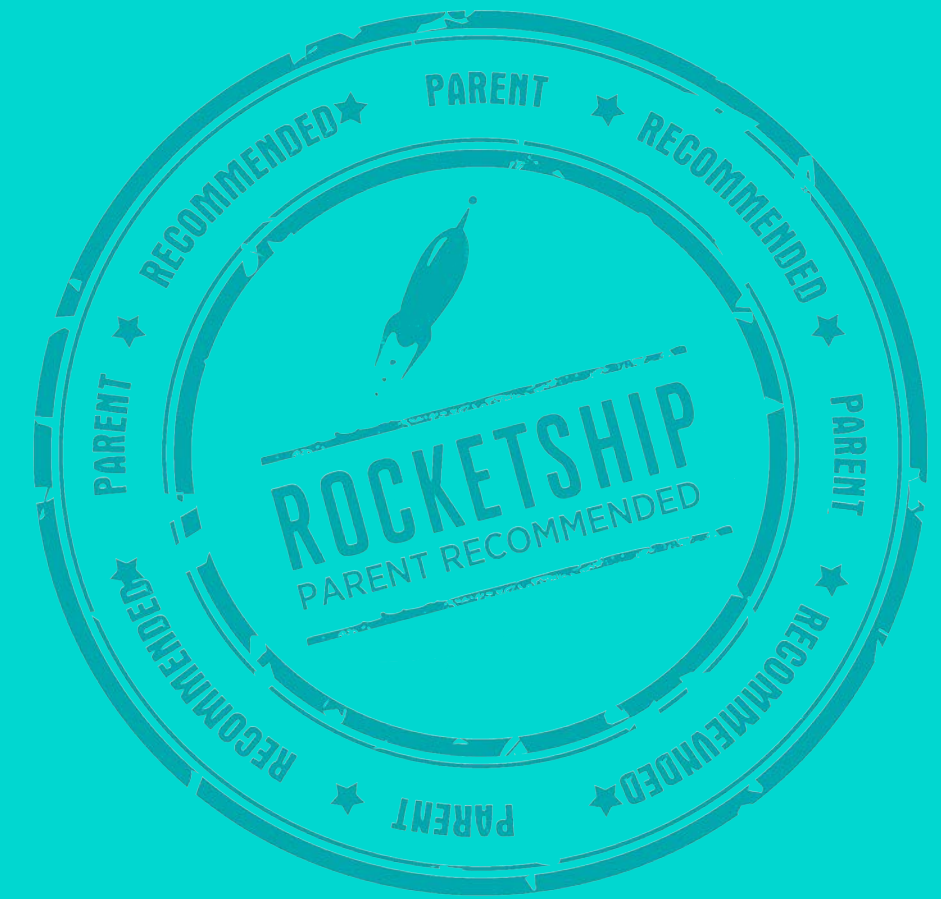
Christina Khoon
Fourth Grade Humanities Teacher, Rocketship Mosaic Elementary

"I've been involved in Rocketship Fuerza since it was only an idea. A group of dedicated parents worked hard to open our school, knowing that our kids needed and deserved a better public school. That struggle is why we named our school Rocketship Fuerza Community Prep. "Fuerza" is the Spanish word for force, strength, or power.

Our collective force and power continues to define our school today, with parents involved more than ever. We volunteer in the classroom. Read stories to our Rocketeers. Lead community meetings. And organize public actions to exercise the power of our voice and demand political attention.

I knew that Rocketship would teach my daughter to achieve excellence. But I never imagined Rocketship would teach me how to become an advocate for equity in public education."

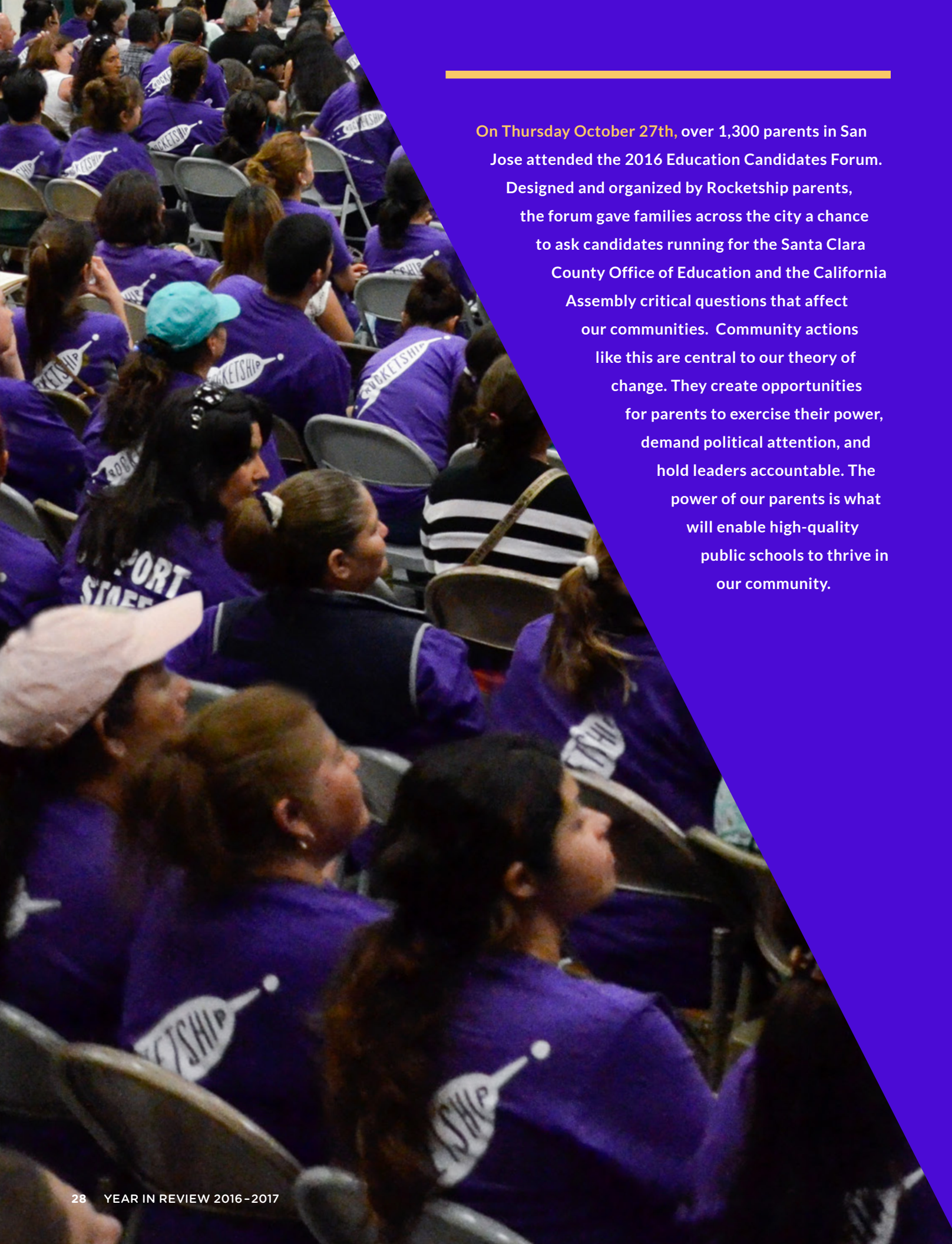
Lety Gomez
Founding Parent,
Rocketship Fuerza Community Prep



87%

**On our annual parent satisfaction survey we asked parents
"have you ever recommended Rocketship to another family?"**

An overwhelming 87% of parents responded yes, they have recommended Rocketship to another family. They did not simply say they "would recommend" Rocketship, they actually did recommend Rocketship. Of course, not every parent is happy every single day. But on most days, the vast majority of families love their Rocketship school.



On Thursday October 27th, over 1,300 parents in San Jose attended the 2016 Education Candidates Forum. Designed and organized by Rocketship parents, the forum gave families across the city a chance to ask candidates running for the Santa Clara County Office of Education and the California Assembly critical questions that affect our communities. Community actions like this are central to our theory of change. They create opportunities for parents to exercise their power, demand political attention, and hold leaders accountable. The power of our parents is what will enable high-quality public schools to thrive in our community.

"I never thought I'd be involved in politics. I didn't think my voice mattered. But in 2014, a rather persistent community organizer from Rocketship convinced me to come to an organizing meeting for the San Jose Mayoral Candidate Forum. The community organizers and other parents showed me that advocacy is about fighting for a better future for our kids. It's about seeing the opportunity ahead and making it a reality.

So I took the chance and got involved. The first time I met with the Mayor I was so nervous, too afraid to say anything in front of him. But over time I learned to find my voice. I have now spoken at many, many school board meetings, worked with elected officials, and even spoken to lawmakers in Sacramento.

Becoming politically active was scary, but I did it because if I don't, who will? Our public officials make major decisions about education for our kids, so we have to be involved—to ask questions, get answers, and make our voices heard.

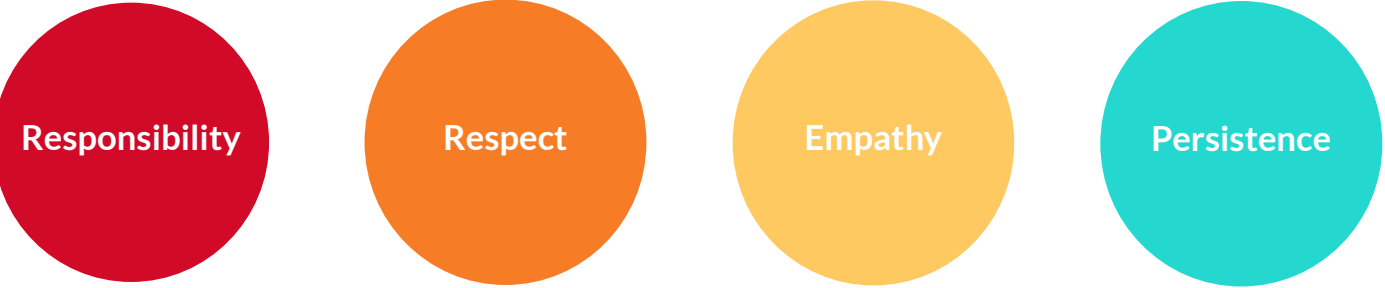
It is even more important for me, as a Latina, as we are often afraid to speak up. I am an example at my school for other Latina moms. Just because I didn't go to school does not mean that my kids have to follow the same path. As my kids beat the odds at school, I make my voice louder and louder to advocate for a better future for all of us.

Rocketship showed me that I have choices for my daughters, for myself, and for my community. Rocketship gave me a lot of tools that I use to advocate not just for my own kids, but for all kids in my community, and now I hope to bring other parents along to do the same."

Eva Heredia
Parent Leader, Rocketship Discovery Prep



In addition to the four core values that all Rocketship schools share



every school selects a fifth core value to capture the unique identity of their school community.

- Fuerza Community Prep : Ganas
- Discovery Prep : Creative Expression
- Mosaic Elementary : Global Citizenship
- Los Sueños Academy : Environmental Stewardship
- United Academy : Gratitude
- Alma Academy : Service
- Mateo Sheedy Elementary : Founding Four Values
- Brilliant Minds : Initiative
- Sí Se Puede Academy : Healthy Choices
- Redwood City Prep : Bravery
- Spark Academy : Curiosity
- Southside Community Prep : Esfuerzo
- Nashville Northeast Elementary : Self-efficacy
- Rise Academy : Grit
- Futuro Academy : Purpose
- Rising Stars Academy : Advocacy

In August 2007 I left my teaching job at a district school and joined Rocketship. I had no idea what to expect. It was the first day of the first year of the very first Rocketship school. And 25 curious, scared, shy, and nervous Rocketeers were staring me down and watching my every move.

That first year was tough. Our classroom was a tiny cramped room inside a little church. Despite our modest environment, we carried on like a top-tier school. We worked really, really hard. We stayed up late, we met on weekends, we read tons of books, and did lots of homework. We all knew that's what it would take to fulfill the promise those founding families saw when they decided to join our new school. The promise of reaching college.

10 years later and those aspirations are now a reality. It fills my heart with pride to see our founding class of Rocketeers start college this year. And when I think about all the Rocketeers who will follow that courageous first class—in San Jose, Milwaukee, Nashville, Concord, Redwood City, and Washington DC— I see the vision we set out to achieve ten years ago start to take shape. Together, we will eliminate the achievement gap in our lifetime.

Maricela Guerrero

Founding Teacher, Rocketship Mateo Sheedy (2007 – 2009)
Principal, Rocketship Mateo Sheedy (2009 – 2013)
Founding Principal, Rocketship Fuerza Community Prep (2014 – 2016)
Senior Director of Schools (2016 – present)



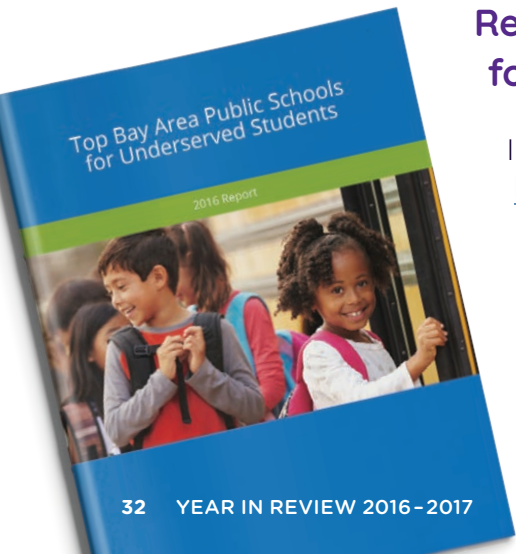
ROCKETSHIP

Bay Area



The Bay Area economy is still booming but many communities are being left behind. Families are getting priced out of their homes and forced to move away from the region's economic centers. Commutes grow longer every year. Families are fracturing. Affordable housing, good-paying jobs, and high-quality schools are seldom found in the same community.

Rocketship's network of 12 Bay Area schools is working to restore equity in the land of opportunity. We remain steadfast in our belief that the quality of public education should not depend on where you live and how much money your parents earn. Our movement to create educational equity continues to grow in the Bay Area where we opened two new schools last year and, once again, ranked in the top 10% of all elementary school districts and charter networks serving similar students across the entire state of California.



Recognized as Top Bay Area Schools for Underserved Students

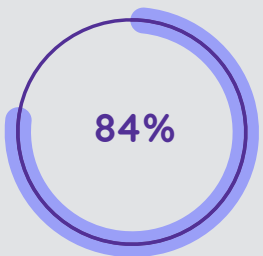
Innovate Public Schools [recognized six Rocketship schools](#) as top-performers for low-income and minority students—the most schools of any district or charter network across the Bay Area.

12

SCHOOLS

5,897

STUDENTS



SOCIOECONOMICALLY
DISADVANTAGED



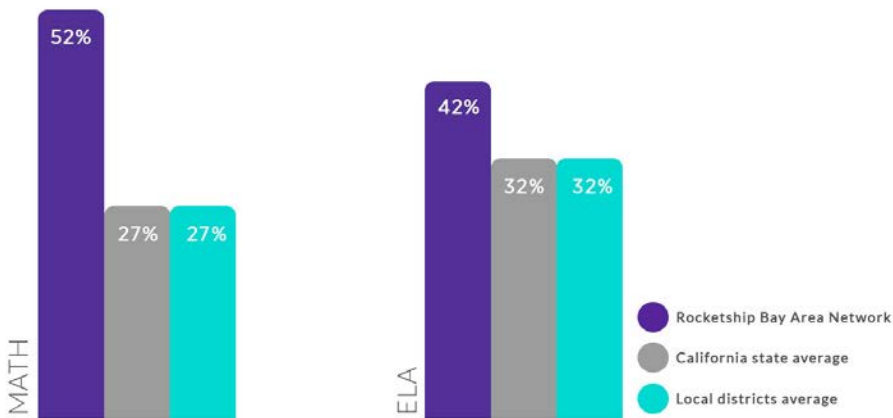
ENGLISH
LEARNERS



HISPANIC OR
LATINO

2016–2017 California State Assessment Results

Percent of students in grades three to five classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged who met or exceeded California state standards.



Source: California Department of Education. Percentages calculated by Rocketship Public Schools from grade-level data research files downloaded from the CAASPP website.

Ten years after opening our first school, we launched our tenth school in San Jose and our first school in the East Bay. Rocketship Rising Stars Academy opened its doors to nearly 500 Rocketeers in a neighborhood on the southside of San Jose, and Rocketship Futuro Academy blazed a new trail in Concord, California. While many miles apart, these new schools serve families who are increasingly being pushed away from Bay Area urban centers due to a lack of affordable housing. The exurbs that Bay Area immigrant and working class communities are migrating to offer few, if any, quality public schools. Some students commute over two hours every day to attend to a quality school. Our two new Bay Area schools are a direct response to the rapidly shifting demographics of the region. At Rocketship Rising Stars and Rocketship Futuro, our parents and teachers are working together to improve the quality of public education in their own community and ensure our Rocketeers achieve the bright future they deserve.

Our newest campus is a state-of-the-art school facility. Two modern school buildings frame a joyful courtyard featuring majestic, old-growth redwood trees. Classrooms are illuminated with natural daylight. The campus has a collegiate feel, inspiring dreams of higher education in our Rocketeers.



ROCKETSHIP Milwaukee

Milwaukee is home to the nation’s largest racial achievement gap. It is also home to the nation’s oldest school choice program. But families trying to choose which district, voucher, or charter school is right for their child have few high-performing options. School choice on its own won’t eliminate the achievement gap. Milwaukee families need quality choices to give their children the excellent education that all kids deserve.

Rocketship Southside Community Prep is proving that great schools can unleash the amazing potential in our students and our communities. Our Southside Rocketeers outperformed the district average for math performance by nearly threefold last year! The esfuerzo our teachers, leaders, parents, and students demonstrate every day is propelling this proud community forward. Together, they are building the movement for educational equity in Milwaukee and laying the groundwork for the new school we will open on the city’s northside in 2018.

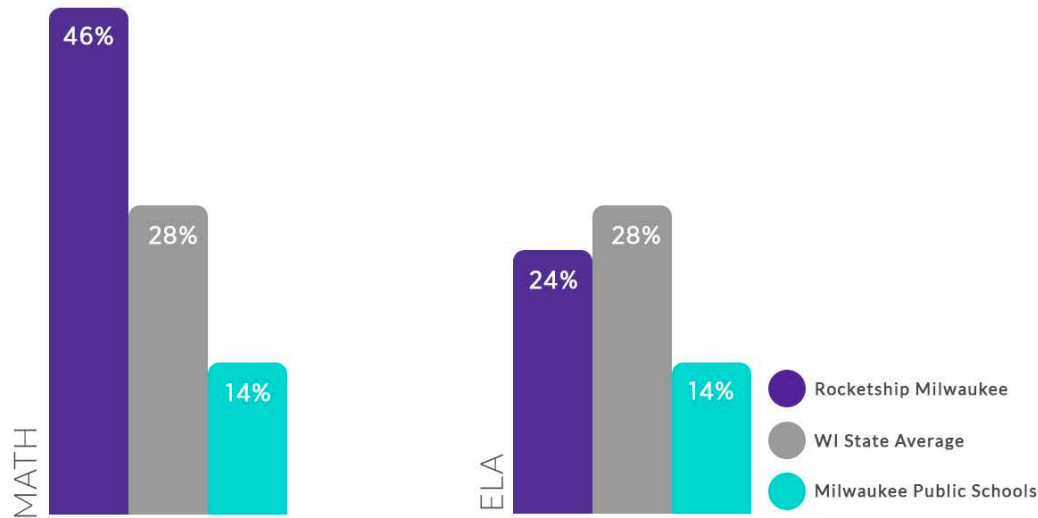


AMONG ALL DISTRICT AND CHARTER SCHOOLS IN WISCONSIN SERVING A SIMILAR STUDENT POPULATION.



2016–17 Wisconsin State Assessment Results

Percent of students in grades three to five classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged who scored proficient or advanced.



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Grades three to five percentages calculated by Rocketship Public Schools from grade-level data in research files downloaded from the WISEdash website.

ROCKETSHIP

Nashville

Nashville is one of the nation's fastest growing cities. A thriving music industry and burgeoning startup sector are attracting entrepreneurs, artists, and young professionals to the region. But while the Music City is booming, not everyone is benefiting. Among low-income families all across Metro Nashville, fewer than one in five elementary school students are achieving grade level proficiency in math and reading. As Nashville races ahead, these communities and their children are being left behind.

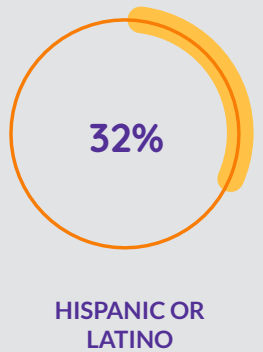
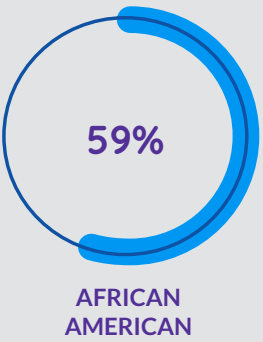
Rocketship launched in Nashville in 2014, and in just three years has grown to serve over 1,000 Rocketeers. Our schools serve historically underserved communities in Nashville as well as the region's rapidly growing immigrant communities. No matter if they are Nashville natives or newly arrived Somalis, they all desire and deserve a great public education for their children. They hold true to the belief that public education is the great equalizer in our nation. And while we have much more work ahead to fully realize the promise our families see in our schools, the progress our Rocketeers are making is powerful proof that demographics do not define their potential.



ROCKETSHIP UNITED ACADEMY RANKED IN THE TOP 12% OF ALL METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS for math performance among socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

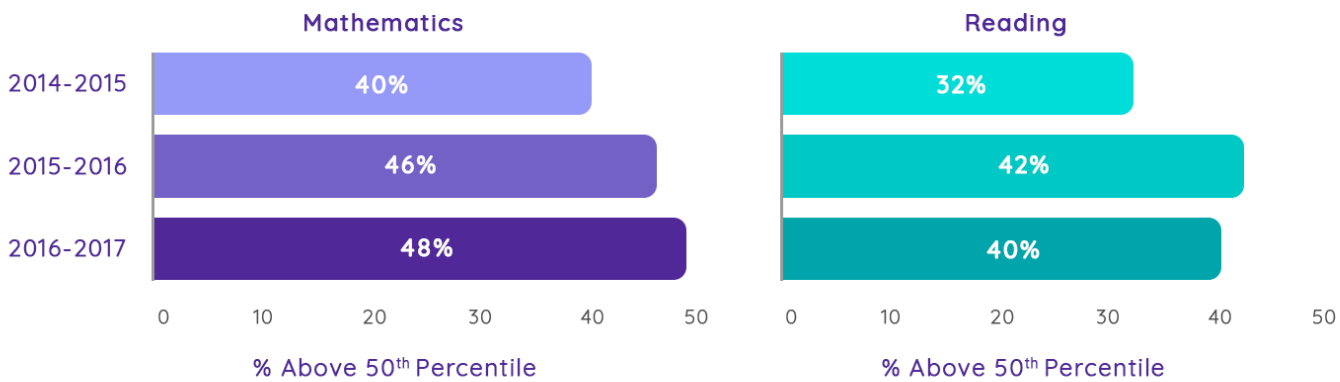
2
SCHOOLS

1,038
STUDENTS



NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

Percent of Nashville Rocketeers performing above national norm



Source: NWEA MAP is a nationally-normed assessment used by more than 7,400 schools and districts throughout the world. Results shown here are the percent of students scoring above the 50th percentile (national norm) in the spring of each school year.



ROCKETSHIP

Washington DC

The District of Columbia is home to one of the most progressive public education reform efforts in the nation. It is the only city in the country with two public school systems of roughly the same size. Competition is strong and student performance is improving at both traditional district and public charter schools. On the charter side, the efforts of DC’s Public Charter School Board to close low-performing schools and attract more high-performers to the region is driving the sector and DC students forward.

In their nationwide search to identify innovative and impactful public school models, DC leaders singled out Rocketship as uniquely poised to transform the city’s most underserved communities. On August 22, 2016, Rocketship Rise Academy at the Ruth Rales Campus launched as the single largest opening in DC’s twenty-year history of charter schools. And in their very first year, Rise Rocketeers scored in the Tier 1 category—the highest performance ranking for DC Public Charter Schools. Our first DC school is off to a strong start and is a vital anchor in our movement to build a high-performing and financially sustainable network of public elementary schools serving at-risk communities in our nation’s capital.

ROCKETSHIP RISE ACADEMY SCORED
IN THE TIER 1 CATEGORY IN YEAR 1



While schools in their first year of operation do not receive an official tier designation from the DC Public Charter School Board, Rocketship Rise Academy scored a 71.3% on the PMF which meets the criteria for Tier 1.

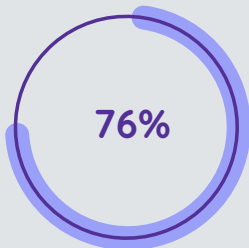


1

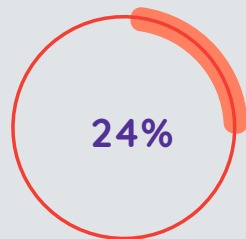
SCHOOL

440

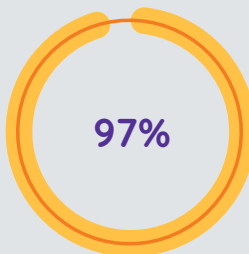
STUDENTS



SOCIOECONOMICALLY
DISADVANTAGED



HOMELESS



AFRICAN
AMERICAN



“Rocketship Rise Academy is a brilliant school. The name alone represents a whole new horizon of academics in Ward 8. As a founding parent from this community, I have seen this school’s growth and impact not only on my child’s life, but mine as well. I am involved as a parent here, and it has taken my mind to a whole new level that I didn’t receive growing up. Rocketship is family to our children when they’re not at home, providing structure and guidance, and preparing our youth for the future.”

Alisha Tiggett, Founding Parent, Rocketship Rise Academy

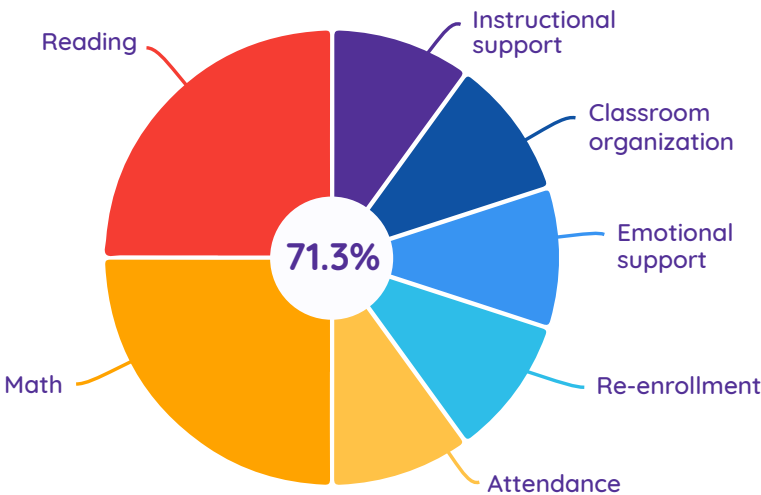
The DC Public Charter School Board uses the Performance Management Framework (PMF) to assess school-wide academic performance.

Schools are rated by tiers:

Tier 1 = High Performing
(65.0% – 100.0%)

Tier 2 = Mid Performing
(35.0% – 64.9%)

Tier 3 = Low Performing
(0.0% – 34.9%)

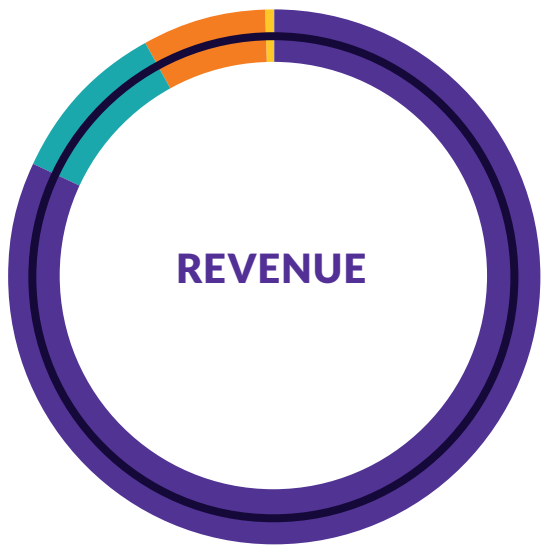


FINANCIALS

Rocketship is building a scalable and financially sustainable non-profit school model that propels student achievement in underserved communities across the country. In 2016 - 17, 92.5% of our funding came from public sources. School-based expenses accounted for 83% of our spending.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Fully enrolled schools reach financial sustainability within three to five years of launching. Each region is financially sustainable at five to eight schools. Our Bay Area region is our first fully sustainable region, meaning that our 12 schools and the regional team supporting them operate solely on public funds. We are on track to achieve organization-wide financial sustainability by 2020.



- 82% State Revenue
- 10% Federal Revenue
- 7.5% Philanthropy
- 0.5% Other Local Revenue



- 42% School Staff
- 25% School Operating Costs
- 16% School Facilities
- 4% Schools, Achievement, & Personalized Learning
- 4% Community Engagement, Comms, & Parent Leadership
- 3% Facilities & Operations
- 3% Talent, HR, & Scalability
- 3% Finance & Legal

SUPPORTERS

AUTHORIZERS

Rocketship couldn't do this work without the partnership, support, and expertise of our authorizers.

- California State Board of Education
- City of Milwaukee
- District of Columbia Public Charter School Board
- Franklin McKinley School District
- Metro Nashville Public Schools
- Redwood City School District
- Santa Clara County Board of Education

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Thank you to our board for their expertise and dedication. We are proud that all board members support our schools both strategically and financially.

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2016 - 17 MAJOR DONORS

Thank you to our donors for their generous support, which allows us to continue innovating across our network and growing to provide high-quality schools for more Rocketeers across the country.

\$1,000,000+

- Arthur and Toni Rembe Rock
- Charter School Growth Fund
- The Norman and Ruth Rales Foundation

\$500,000+

- Reed Hastings & Patti Quillin
- Tipping Point Community
- Silicon Schools Fund

\$100,000+

- Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation
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- John and Catherine Debs
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MATEO SHEEDY
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HEALTHY

10 YEARS