Rocketship Education is a non-profit network of public elementary charter schools serving primarily low-income students in neighborhoods where access to excellent schools is limited.

By rethinking elementary education from the ground up, we will eliminate the achievement gap in our lifetime.
Rocketeer Supporters and Friends,

Each morning, our students recite the Rocketeer Creed, pledging to be leaders at home, at school and in their communities. Our school staff and families hold themselves to the same standard.

Truly great schools do more than drive student achievement. Great schools transform communities. The families we serve have the capacity to revitalize entire communities and drive social change far beyond the confines of the classroom.

Today, parent voice thrives in San Jose. High quality seats in schools of choice have grown to over twelve thousand seats in the last eight years. San Jose now leads the country in cities making gains for students.

In November, Rocketship families brought elected officials to the table in San Jose’s first parent-organized mayoral forum. And just north of Santa Clara County, Redwood City families demanded choice. Because of this parent-led movement, we were proud to open Rocketship Redwood City Prep in 2015.

But it’s not just our parents who are accomplishing incredible things. Rocketeer alumni continue to outperform their peers in middle school. Two proud alumni, Maya and Pedro, gained national recognition for their science project that was designed to take on the biggest drought in California’s history.

As Rocketship reaches more communities across the country, our model of excellent teachers and leaders, personalized learning and engaged parents is picking up steam in Milwaukee, Nashville and Washington, DC. Our Milwaukee Rocketeers continue to redefine excellence in a city with robust choice but limited quality. In Tennessee, our inaugural class of Rocketeers earned the second highest growth score of all 73 elementary schools in Nashville, setting the tone for future Rocketship schools in the region.

In the pages that follow, you will learn more about what our network has achieved in our eighth year. While we can always do better, we are proud of all we have accomplished to date. Together, we will eliminate the achievement gap in our lifetime.

Let’s get it done,

Preston Smith
Co-founder and CEO
Closing academic gaps and setting our Rocketeers up for success in middle school, high school, college and beyond means accelerating their learning.

We strive to deliver well over one year of growth for every year a student is with us. By accelerating learning, we can first narrow — and ultimately eliminate — the achievement gap between our students and their more affluent peers.

**In the 2014-15 school year, Rocketeers nationally achieved gap-closing growth.**

---

**2014-2015 Rocketeer Growth on NWEA MAP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>ELA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NETWORK</td>
<td>1.7 years</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW TO NETWORK</td>
<td>1.8 years</td>
<td>1.6 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The NWEA MAP is the nationally-normed, Common Core-aligned assessment we use to track student growth within a school year and absolute performance across years. Our students take the MAP in the fall, winter and spring. This is the second year Rocketship has administered MAP Common Core.

---

**ROCKETSHIP NETWORK AT A GLANCE**

- **5,951** Rocketship Rocketeers
- Serving PreK - 5th Grades
- 88% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
- 56% English Language Learners
- 6% Special Education
- 85% Hispanic and African American

---
Meeting Personalized Goals

All students have personal growth goals on the NWEA MAP. Teachers differentiate instruction to ensure all students, regardless of their level, reach their goals.

% of Rocketeers who met NWEA MAP growth goals

Exceeding National Norms

Our Rocketeers began the year below the national average on the NWEA MAP. Because of accelerated learning, by the spring they blasted beyond their peers nationally.

% of Rocketeers scoring at or above 50th percentile

A Rocketeer’s Blended Day

Our instructional model educates the whole child, meeting students at their unique level.

Unlike most elementary schools, instruction in the humanities and integrated math is led by Rocketship teachers who specialize in one subject.

The learning lab, where tutoring and online learning takes place, is led by individual learning specialists with the support of assistant principals.

Every Rocketeer has daily access to physical education. To meet the unique needs of each community, specific enrichment activities are selected by school leaders in partnership with families.

Rocketship’s Approach to Personalized Learning

Our personalized learning model is designed to provide each student with the right content, at the right time, using the right instructional method so that all students ultimately perform on par with their affluent peers and develop into well-rounded scholars and citizens.

Dynamic Student Grouping

To ensure all students reach their goals, teachers and tutors create small groups for targeted instruction to remediate and accelerate learning.

Data-Driven Instruction

Our custom data warehouse integrates many sources, including teacher-created assessments, to create a comprehensive data profile for each student so our educators can rapidly adjust instruction.

Purposeful Use of Technology

In addition to providing students with targeted practice, we expose them to digital learning to build technology fluency and assert control over their own learning.
Mateo Sheedy Elementary, our first Rocketship school, opened in 2007 in downtown San Jose, a city with a widening achievement gap. Just two years later, the community banded together to form SJ2020, a coalition of city officials, school districts, charter networks, businesses and non-profit organizations working to eliminate the achievement gap in our community by 2020. While much work remains, San Jose is making major progress fueled by nine Rocketship schools, serving over 5,000 students in 2014-15.

Our families have also advocated for excellent charter middle school options, adding approximately 5,000 more seats. Together, we’re building a movement in San Jose to increase choice and quality. In fact, a 2015 report from Stanford University’s Center for Research on Education Outcomes found that San Jose was one of two cities that provided positive gains for public charter school students in math and reading and met or exceeded state-wide average achievement across all socioeconomic groups.

### 2014-15 California State Assessment Results

Shows percent of students classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged who met or exceeded new Common Core standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Rocketship</th>
<th>Surrounding Districts</th>
<th>CA State Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results for socioeconomically disadvantaged students in grades three through five on CAASPP. Surrounding districts include Alum Rock Union Elementary, Franklin-McKinley Elementary and San Jose Unified school districts.

### % of Rocketeers scoring at or above 50th percentile on NWEA MAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>ELA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natl AVG</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay Area Average</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Accelerated Learning

- **1.7 years** average Rocketeer growth in mathematics on the NWEA MAP
- **1.5 years** average Rocketeer growth in English Language Arts on the NWEA MAP

### Beating the Odds

A recent report by Innovate Public Schools recognized three Rocketship campuses — Mateo Sheedy, Brilliant Minds and Mosaic — for beating the odds for low-income students.

### Alumni Success

How does a Rocketship education prepare our alumni for success in middle school? We partnered with SRI International to find out (page 11).
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Milwaukee is the most racially segregated city in the nation and has the second largest achievement gap. Over 40,000 students attend schools of choice in Milwaukee, but less than four of ten fourth graders read on grade level. Though the city is rife with choice, parents still clamor for high-quality, gap-closing education for their children.

Rocketeers from Southside Community Prep continue to attain exceptional growth, setting the tone for what excellent schools can achieve for underserved communities throughout Milwaukee.

% of Rocketeers who met NWEA MAP growth goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>MILWAUKEE AVERAGE</th>
<th>NATL AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5 years average Rocketeer growth in mathematics on the NWEA MAP
1.4 years average Rocketeer growth in English Language Arts on the NWEA MAP

“Rocketship is more like an extended family ...its commitment to parent involvement is so different than other schools.”
- Alex Briones, Rocketeer Parent

rsed.org/blog/AlexRSCP

Rodney Lynk, Jr.
Principal, RSCP

“I'm proud to lead a Rocketship school in the city where I grew up. The kids in my community deserve a great place to learn.”

407 Rocketship Rocketeers
Serving PreK - 5th Grades
84% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
46% English Language Learners
14% Special Education
94% Hispanic

The staff from Southside Community Prep bring their favorite Dr. Seuss characters to life in celebration of the poet’s birthday. Oh, the places Southside Community Prep Rocketeers will go!
Nashville Northeast Elementary, our first school in the region, opened in July 2014. Through a close partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools and the statewide Achievement School District, RNNE opened its doors to 442 first-time Rocketeers.

Our Nashville Rocketeers came to us with the deepest academic deficiencies of any school we have ever opened. Eight of ten students performed below the national norm on fall diagnostics, testing the strength of Rocketship’s personalized learning model and intervention program.

Through a combination of highly differentiated classroom instruction, targeted tutoring and strong partnerships with families, our Rocketeers achieved the second-highest growth in Nashville, far exceeding Tennessee’s growth standards.

### 2015 Nashville Elementary TVAAS Composite Scores

The Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) — shown below for all public elementary schools in Nashville — measures the impact schools and teachers have on their students’ academic progress. TVAAS is a powerful tool because it measures how much students grow in a year, and shines more light on student progress than solely considering their score on an end of year test.

Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary earned the **second highest growth score** among all 73 Nashville public elementary schools.

Students from **Level 1** schools have made significantly less progress than the state growth standard. Students from **Level 3** schools have made growth similar to the state growth standard. Students from **Level 5** schools have made significantly more progress than the state growth standard.

### % of Rocketeers who met NWEA MAP growth goals

- **Math**: 82%
- **ELA**: 65%

1.5 years average Rocketeer growth in mathematics on the NWEA MAP

1.3 years average Rocketeer growth in English Language Arts on the NWEA MAP

Nashville Northeast Elementary has laid the foundation for future Rocketship schools throughout the region.
Slam Dunk! Santa Clara County’s First-Ever Special Olympics

Hannah Gray, an Integrated Special Education Specialist at Mosaic Elementary, teamed up with the Special Olympics of Northern California, the YMCA, teachers and enrichment coordinators across the network to host this inaugural event.

by Nikki David | Associate Editor, Beyond

If you’re into March Madness buzzer beaters and Cinderella stories, Rocketship’s tournament was one for the ages.

Cheers erupted from both sides of the court as fans watched several three-foot-something kids soaring impressive slam-dunks into a net three times their height — with a boost from their P.E. coach, of course.

This stunning spectacle, with students, teachers and parents of all backgrounds and abilities cheering both teams on, perfectly encapsulated Santa Clara County’s first ever partnership with the Special Olympics.

About 100 basketball stars from Mosaic Elementary, Discovery Prep and Brilliant Minds faced off in late March at the East Valley Family YMCA, including several players from Rocketship’s Specialized Inclusion Program (SIP). Dozens of other students also came to cheer on their classmates, showing their school spirit from the sidelines with colorful handmade signs. Just as the Special Olympics aims to empower and unite athletes with and without disabilities, the SIP model helps students with moderate to severe disabilities learn alongside their general education peers for most of the school day.

Mosaic parent Tanisha Kruger saw the event as a unique learning opportunity for her son Bryce, a student in the SIP program.

“People don’t always understand that just because someone has a disability, it doesn’t mean the rest of them is disabled. They’re still whole, and they just want to play with their friends, be a part of the competition and feel included,” Kruger said.

Throughout the tournament, students of all grades and abilities showed off their teamwork in games against the other schools. They also participated in a skills competition for dribbling, passing and

“People don’t always understand that just because someone has a disability, it doesn’t mean the rest of them is disabled.”

- Tanisha Kruger, Rocketeer Parent
shooting. P.E. coaches conducted weekly practices for the six weeks leading up to the event, and for many players, it was their first experience being part of an athletic team.

Integrated special education teacher Hannah Gray, who coordinated the event to engage her students outside the classroom, watched all the players—both students with and without learning disabilities—grow and learn.

“It was great to hear kids tell me how excited they were for basketball practice after school. The practices were pretty exhausting, but seeing all of the hard work pay off on the faces of the kids was totally worth it,” Ms. Gray said.

After this pilot season with three schools, the Special Olympics partnership will include two events in the 2015 school year. Kruger and Bryce are excited for more fun and inclusive opportunities to meet families from different schools in the future.

In the spirit of Rocketship’s full inclusion program for students with special needs, Rocketeers with and without learning disabilities came together to cheer each other on, showing pride and support for their school and one another.

### Meaningful Inclusion

At Rocketship, we believe all students deserve access to high quality instruction alongside their typically developing peers. Meaningful inclusion, coupled with specially-designed individual supports, is an evidence-based best practice for the education of students with disabilities. We make a promise to our Rocketeers and their families that we will approach special education from this philosophy.

**1.8 years**

average growth in mathematics for Rocketeers with IEPs

on the NWEA MAP

**1.4 years**

average growth in reading for Rocketeers with IEPs

on the NWEA MAP
Rocketship Alumni Win National Samsung Solve STEM Competition

Faced with the worst drought in CA history, two Rocketeer alumni design a rainwater storage system to help their community conserve.

by Maya Díaz & Pedro Castillo | High School Rocketeer Alumni

Rocketeers learn how to solve problems and blast beyond the status quo long after they graduate. As our teachers work tirelessly to prepare students for lifelong success, stories like Maya Díaz’s and Pedro Castillo’s fill us with pride.

Graduates of Mateo Sheedy Elementary and current Downtown College Prep Alum Rock High School students, Maya and Pedro have already gained national recognition for solving problems. Faced with the worst drought in California history and a county-mandated 20 percent reduction in water consumption, Maya and Pedro helped their school’s engineering club design a gray water system and rain water storage system to help their community save water.

Their project sailed through five phases of competition in the nationwide Samsung Solve For Tomorrow contest, beating out thousands of other STEM projects to win $150,000 in technology for their school. Here, the students recap their once-in-a-lifetime experience in their own words and explain how Rocketship helped them on their journey.

PEDRO 9th grade

After everything we have experienced, the wind milling punches of shock and awe that came with winning $150,000 in technology for our school, being able to visit New York and building an accessible gray water system, I can say these experiences changed our lives.

Personally, this is credited to being raised in an environment that nurtured our desire for education. Without the help of my education at Rocketship
SRI International Study Finds Rocketship Alumni Outperform Their Peers

Rocketship teamed up with SRI International to conduct a longitudinal study of our alumni in middle school.

The preliminary findings reveal our Rocketeer alumni are prepared to excel in middle school.

- 95% of Rocketship alumni think graduating from college is very important
- 90+% of Rocketship alumni reported high levels of motivation and grit

MAYA 10th grade

In response to the extreme drought and the changes we’ve all witnessed in our communities, we designed an affordable gray water system that would enable residents to save up to 37 percent of fresh water use.

Our engineering team was thrilled and excited when we made it past the first round of the competition. We continued to work on our project, meeting up on the weekends and breaks.

It paid off. We continued to make our way through the stages of the competition and gained more excitement with each step. After we were admitted as one of 15 national finalists, we were all determined to win. We got the opportunity to go to New York and see the 14 other creative presentations.

When I learned our team was one of the five national finalists, I was excited and surprised that, as a group, we were able to accomplish such a big thing. Being in this club and competition has given us so many opportunities and opened so many doors for us that we would have never thought were possible. We went to New York and visited colleges that we’ve only heard about, and we went places I’ve only seen in the movies. This competition has really shown me that I can uplift my community using STEM and solve problems we face every day.

“Without the help of my education at Rocketship, and the wonderful teachers that supported me along the way, I would have not been able to arrive at where I am today.”

-Pedro, Rocketship Alumnus

This graph represents descriptive data and does not account for differences in student demographic characteristics. It includes data from two of the four charter management organizations included in the study.

Rocketship Alumni...

- Outperform their peers in the first year of middle school
- Have strong social-emotional mindsets
- Are college focused

95% of Rocketship alumni think graduating from college is very important

90+% of Rocketship alumni reported high levels of motivation and grit

READ MORE ➝ rsed.org/blog/SRI
It Takes a Village to Elevate a Teacher

Ms. Fernandez began her Rocketship career as a crossing guard. Three years later, she’s leading fifth grade Rocketeers as a classroom teacher at Discovery Prep.

by LaToya Fernandez  | Teacher, Discovery Prep

At Rocketship, we know it takes a village to raise a child. Little did I know when I began my career at Mateo Sheedy Elementary as a crossing guard that Rocketship’s village would also elevate me.

Three years ago, I remember my mornings starting at 5:30 a.m. I worked three jobs at the time through the YMCA’s after school program, helping with traffic before and after school and supporting teams in the learning lab and enrichment classes at Mateo Sheedy. I rushed to catch the bus to work as the sun came up, but I relished the responsibility of being the first warm, smiling face Rocketeer families saw each morning. As an added bonus, our amazing families brought me breakfast and gifts in appreciation. When Brittany Kinser, then an assistant principal, noticed my work ethic, I received a gift that changed my life: a chance to officially join Rocketship as a member of the support staff team.

The more I became immersed in Rocketship culture, the more I fell in love with the organization and the people in it. Even as I transitioned to working lunch and recess on support staff and traveled to Discovery Prep to work for their after school program, I knew I wanted to more directly impact students’ learning. I was elated when I got that chance. Faculty, families and school leaders noticed my interactions with students, and I was invited to become an Individualized Learning Specialist (ILS) in Discovery Prep’s learning lab.

As an ILS, I received endless guidance from peers, school leaders and the entire Rocketship network to help take my tutoring to the next level. I learned to integrate new strategies to boost Rocketeers’ comprehension and phonics skills. It felt great to not only help eliminate the achievement gap, but to be trusted and supported in my work and ideas.

I wanted to connect with this organization on another level — to truly understand our mission. There are few organizations where anyone can set up a face-to-face meeting with the CEO, but I reached out and before I knew it, I was sitting at a coffee shop with Preston Smith, Rocketship’s co-founder and CEO.

“How’s your daughter doing?” he asked when we sat down.

He wanted to know what my goals were and if he could answer any questions. After hearing me out, he suggested I might be better suited for the classroom and encouraged me to pursue a teaching credential. I left inspired.

A whirlwind of personal and professional transformation followed. With a four-year-old to take care of, though, investing time and money into my credential felt impossible. But with support, anything is possible. As a new teacher, I directly impacted students in ways I never could before.

With the amazing support of the Rocketship network, my Discovery Prep family and my students’ amazing families, my students grew an average 2.2 years in literacy, among the most significant gains in our network.

In addition to teaching, I channeled my passion for diversity and social justice and created a girls’ empowerment group — a safe space that grew girls’ confidence in and out of the classroom.
Building Staff Capacity

Our school staff are on the front lines of eliminating the achievement gap. They work tirelessly to reach each and every student, partner with families, and invest in their school communities. Here are just a few ways we’re supporting them in return:

- **EIGHT** staff members rising into teacher positions
- **SEVEN** teachers moving into assistant principal positions
- **6:1** teacher to school leader ratio for maximum support & development
- **300+** hours of professional development for each teacher each year

Three years after starting as a crossing guard, I am no longer a contributor; I am eliminating the achievement gap. As I continue to pursue my credential, I am now reaffirmed that anything is possible. I am proof for my students, families and daughter that it takes a village to raise a star.

Rocketship is my village and together we are facing social issues head on, eliminating the achievement gap and pursuing excellence. We are not just another network of schools. We are a movement of change and progress for our students, for our staff and our communities.

Ms. Fernandez’s Rocketeers take a light-hearted break to teach her a new dance move after a discussion about the Syrian humanitarian crisis. Rocketeers expressed their feelings on the conflict and ways to promote peace as the leaders of tomorrow.
How Teacher Voice Shapes Rocketship

Veteran teachers form teacher advisory group to drive positive network change

by Sheena Shirakhon | Rising Assistant Principal, Si Se Puede

Teachers spend more than one thousand hours with their students each year. We make deliberate and conscious decisions for every lesson we teach. Everything in our classrooms — from the anchor charts and desk arrangements to lesson hooks and essay topics — are decisions we make to ensure our kids thrive and realize their incredible potential. It is key for teachers to have the autonomy to make these choices in our classrooms, but it is also imperative that we have a voice in the decision making at the school and network or district level.

I started my teaching career in a New York City middle school in 2008, and while I was new to the profession, I quickly became frustrated by the administration’s decisions that often seemed to go directly against the interests of my students. I remember one day in my first year, my principal barged into my room and announced to the class that she would be taking a handful of “good” students to the movie theater that day. While well-intentioned, the outcome was a room full of students angrily asking, “But why don’t I get to go?”

Unfortunately, this moment was indicative of the fact that the school had developed a culture in which decisions were made top-down, often seemingly haphazardly and with utter disregard for the needs and interests of our students. I knew, if I wanted to make a real impact in my students’ lives, I needed a change.

When I eventually transitioned into a different school context, I was immediately aware of a shift in the dynamic between school leaders and teachers. First at KIPP in New York, and then here at Rocketship in San Jose, it became clear to me that school leaders valued open and candid conversations with teachers. While not always perfect, it was refreshing and led to a higher degree of cohesion.

Rocketship has utilized a number of practices to gather teacher input (satisfaction surveys, teacher focus groups, etc). However, as a growing and evolving network, there is always opportunity to further infuse teacher voice into school — and network-wide decisions. At the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, I joined forces with leadership from Rocketship’s Network Support Team and we began planning what eventually became the Teacher Advisory Group.

With a national teacher shortage threatening the future of public education, we knew increasing the role of teacher voice in Rocketship would help us discover ways to better retain and develop talent and achieve our mission to eliminate the achievement gap in our lifetime.

We set out to bring our most experienced teachers into the group. Ultimately, the teachers who signed on not only brought experience, but also warmth, wisdom and, above all, an ability to thoughtfully and powerfully articulate their ideas, even late into the evening after a long day at school.

91% of school staff have established strong relationships at Rocketship

92% of school staff are passionate about Rocketship’s mission and values
For anyone who has ever attended a meeting after 5 p.m. on a school night, you know this is no small feat.

Throughout the year, we tackled a variety of issues, including:

• the development of the Teacher Professional Development Fund. This fund pays for external PD opportunities ranging from language study abroad to instructional workshops

• the creation of an internal teacher time study to better understand how teachers currently spend their time to find ways to support efficiency and sustainability

• shifts in the assessments calendar to maximize data-driven instruction

While the group expressed ideas and provided feedback, network leadership actively listened, responded to ideas and asked follow-up questions to probe a bit further. By participating in this ongoing dialogue, teachers learned more about the various factors that impact network decision-making processes and network leaders were able to get real-time feedback on ideas before rolling them out network-wide.

I am impressed by the progress that the group made in the 2014-15 academic school year and I look forward to seeing what it achieves in the year to come.

Rocketship is an organization that belongs to all of us, and our mission to eliminate the achievement gap in our lifetime requires that we all play a role in making our schools an excellent place to learn and an empowering place to teach.

**TOP** During a weekly professional development session, teachers share shout-outs for creative lesson plans and innovative problem solving. **MIDDLE** Fuerza’s transitional kindergarten team aligns during common planning time. **BOTTOM** Assistant Principal Mateos films a Rocketship tutor to help provide targeted feedback and development.
Over 1,200 Parents Attend San Jose Mayoral Forum

On October 6, 2014, parent leaders from Rocketship, in partnership with other local charter schools and People Acting in Community Together, held a non-partisan candidate forum.

by Lety Gomez | Fuerza Community Prep Parent Leader

Election season in San Jose featured many candidate forums, but we had the incredible opportunity to do something different. Our community candidates forum, organized by parents for parents, was a unique opportunity to hear where the candidates for mayor, county and local school boards stand on education issues and, most importantly, how they plan to work on addressing San Jose’s achievement gap.

Silicon Valley is a hub of innovation and prosperity, yet we still struggle to provide our children equal access to a quality education and prepare them for the competitive jobs our region offers. Forty thousand San Jose students — about half of our kids — are not proficient in grade level skills. We can and must do more to halt this injustice.

As parents, we are looking for leadership on this issue and partnership moving forward, so both parents and elected officials can ensure all San Jose kids have access to the great education they deserve.

“We as parents will not and cannot be silent in addressing the challenges facing our education system,” Rocketship Brilliant Minds Parent Leader Celemente Rocha said to the crowd of 1,200 at the forum.

“Our children follow our examples — by parents taking action, we inspire our kids to do their best.”

Knowledge is power and the forum armed our community with greater knowledge, and greater power, to catalyze the change we need.

“We know that every student with ganas can graduate from college if we enable them to,” San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo, then still a candidate, said at the forum.

“We can do it if we support innovative schools. They are helping lift the ambitions and aspirations of our children.”

Council member

“Our children follow our examples — by parents taking action, we inspire our kids to do their best.”

- Sam Liccardo, San Jose Mayor
Liccardo was joined by fellow mayoral candidate Dave Cortese, Santa Clara County Board of Education candidate Darcie Green and Alum Rock Union School Board candidates Dulce Gonzalez, Esau Herrera, Andres Quintero and Claudia Tercero to discuss their visions for the children of San Jose. Our community learned much from the candidates who pledged to work together to change the statistics and make sure our children are prepared for college. By turning out to vote in this last election and continuing to engage our elected officials, we will hold them accountable to follow through on the commitments made during the forum. However, we know politicians cannot do this work alone.

As parents and community members, we must do our part. We all must support the academic achievement of the children in our lives and advocate for eliminating the achievement gap. The future of San Jose depends on it.

2015 Hart Vision Volunteer of the Year Awarded to Rocketship Parent Leaders

*The Esparza family inspired a movement to bring quality schools to their community.*

For years, Enrique Esparza has been driving over 100 miles each day to transport five Rocketship students from their homes in Redwood City to our schools in San Jose. Determined to create better school options in their own community, Enrique and his wife Maritza Leal led the charge to open a Rocketship school and a KIPP school in Redwood City. They were recently awarded the 2015 Hart Vision Volunteer of the Year award by the California Charter Schools Association.

**LEFT** The Esparza family, from left, Enrique, Deborah (8), Daniela (13), Maritza and David (3).

Engaged Parents Are Essential

Parents are not only their children’s first teachers, they are lifelong advocates. A staple of the Rocketship model, engaged parents contribute to their kids’ academic progress and the overall prosperity of their community.

Our educators make it a priority to communicate our Rocketeers’ academic progress with their families and engage parents on strategies to improve each student’s performance.

- **93%** of parents are satisfied with their relationship with teachers
- **95%** of parents know how their child is meeting his academic goals
- **90%** of parents would recommend Rocketship to a friend
Ward 8 Parent Leader: With Rocketship, We Can Get Our Community Back!

At Rocketship’s groundbreaking ceremony for our first elementary school in the Washington, DC region, proud Ward 8 parent Keisha Clark delivers a heartfelt speech.

Speech by Keisha Clark | Ward 8 Parent Leader

Hello, I’m Keisha Clark. I live in the Woodland Terrace area. I have three children: Britteny, 8, Lonisha, 17, and Ky-Arnie, 4.

Ky-Arnie will be going to Rocketship when it comes! I had the pleasure of going to Nashville to observe the Rocketship school and I was extremely pleased. Everything was so amazing in how the kids were learning.

Everything was hands on. If a child didn’t understand, they were helped...not just by the teacher, but also by the other students.

They were pushed to keep trying. The teachers didn’t leave the students behind and say, “Okay, you didn’t get it.”

They helped them get it and then they moved further.

When I went into the kindergarten class, these kids...Oh, when I say these kids, it was like they were in schools for years. They were adding numbers in so many different ways. They were getting hands on with these little tally marks. It was like, “What grade did you say they were in?”

Now, Ky-Arnie has never been in school at all, so with Rocketship, there is no doubt in my mind that she will be going to a place where she can succeed. Unbelievable.

Everything I saw and witnessed, even down to the parents, was amazing. The parents were open doors. Anything you can think of, they will help you to the best of their ability.

And it wasn’t just teachers and parents there for their kids — they were there for all kids.

They knew their names, they knew their parents’ names, they knew the things they were needing in their homes, not just in school.

If we could get that in Woodland Terrace, we can get our community back.

“It goes back to what my mom said, ‘It takes a village to raise a kid.’ And with Rocketship, you have your village and you will gain an extended family.”

- Keisha Clark, Ward 8 Parent Leader

WATCH: Launching DC documentary
rsed.org/blog/LaunchingDC
Rocketship DC Launching 2016

Our nation’s capital is home to a vibrant community of multi-generational families and newcomers alike. The community has proven that it is dedicated to ensuring every student has access to an excellent school and we’ve seen progress, but still less than half of our students are on grade level. Our southeast neighborhoods demonstrate an even greater need, with less than a third of students on grade level. We need to rethink elementary education; our students deserve better.

Rocketship has been partnering with the DC community since January 2013 in anticipation of our first community school opening in August 2016. AppleTree Public Charter School has joined forces with Rocketship and will serve PreK students inside our first school.

In 2014, we began construction on our first school in DC. Opening in DC’s lowest performing Ward, Rocketship’s two-story, 54,000 square foot facility will feature a glass entrance, an outdoor terrace, two playground structures and incredible views.

TOP Rocketeers and members of the DC Public Charter School Board and Woodland Terrace community break ground for Rocketship DC.

MIDDLE A rendering of our DC campus. BOTTOM DC’s Regional Director, Jacque Patterson, with his daughter at the Ward 8 Enrollment Fair.
At fifth grade science camp in Yosemite, CA, Rocketeers practice teamwork skills on Camp Tuolumne Trail’s challenge course.
A Rocketeer from Fuerza Community Prep prepares to perform the Jarabe Tapatio dance.
Rocketship is a nonprofit with the mission of eliminating the achievement gap in our lifetime. In 2014-15, 93% of our funding came from public sources as we continue on a path towards financial sustainability. School-based expenses accounted for 84% of our spending, while the other 16% was spent on central school supports.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
Each Rocketship school reaches financial sustainability at full enrollment. Each region reaches sustainability when it scales to five to eight schools. Our Bay Area region is already financially sustainable, meaning that our existing schools and the regional team supporting them can operate solely on public funds.

We are on track to achieve organization-wide financial sustainability by 2020.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
($000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
<td>$18,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Current Assets</td>
<td>$4,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$22,699</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Liabilities</td>
<td>$5,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term Liabilities</td>
<td>$5,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets</td>
<td>$12,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$22,699</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Authorizers

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

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 Office of Education

Rocketship Board of Directors

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

Fred Ferrer | Chair  
Alan Crites | Treasurer  
Arra Yerganian | Secretary  
Alex Hernandez  
Alex Terman  
Deborah McGriff  
Greg Stanger  
Joey Sloter  
Louis Jordan  
Mary Herald  
Ralph Weber  
Raymond Raven

Wisconsin Board of Directors

Ralph Weber | Chair  
Denisha Tate  
Garrett Bucks  
Robert Montemayor  
Tim Sheehy

DC Board of Directors

Joey Sloter | Chair  
Barry Rosenthal  
Jean-Claude Brizard  
June Nwabara  
Justin Bakewell  
Michael Spencer

2014-15 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+

Anonymous  
Arthur & Toni Rembe Rock  
Charter School Growth Fund

$500,000+

Reed Hastings & Patty Quillin  
Tipping Point Community

$100,000+

CityBridge Foundation  
John & Susan Carver  
John & Catherine Debs  
Ludwig Family Foundation  
Stanley & Jolene Sloter Family Foundation  
Tommy & Julie Frist

$25,000+

Anonymous  
BMO Harris Bank  
M&I Foundation  
Perkins Malo Hunter Foundation

$5,000+

Anonymous  
Argosy Foundation  
Arzbaecher Family Foundation  
Baird  
Greg & Lisa Stanger  
Herzfeld Foundation  
John & Linda Mellowes  
Jon & Ann Hammes  
Louis & Lynda LL Jordan  
Wilson Family Foundation