



2022
2023

YEAR IN REVIEW

ROCKETSHIP
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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STUDENTS
SERVED
LIFETIME

30,499

10,335 Rocketeers

70% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged

43% English Language Learners

85% Latino and Black

10% Special Education

**2022-23
STUDENT
POPULATION**

Sixteen years ago, Rocketship Mateo Sheedy opened its doors in downtown San Jose with a humble 160 Rocketeers. Today, we have grown into a formidable force in public education, with 23 schools spread across California, Milwaukee, Tennessee, Washington DC, and Texas, serving nearly 11,000 children and families each day. Our progress from that single school to a widespread national network mirrors the rise of innovative public charter schools across the country.

A recent groundbreaking study from Stanford showcased that students in public charter schools consistently outperform their district school counterparts. The study's author, Margaret "Macke" Raymond, wrote that "What you're looking at is really the only story in U.S. education policy where we've been able to create a set of conditions such that schools actually do get better." The study ranked Rocketship Public Schools as one of the "gap-busting" networks in the country — proof that high-quality public education is possible in any community.

Charter schools were founded in 1988 by Albert Shanker, an education reformer and American Teachers Federation president. The founding premise of charter schools was to free educators from the bureaucratic constraints of traditional district schools and empower educators to experiment with innovative approaches to instruction, especially for students in disadvantaged communities of color who continued to be underserved by the traditional system. Charter schools were conceptualized as a means to revitalize the twin promises of American public education, fostering social mobility and unity in our diverse society. Our commitment to realize that promise is why over 30,000 families have chosen to send their children to Rocketship over these last 16 years.

While we celebrate the incredible progress our network has made, Rocketship remains a work in progress. Just as our Rocketeers continuously learn and grow, we, too, are committed to continuous learning. We are relentless in our pursuit of innovative methods to better serve our students, nurture our talent, and support our parents to champion equity and excellence in their communities. Together, our collective of parents, teachers, leaders, supporters, and students are igniting a movement to reshape the future for underserved communities throughout our nation.

TOGETHER, WE ARE
UNLEASHING POTENTIAL.



Preston Smith
Co-Founder & CEO



16 YEARS
5 REGIONS
30,499
ROCKETEERS

Major New Stanford Study Highlights “Gap-Busting” Public Charter Schools

A major new [Stanford CREDO study](#) of more than 3 million public school students found that students at public charter schools outperform traditional public school students. More notably, the study highlighted Rocketship Public Schools as one of the charter sector’s “gap-busting” networks that are providing empirical proof that high-quality public education is possible anywhere.

The study also pushed back on a common, unfounded claim that charter schools “cherry pick” the best students as a way to improve their results. In multiple analyses, this major study found the opposite is true. Charter schools enroll students who are disproportionately lower achieving than the students in traditional schools. Charter schools are serving the students most in need and realizing stronger results.

Margaret “Macke” Raymond, founder and director of CREDO, put it best when she said that:

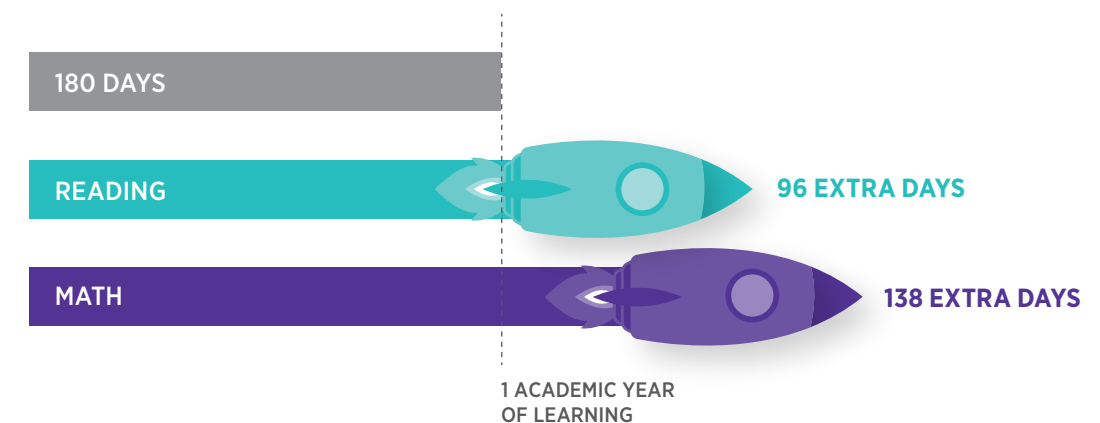
“What you’re looking at is really the only story in U.S. education policy where we’ve been able to create a set of conditions such that schools actually do get better.”

Indeed, this study makes it clear that public charter schools are driving significant progress in public education. And at the core of that progress is our commitment to continuous learning, innovation, improvement, and meeting the unique needs of all students and families. All of us at Rocketship are tremendously proud to play a significant role in demonstrating what is possible in public education.

Rocketeers Gain Five to Seven Months of Additional Learning per Year

The Stanford CREDO study found that nationwide, public charter school students gain the equivalent of 16 additional days of learning in reading and six additional days of learning in math compared to their peers in the traditional public schools they would have otherwise attended. At Rocketship, our Rocketeers gained significantly more — the equivalent of 96 additional days of learning in reading and 138 additional days of learning in math. That is equivalent to five to seven months of additional learning in a single school year. We truly are unleashing potential.

Additional Learning Rocketship Students Gain Each Academic Year

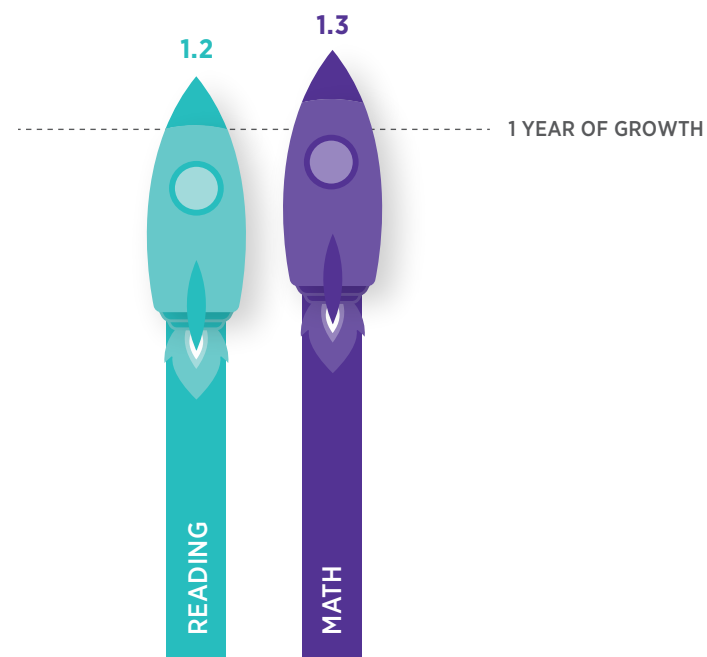


First-Year Rocketeers Narrow Achievement Gaps

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 offers 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 narrow the gap that separates them from their college-bound peers. In the 2022-23 school year, our first-year Rocketeers achieved gap-closing results in every region. By growing over a grade level in a single school year, students are gaining ground on their college-bound peers and eliminating the achievement gap.

NWEA, the Northwest Evaluation Association, and its MAP Growth nationally-normed assessment, is used by more than 9,000 schools and districts throughout the world. Rocketship students take the MAP assessment in the fall, winter, and spring. Our Rocketeers grow more than a full grade level in a single school year, every year. Last year, our new Rocketeers grew an average of 1.3 grade levels in math and 1.2 in reading.

Average New Student Growth



Partnering with Parents from the Start

Our approach to personalized learning is focused on building deep relationships with our Rocketeers and their families. A strong relationship between the family and school is the backbone of child development. At Rocketship, this starts with our annual home visits. Last school year, our teachers visited the homes of 8,632 students by Thanksgiving break. This annual practice enables our educators to learn about their students' home environment, family structure, unique interests, and more.

In addition to annual visits, our teachers hold three family-teacher conferences every year. And throughout the course of the year, families receive weekly updates on how their child is progressing and how to help support their child's growth and development at home.

We know that when parents are more involved in their child's education, Rocketeers have greater chances at excelling in school. By creating multiple opportunities for families to engage, we're able to support Rocketeers holistically and connect with families genuinely.

8,632

Students Received
Home Visits from Educators



SRI Spotlights Rocketship's Parent Power

A parent is a child's first teacher and lifelong advocate. Parents hold extraordinary power to change outcomes for their children and improve the quality of their community. But they often don't have a seat at decision-making tables. We're working to change that.

SRI International, an independent nonprofit research institute, spent months analyzing our parent leadership work and published a report detailing our model and results. The study authors noted that, "Rocketship parents are learning to use their voices to influence local and state policies that impact their families and communities."

We believe every parent can become a leader. Parents who get involved in this work typically do not have any experience in community organizing or advocacy. As they learn about new issues affecting their community and acquire new skills, our parents build power and create change in their communities. Rocketship families have pushed for better traffic safety measures, raised awareness about the importance of voting, participated in marches and rallies, and advocated for policies that are improving excellence and equity in public education. For many parents, these experiences have led to increased self-confidence, lasting friendships and, in some cases, jobs in advocacy and government.



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Rocketship parents are learning to use their voices to influence local and state policies that impact their families and communities.

– SRI International

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Voices for Change:
Parent Leadership &
Advocacy at Rocketship
Public Schools

SRI International®

Families Come Together to Get Out the Vote!

As a public school network, we believe it is our responsibility to not only teach our students about the bedrock of our democracy but also engage their parents to ensure they are exercising their rights as citizens. That is why we coordinated an effort across all our schools nationwide to register families to vote and drive voter mobilization. This included family sessions to learn about the right to vote, communications campaigns about election logistics, one-on-one conversations to answer questions and a student curriculum about what voting means in America's democracy, and a home-to-school connection to encourage families to have conversations about voting at the dinner table. We worked individually and in small groups to make sure everyone knew how to access their vote: the requirements for registering, relevant deadlines, voter registration forms, polling locations, and more.



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“The deep, trusting relationships schools form with parents can serve as the foundation for broader civic engagement.”

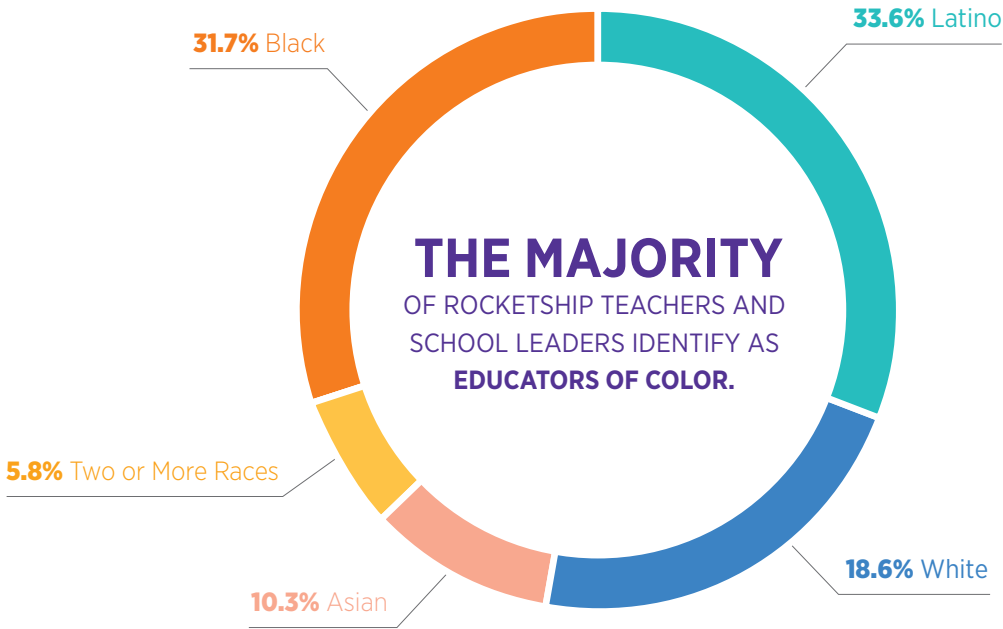
Featured in **The74**

Rocketship Educators Reflect the Communities We Serve

An increasing body of research shows that student achievement and attendance go up and suspension rates go down when students have at least one same-race teacher. Yet national data from the Institute of Education Sciences shows that America’s teaching force hasn’t increased in diversity. In fact, 79% of the nation’s public school teachers are white. In contrast, 45 percent of the nation’s public school students are white, according to the National Center of Education Statistics. While there has been a slight increase in Hispanic public school teachers since 2015, the share of Black teachers has actually declined since the 1990s.

We are flipping the “diversity in education” script at Rocketship. **Our educators reflect the communities we serve. The majority of our educators — 81% — identify as people of color.**

Equity in education is about providing each student with what they need to succeed. This includes learning from teachers who offer both windows and mirrors — people who bring new perspectives, as well as reflect their own background and experience. That is why Rocketship is working relentlessly to ensure that our Rocketeers are taught by a representative team of educators that bring experiences, ideas, and perspectives to our classrooms that truly connect with our kids and communities.



*All Rocketship teachers and school leaders



Rocketship’s DEI Vision

In 2019, Rocketship launched its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team to help unleash the full potential of our incredible team by purposefully pursuing representation in our communities, breaking down barriers to power, and creating a safe, collaborative environment that celebrates our differences. We recognize the systemic inequality of opportunity in our society and seek to address those disparities through:

- **DIVERSITY:** Create a diverse collective of change agents with voices, experiences, backgrounds, and identities, at all levels, that authentically represent the communities that we serve.
- **EQUITY:** Acknowledge that systemic advantages and barriers exist in our society at large and work to break down those barriers to ensure all staff, families, and students have equitable access to opportunities regardless of identities.
- **INCLUSION:** Cultivate a culture of belonging where people of diverse values, backgrounds, and identities are valued, respected, as well as heard in decisions that impact our collective work.



ELEMENTARY- ONLY BY DESIGN



Improving the Public Education Ecosystem

By focusing exclusively on elementary education, we work to improve the entire ecosystem of public education in the communities we serve. We are not creating a parallel K-12 school system, we are focused on improving outcomes for kids and deepening engagement with parents at the elementary level.

Our expertise in elementary education prepares thousands of Rocketeers in their vital early years of education. When our graduates move on to attend different middle schools, those students are ready for the rigors of middle school. In fact, a [three-year study by SRI Education](#) found that our Rocketeers are a full year ahead of their middle school classmates in both math and reading. This means middle schools are enrolling more students that are on grade level and ready to advance their education.

We are sending powerful parents off to join their middle school communities as well. During their time at Rocketship, our parents are deeply engaged in their Rocketeers' education. They become champions of their child's learning and learn how to harness the power of their voice to advocate for their children and their communities. They learn to hold leaders accountable and ensure their kids continue to receive the same excellence in education that they experienced during their elementary years at Rocketship.

Excellent elementary schools beget stronger middle schools beget stronger high schools. It's a virtuous cycle designed to scale impact far beyond the number of seats offered by Rocketship. This is how our elementary-only model is designed to elevate the entire public education ecosystem in the communities we serve.



Rocketship Wisconsin is Going to College!

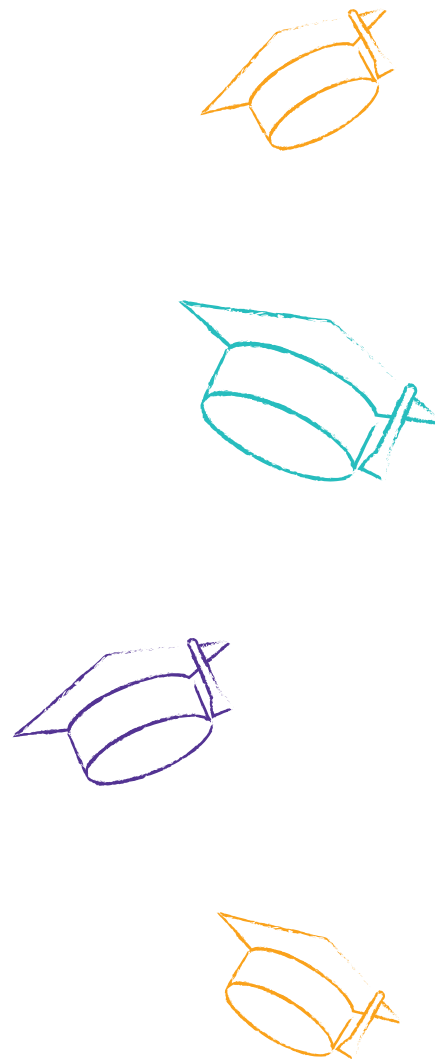
By Amir Santiago

Founding student, Rocketship Southside Community Prep

I'm a first-generation college-bound student, and as anyone will tell you, the cards are stacked against kids like me. I feel blessed to have been accepted at multiple colleges like the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Carroll University, and I plan to go to Marquette next year. As I look ahead to college, I can't help but think about my elementary school experience. I will never forget my first day of third grade at Rocketship Southside Community Prep. I remember how intentional Rocketship teachers were about building inclusive classroom environments, where everyone felt equally loved and respected. Because I was taught how to navigate diverse perspectives in social relationships as a young elementary student, I was better prepared for middle and high school — and I'm sure, college.

The friendships I built with my classmates and the deep, meaningful relationships I built with my teachers are the biggest highlights of my time at Rocketship. My friend, Mariana, was also in my class and is a first-generation student like me. She's getting ready to go to Marquette, as well. Mariana wants to become a nurse to help people like her mom who was diagnosed with cancer while we were at Rocketship. Her parents are monolingual, so she was often the family translator, trying to ensure her mom got the care she needed at the tender age of 10. Rocketship's project-based learning approach helped Mariana learn English well enough not only to help her mom as she was going through cancer treatments but also to become an advanced English-language reader by the end of our first year.

Both Mariana and I feel prepared for college because of our experiences at Rocketship. I know that I'm prepared to tackle this next challenge in my academic career because of the empathy and skills I learned as a little one. And I know I am not alone as I enter the next chapter of my life.



Alumna & Mother See Rocketship's Impact Long After Graduation Day

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“I felt the difference on the first day of first grade at Rocketship. I liked it better than my other school because getting to know my teachers and classmates was easier. I was able to build deep relationships with my teachers, many of whom I have kept in touch with today. Teachers like Ms. Alvarez always pushed me to do well and get a head start on preparing for college.”

Esperanza Heredia,

Founding Rocketeer at Rocketship Discovery Prep and freshman at University of California, Irvine

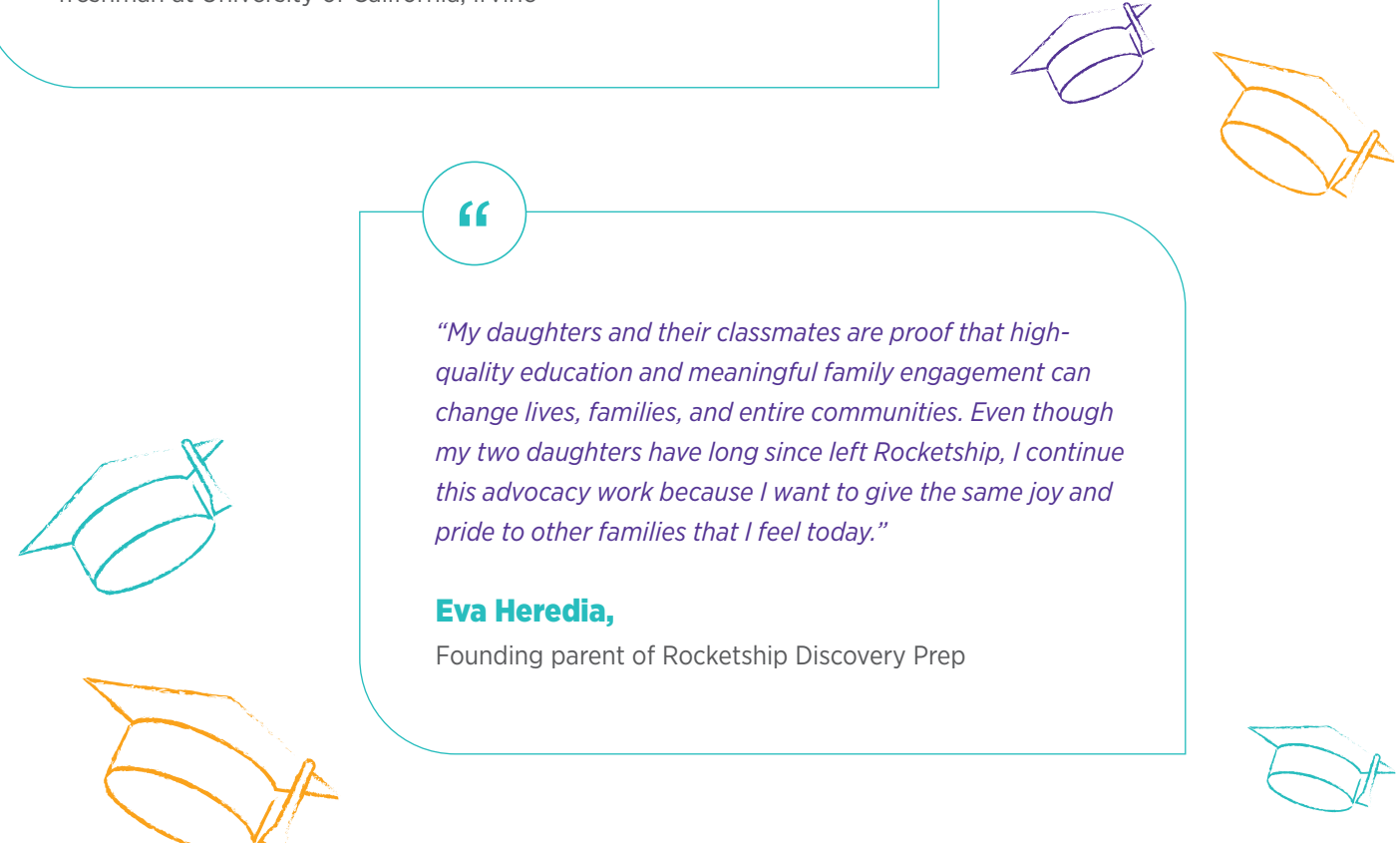


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“My daughters and their classmates are proof that high-quality education and meaningful family engagement can change lives, families, and entire communities. Even though my two daughters have long since left Rocketship, I continue this advocacy work because I want to give the same joy and pride to other families that I feel today.”

Eva Heredia,

Founding parent of Rocketship Discovery Prep



ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS CALIFORNIA



6,475 **ROCKETEERS** 73% **LATINO** 76% **SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED** 56% **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

Rocketship started in 2007 in a church in downtown San Jose with makeshift classrooms, seven fearless teachers, and 160 courageous Rocketeers. Building on an innovative model of teaching, learning, and parent power, Rocketship California has grown to a network of 13 high-performing schools across the Bay Area serving thousands of students.

And our impact goes far beyond our current students. Tens of thousands of Rocketship California alumni make their communities better every single day. From high schoolers active in volunteering to college students aiding in scientific research and immigration justice, our Rocketeers are changing the world for the better. And a few of our Rocketeers are even back as educators in our schools — helping to unleash the potential of the next generation.

2007

Rocketship Mateo Sheedy Elementary opens

2009-2011

Four schools open: Rocketship Si Se Puede, Los Sueños Academy, Mosaic Elementary, and Discovery Prep

2012-2015

Three schools open: Rocketship Spark Academy, Fuerza Community Prep, and Redwood City Prep

2016-2018

Three schools open: Rocketship Rising Stars Academy, Futuro Academy, and Delta Prep

2019

2,500 Parents Advocate for Educational Equity at Stand with Great Schools event

2019

California Distinguished Schools Award

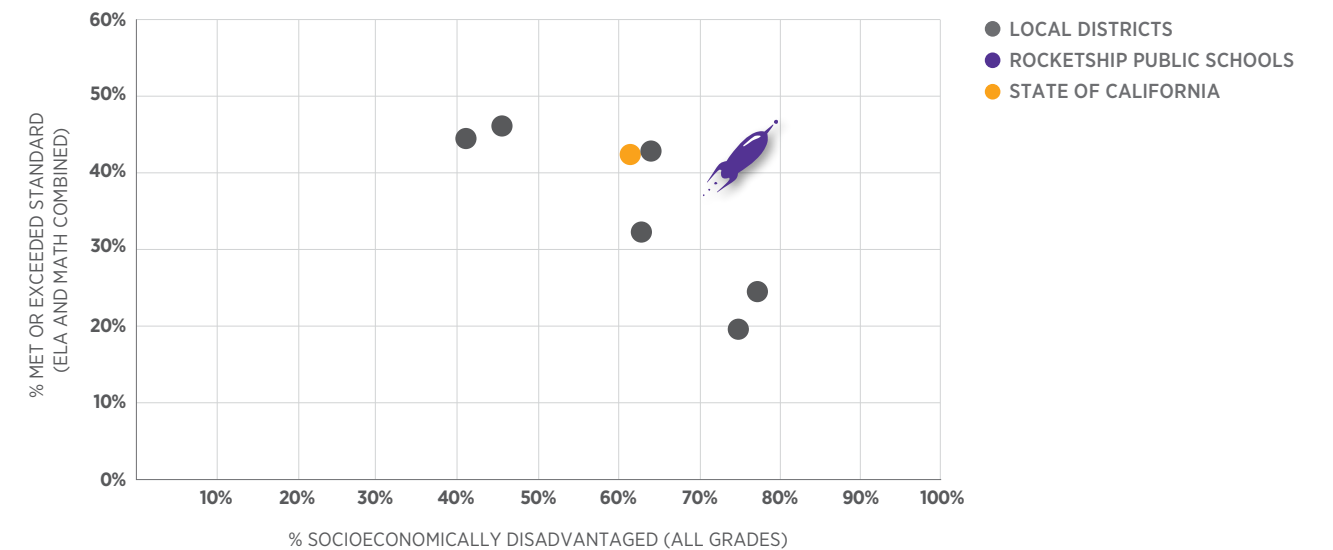
2021

US News & World Report ranked seven Rocketship schools Best Elementary Schools in the state and nation

2022

Rocketship receives Charter School of the Year and Pivotal Practice Awards

2022-23 CAASPP: GRADES 3RD-5TH ROCKETSHIP AND LOCAL DISTRICTS



Rocketship California Outperforms Local Schools Serving Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students

Among California schools that serve a similar population, Rocketship California ranks at or above the 70th percentile for socioeconomically disadvantaged students in both math and English Language Arts. We're proud to share that all of our schools outperformed their local district averages for socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

The chart on this page shows achievement results plotted against the percentage of students classified as socioeconomically disadvantaged for local districts, the state of California, and Rocketship California. This analysis underscores how our Rocketeers are charting a new course for disadvantaged students in our state. Our high-quality schools and instructional model are proving that demographics do not define the amazing potential of the Rocketeers we have the privilege to serve.

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“The individualized learning program and support at Rocketship is a feature we greatly appreciate. It’s not a one-size-fits-all approach; instead, it’s tailored to address each student’s unique strengths and challenges. This tailored education has allowed our son to thrive, building confidence and reaching his full potential.”

Kathlyn and Carmine Clementelli,
Rocketship Parents

1000+ Families Attend Parent-Led Voter Forums

Rocketship California's parent leadership community has a long history of unleashing parent power, and this year was no exception. Our parent leaders hosted two non-partisan political forums in advance of the November elections to ensure our community came to the polls fully informed. As part of these forums, parents shared their stories with local candidates and leaders so they can better understand the issues affecting their community.

To help families more effectively share their experiences, Rocketship's education organizers hosted a full-day training for 30 parent leaders on the Marshall Ganz's Public Narrative Framework. The goal was to give parent leaders the tools they need to craft strong, compelling testimonies to use in advocacy work.

We saw these strong testimonies in action at our first-ever East Bay Education Candidate Forum, where candidates from the Contra Costa County Office of Education and the Antioch Unified School District board joined a parent-led panel and more than 500 community members virtually. Our powerful parents shared their stories and asked candidates questions about school choice, the achievement gap, college and career pathways, and more.

Parent leaders in San Jose also hosted a parent-led Santa Clara County Office of Education Forum, where more than 500 families and local leaders came together to better understand each candidate's stance on issues ranging from mental health support in schools to the importance of working with underserved communities.



“

“It’s important for parents to be involved in local politics because that’s where things will spark change. Getting to know who our local elected representatives are and understanding what they stand for is going to ignite change for our community, for our families, and for our children.”

Rosemary Chavez Scott

Parent Leader in San Jose, CA



Care Corps Supports Families Outside of the Classroom

As community schools, we know that our campuses are hubs for connection, and ultimately become a family’s second home. Rocketship California’s Care Corps is an expansion of our community schools model and offers wrap-around services to support families outside of the classroom so their Rocketeers can show up fully in the classroom.

Each school’s Care Corps coordinator helps our families navigate support systems and get assistance related to job searches, housing, financial aid, food security, and much more. Care Corps has created a safe space where parents can ask for help and remove obstacles to improve access to vital support services in their community.



Full Circle Support with Community Partnerships

We’re so proud to have once again holistically served thousands of families last year thanks to partnering with incredible local organizations.

- **5,655 free health screenings** for Bay Area Rocketeers thanks to the Healthy Kids Foundation and K-12 Health East Bay.
- **11,000 food kits** distributed to families in San Jose and the East Bay in partnership with Second Harvest.
- **200 households were given clothes** at a pop-up closet thanks to donations from City Team Ministries.
- **500 free haircuts** to Rocketeers and their siblings thanks to Bay Area Urban Barber College.
- **Hosted a vaccination clinic and community resource fair** for our San Jose families in partnership with the State of California and the Santa Clara County Department of Health.

ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS WISCONSIN



713
ROCKETEERS

94%
LATINO
& BLACK

85%
SOCIOECONOMICALLY
DISADVANTAGED

14%
SPECIAL
EDUCATION

Despite decades of effort, the racial achievement gap in Milwaukee is still among the worst in the nation. Another generation of students in Milwaukee is at risk of being denied the opportunity to realize their full potential. Standing apart from this seemingly intractable problem is Rocketship Wisconsin. Focusing on small group instruction, culturally responsive classrooms, and social-emotional learning, our educators are engaging students in a joyful learning community focused on positivity, growth, and opportunity. And our families are deeply engaged in both our school community and the greater movement for equity in Milwaukee.

In 2013, Rocketship Wisconsin launched the largest charter school opening in the history of Milwaukee: Rocketship Southside Community Prep. In 2018, we launched our second school, Rocketship Transformation Prep. We are proud to now serve over 700 students on both the North and South sides of Milwaukee.

2013

Rocketship Southside Community Prep launches as the largest charter school opening in the history of Milwaukee

2014

Southside Community Prep earns 'Exceeding Expectations' on the state accountability system's annual record card

2018

Rocketship Transformation Prep opens on the North Side and triples enrollment after moving into its permanent space a year later

2018

Rocketship Southside Community Prep wins "Beating the Odds" award from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

2020

Parent leaders meet with the Governor to share their testimonies and demand for equitable funding for Wisconsin's charter schools

2021-2022

Parent leaders encourage a turnout of over 1,000 community members for a virtual forum with Milwaukee mayoral candidates in advance of the election

2023

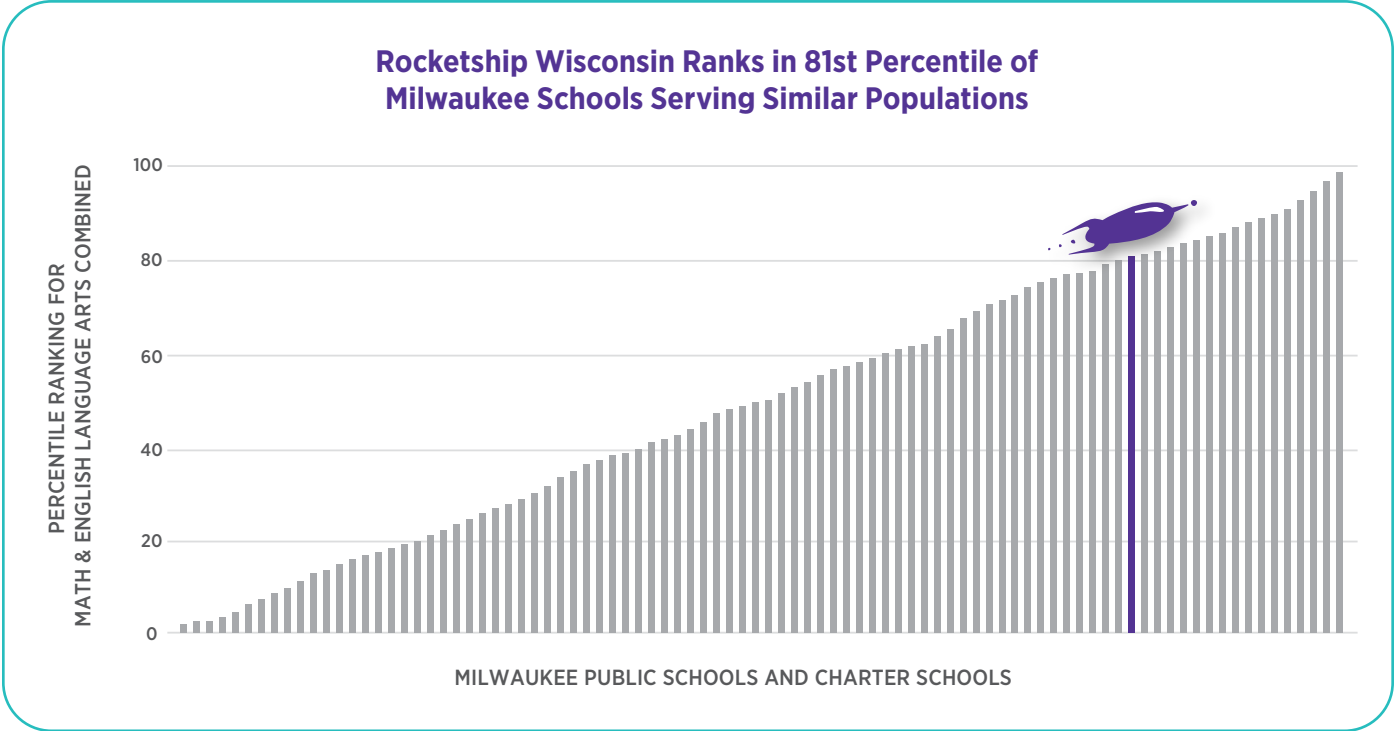
Rocketship parents lead the Equal Funding Campaign with nine other partner choice schools in Milwaukee to achieve historic school funding increases from the Wisconsin legislature and Governor

2023

Rocketship Transformation Prep breaks ground on expanded campus to include a new gym, cafeteria, food server, and laundry room — the culmination of five years of work to serve more families

Rocketship Wisconsin Ranks in 81st Percentile of Milwaukee Schools Serving Similar Populations

Among Milwaukee district and charter schools that serve a similar population, Rocketship Wisconsin ranked in the 81st percentile in English Language Arts and math combined on the Wisconsin Forward Exam in 2023. State-wide, our schools also ranked in the top 80th percentile in English Language Arts among all Wisconsin serving a similar population. While our scores did dip from the heights we achieved before the pandemic, our resilient Rocketeers are still outperforming their peers at local schools.





Rocketship Transformation Prep Expands to Serve More Students and the Community

In the Spring of 2023, we broke ground on a brand new, 5,000-square-foot addition at Rocketship Transformation Prep. The added physical space will become a multi-purpose gymnasium that allows Rocketeers to enjoy art, dance, physical education, and gather the entire school community under one roof. This beautiful new wing also comes with a cafeteria, food servery, and a laundry room available for families to use.

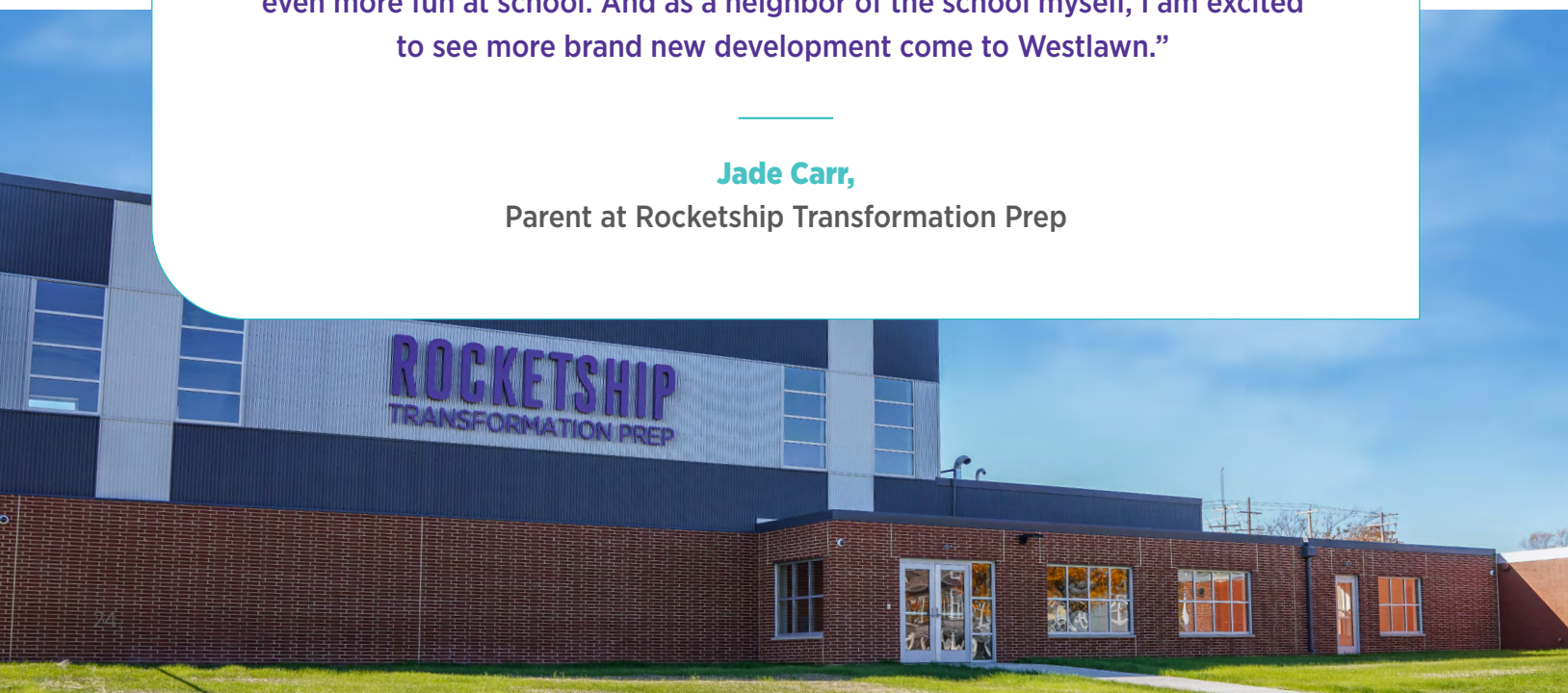
The dream of having a state-of-the-art gymnasium has always been at the forefront of our minds, especially for our dedicated parents. We believe that our students deserve the very best. A gym is not merely a building with walls and a roof; it's a space where dreams are nurtured, where physical well-being is promoted, and where teamwork and discipline are instilled. Our students are the future, and they deserve the best tools and facilities to excel holistically.

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“My son has special needs and he has thrived at Rocketship Transformation Prep since the first day it opened. The new additions to campus will give my baby, and all our kids, extra space to be able to learn, dance, play, and have even more fun at school. And as a neighbor of the school myself, I am excited to see more brand new development come to Westlawn.”

Jade Carr,

Parent at Rocketship Transformation Prep



Wisconsin Families Unite to Increase State Funding for Charter Schools

Prior to July 2023, charter and choice schools in Wisconsin received 20% less funding — a staggering \$5,000-\$7,000 less per pupil than traditional public schools. This marks the lowest public funding rate for charter and choice schools in the country, even though more than half of Milwaukee families attend such schools.

Parents knew something had to be done, so they came together to fight for equal funding. Rocketship's parent leadership team equips families with skills to advocate for political issues like this in their community. And our team knew they could make a meaningful change if families across the state came together. So, Rocketship Wisconsin's senior education organizer, LaToya Woods, teamed up with other charter schools to lead an initiative that would go down in Wisconsin history.

First, Rocketship's education organizers worked with City Forward Collective to bring together over 200 families from nine different Milwaukee charter schools to learn about this issue and how to organize for legislative change. Parents then led 11 meetings with members of their State Legislator's Joint Finance Committee, State Assembly, Senate, and Education Committee. Here families shared how their charter schools have transformed their kids and communities. Most importantly, they asked them to support a bill to increase funding for charter and choice schools.

Then, hundreds of families reconvened to attend four additional Joint Finance Committee hearings, two state senate and assembly hearings, and two budget listening sessions with local representatives. Families from charters across Milwaukee showed up in green shirts with “parent power” scribed on their backs and stood tall in the room, visually demanding equal school funding for their communities.

Parent after parent shared how their children are thriving in their charter schools. But to be sure their voices were heard, families decided to close out the campaign strong. More than 600 parents contributed to an email campaign where 5,500 emails were sent to elected officials asking for their support in closing Wisconsin's substantial education funding gap.

It took five months and hundreds of parents but together all of these collective efforts paid off. The deciding committee voted 6-1 in favor of a funding increase. From there, Wisconsin Gov. Evers and state legislators put forth a bill to allocate an unprecedented \$2,500 per pupil increase to charter schools.

This is a historic win for charter schools in the state of Wisconsin!

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“We know quality education is a matter of justice for our children and we will keep holding our leaders and systems accountable to make sure high quality schools can thrive in ALL of our communities.”

LaToya Woods,

Sr. Educator Organizer, Rocketship Wisconsin



ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS TENNESSEE



1,347
ROCKETEERS

35%
LATINO

57%
AFRICAN-AMERICAN

33%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNERS

Our first school in Tennessee, Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary, launched in 2014. Rocketship United Academy opened in south Nashville a year later. And in August 2022, Rocketship Dream Community Prep opened in southeast Nashville. Our three schools served more than 1,300 students in the 2022-23 school year. Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary and Rocketship United Academy have both been named a “Reward School,” the highest recognition for student achievement by the Tennessee Department of Education.

Rocketship Public Schools Tennessee provides academic excellence through a liberating and holistic college and career-ready education intended to produce societal change agents. We intentionally provide rigorous instructional programming, interventions, and afterschool opportunities to address the specific academic and social needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged students of color. We open a world of opportunity to them through expeditionary learning, travel, and strategic partnerships. This work is supported by the deep and trusting partnerships we form with parents and families.



Exceeding Expectations Across Tennessee

Accelerating student growth is an integral part of our school model. We serve a majority of socioeconomically disadvantaged students of color, and many of our students come to us academically behind their similar-age peers. We know the only way for them to reach their full potential and be college- and career-ready is by gaining more than a year’s worth of academic growth each school year.

That’s why we are excited to share that students at all three Rocketship Tennessee schools exceeded the state’s growth expectations during the 2022-2023 school year! Rocketship United Academy and Rocketship Dream Community Prep both received a composite score of Level 5 — the highest score possible — on the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) and Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary scored a Level 5 for Literacy & Numeracy. These scores validate our internal data, which indicated that students at all three campuses gained an average of 1.25 years of academic growth last school year.

We credit these results to the personalized instruction our teachers provide in the classroom and our strong partnership with each family to ensure our students’ academic success is supported at home. When students have their individual needs met and teachers are supported effectively, there’s no limit to what we can accomplish.

“We offer our parents a seat at the table, listen deeply, and dialogue with them as equal partners. If you look closely at the schools that are closing achievement gaps, you will find that we have one thing in common – a commitment to engaging parents not as a problem to overcome, but as equal partners who are part of the solution.”

- William Hill, Executive Director of Rocketship Public Schools Tennessee

This article originally appeared in
THE TENNESSEAN





Rocketship Dream Community Prep Launches in Southeast Nashville

Last year, Rocketship Tennessee opened the doors to its third campus in the Southeast Nashville community. Families are not only thrilled to join this campus, but Rocketeers are also thriving academically. Rocketship Dream Community Prep scored a Level 5, Above Expectations, on the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), the highest achievement possible and an impressive launch for this new school community.

Leading with intention, Founding Principal Jessica Alexander says the key to a strong school community is building trust, mutual respect, and a shared vision for the future. In other words, it requires working in harmony, which is why harmony is the fifth core value at Rocketship Dream Community Prep.



Multilingual Rocketeers Thrive Through the Joy of Learning

Our school model is built on the belief that every student learns differently and deserves equal opportunities to reach their full potential. Through a focus on individual academic growth and personalized learning goals, we create an inclusive environment where each student feels seen and supported on their educational journey. That includes the 33% of our Rocketeers who are multilingual learners.

Rocketship Tennessee prides itself on helping students build English proficiency at school while celebrating their home culture and language. After noticing students learn more effectively when engaged in a state of joy and play, Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary multilingual specialist, Amy De la Rosa, found an innovative way to support Rocketeers by creating a language clubhouse. This life-size space rotates themes from becoming a post office, a doctor's office, a bakery, and more, so Rocketeers can build their English vocabulary and have fun while doing it.

Bringing joy to the classroom is just one of the reasons Rocketeers are excelling each year. We're grateful for all of the committed educators who continue to find innovative ways to help their students grow!



ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS WASHINGTON DC



1,493
ROCKETEERS

98%
BLACK & LATINO

77%
AT-RISK

13%
HOMELESS

In 2016, Rocketship Rise Academy opened in Southeast DC's Ward 8 as the largest charter opening in DC history. Rocketship Legacy Prep opened in Ward 7 a year later. In their very first year, both schools achieved Tier 1 status — the highest ranking for DC Public Charter Schools. In August 2020, in the midst of the pandemic, Rocketship Infinity Community Prep opened its doors as our third school in DC. Partnering with AppleTree Institute to provide high-quality pre-K education, we serve more than a thousand Rocketeers every day — students who have the potential to be DC's next leaders and creative thinkers.



2016

Rocketship DC launches first school — Rocketship Rise Academy — opening with 448 students, the largest charter school opening in DC history



2017

Rise Academy scores in the Tier 1 category—the highest ranking for DC Public Charter Schools—after its first year serving students



2017

Rocketship Legacy Prep opens in the Fort Davis neighborhood in Ward 7



2018

Rocketship Legacy Prep scores in the Tier 1 category — the highest ranking for DC Public Charter Schools — after its first year serving students



2020

Rocketship DC launches Care Corps to support our families more holistically and partnered with the WISE Center's counseling services to help staff in trauma-sensitive schools feel safe, connected, and supported



2020

Rocketship Infinity Community Prep launches in Ward 5 with a focus on STEAM education



2020

Parent leaders organize a series of 10 virtual community conversations with candidates for City Council, DC Board of Education, and the Ward 8 Council



2021

US News & World Report ranks Rocketship Legacy Prep among the Best Elementary Schools in DC and the nation

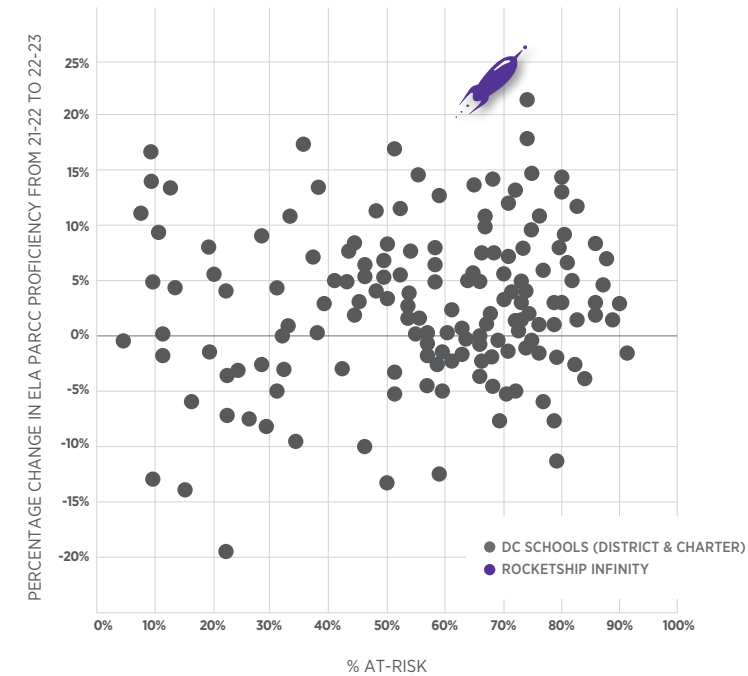


2023

Rocketship Infinity Community Prep honored for exceptional academic achievement for at-risk students by Empower K12

2022-23 PARCC School Results:

Year over year % growth in English Language Arts among students classified as At-Risk



Rocketship Infinity Achieves Highest Growth in City Among Schools Serving Similar Populations

Rocketship Infinity Community Prep was named a 'Bold Performance' School by Empower K12, an independent research nonprofit, for their 2023 results on DC's Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam. Rocketship Infinity had the highest growth in the entire city from third to fourth grade last year. We are proud to have one of only 12 DC district or charter schools honored for boldly supporting priority students — students designated as at-risk, students with disabilities, and students of color — to reach academic success. Bold Performance Schools have 2023 PARCC proficiency rates that are an average 15.1 percentage points better than other schools serving a high priority student population and 11.5 percentage points better than the pre-pandemic average for schools with similar demographics.

Empower K12 noted that each Bold Performance School used five key strategies to achieve their success, all of which we see at Rocketship Infinity and across our other two schools each day:

- **Data analysis to drive instruction:** educators utilized student work, exit tickets, and progress monitoring trackers to adjust instructional support often
- **Teacher support:** instructional leaders provided coaching and professional development, often in-the-moment based on data
- **Family engagement:** with a focus on improving attendance, educators ensured that families were frequently updated on upcoming happenings at school
- **Joyful school climate:** school leadership teams emphasized the importance of a fun and joyful school environment for students and adults
- **Targeted small-group and individual student interventions:** to address specific skill gaps and achieve success on rigorous, grade-level content

Rocketship Infinity Community Prep is clearly beating the odds for students, helping them to achieve at high levels that put them on the path to college and career success.

Partnering with the Community

At Rocketship DC, we partner with those in our community to create bridges for Rocketeers that can benefit them today and after graduation day. Connecting with leaders who shape educational policies is one of the many ways we do this. Last December, our Rocketship Legacy Prep community hosted the Hunt-Kean Leadership Fellows Program. The program partners with senior-level political leaders who have the knowledge, skill, and will to be effective, equity-minded education policymakers at the state level. This powerful group of lawmakers and elected officials spent the morning at one of our Rocketship campuses learning directly from students, families, and staff. They began their day cheering with us at a student-led morning Launch and engaged in rich roundtable discussions with families about their Rocketship experience. They also visited classrooms to see our Rocketeers in action and connected with our school leaders.

From there, Rocketship teamed up with the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP), which brings current and emerging global leaders to the United States for professional exchanges. Rocketship and IVLP partnered on the organization's first-ever project on early education where four Department of State Liaisons and 16 International Visitors from 16 different countries visited Rocketship Infinity Prep to help inform their own work in education. Rocketship was the only charter school they visited during their time in the United States.

We also partnered with OutTeach, an outdoor education science lab, to bring learning to life at Rocketship Legacy Prep. This new program enhances Rocketship's in-classroom science curriculum by creating hands-on learning opportunities outside of the classroom, while also boosting the overall well-being of our Rocketeers by connecting with nature. After seeing such great success with this program, Rocketship looks forward to bringing these outdoor learning labs to both Rise Elementary and Infinity Community Prep in the future!

Throughout the year we also collaborated with [Vision To Learn](#), a national nonprofit that travels to schools to provide free eye exams and glasses to students in need. However, Vision To Learn was experiencing some regulatory hurdles when trying to operate in DC. So, we decided to partner with DC Public Schools and other local public charter schools to write letters and have parents share their stories to help pass legislation to allow Vision To Learn to serve all public school students in DC. As a result, more than 900 students in DC public schools, including Rocketship, received free eyeglasses! These students are now more engaged in class, more confident in themselves, and more excited about learning. We know these benefits will follow students well into the rest of their academic careers and adulthood.

Local partnerships like this program help elected officials better understand the communities they represent and the power of having quality choice schools in Ward 5, 7, and 8.



Washington Post Honors Rocketship Leader

Every year for the past 40 years, The Washington Post has recognized outstanding principals and teachers in the greater Washington DC metro area “who go beyond the day-to-day demands of their position to create an exceptional educational environment.”

In the 2022-23 school year, Angel McNeil, the Founding Principal of Rocketship DC's third campus, now the Director of Schools for the region, was named a finalist for [The Washington Post's Principal of the Year Award](#). The nomination process is open to all principals of district schools, charter schools, and private schools. Angel was nominated by the DC Public Charter School Board and was selected as the charter school principal finalist among all of the charter school nominees throughout the region. We're thrilled to see our leaders gain recognition from the wider community!



Celebrating Exceptional Leaders

We're also proud of the outstanding team members who received regional awards for exemplary work within our Rocketship DC community during the 2022-2023 school year:

DC Rocketeer of the Year: Jennifer Lewis, reading specialist, Rocketship Legacy Prep

Community Award: Martin Washington, operations coordinator, Rocketship Legacy Prep

Tenacity Award: Jessica Spiegler, mathematics achievement manager, DC Network Team

Innovation Award: Hailey Nettles, integrated special education teacher, Rocketship Infinity Community Prep

Authenticity Award: LaToya Cromwell, 5th grade humanities teacher, Rocketship Rise

Congratulations to our incredible educators!



ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEXAS

In August 2022, Rocketship Public Schools Texas opened its first school in Fort Worth. The region is led by Superintendent SaJade Miller, a proven education leader born and raised in Southeast Fort Worth’s Stop 6 neighborhood — the same community our first school serves. Mr. Miller has dedicated his entire career to working to eliminate the racial achievement gap in Texas and has a deep understanding of the strengths, opportunities, and challenges with public education in Fort Worth. He passionately believes that to create a more equitable and excellent public school system in Tarrant County, we need to innovate and we need to collaborate.

Rocketship Texas is creating a diverse coalition of educators, community leaders, and parents who are working together to improve racial equity and excellence



in public education. The Rocketship Texas board brings deep expertise in public education, community organizing, financial management, and parent engagement. Together, they endeavor to establish an equitable and excellent educational environment that serves all children. By focusing exclusively on elementary education, our model is designed to help elevate the entire system of public education in Tarrant County. When our prepared students and engaged parents move on to different middle schools, those students will be ready for the rigors of middle school — and their parents will know how to advocate for their students, partner with educators, and hold leaders accountable. This is how our elementary-only model is designed to help elevate the entire public education system in Tarrant County.

Fueled by Local Leaders



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Changing Trajectories

When we launched our first campus in Fort Worth, 40% of our Rocketeers started the school year two or more grade levels behind. The enormous gaps our students started with were a powerful and sobering reminder of the tremendous need in our great city. 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 we chose to open multiple grade levels in our first 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 to shift our students’ trajectory from falling further behind to gaining ground on their college-bound peers. We are proud to report that our Rocketeers are on the right path. By their second semester, our Rocketeers exceeded one year of academic growth.



Launching Rocketship Explore Elementary

Rocketship Explore Elementary opened its doors in August 2023. Our second Texas campus serves students in grades pre-kindergarten through third grade on Fort Worth’s eastside.

Our families were inspired to choose the name Explore because they wanted to cultivate a school culture that encourages Rocketeers to explore possibilities within themselves and learn from the broader community. We are so excited that Rocketship Explore Elementary will offer experiential, project-based learning, small group student support, and music classes for all Rocketeers.

Founding Principal Amaris Salazar’s vision for the school centers around community and creating a place where students fall in love with learning:

“It’s about bringing joy. In the 27 years that I’ve been an educator, what I have found is that the love of learning is what inspires more learning.”

Principal Salazar,
Founding Principal, Rocketship Explore Elementary

“Parents and educators want the same thing: what is best for our kids. By working together — in hiring, naming our school, and picking our enrichment offerings, core value, and so much more — we are unleashing the power of our parents alongside the power of our staff to create a transformational school.”

This article originally appeared in

Chalkbeat

Parent Leaders Gather to Enhance Local Educational Landscape

In its inaugural school year, Rocketship Texas swiftly cultivated a parent community that was not only engaged in its school community but invested in enhancing the wider educational landscape. Through our parent leadership work, families and education organizers traveled from Fort Worth to Austin, Texas for Rocketship On The Hill Day.

Rocketship parents met with five of the state legislators’ offices and strategically chose to speak not just with legislators who represent our schools, but also those who are working on key issues we care about, such as voter rights and student mental health. Parent leaders even met with the Chair of the House Education Committee!

Later in the school year, our parent leaders hosted a Fort Worth City Council candidate forum in partnership with Fort Worth Families Forward. Candidates from Districts 5, 8, and 11 — the Districts that represent most of our families — joined over 100 people for this noteworthy event. Parent leaders shared reflections and asked questions about where each candidate stands on critical issues, so the community could head into election day more informed.

“

“We are so proud of the transformative impact these brand new, high-tech schools have already made in the Fort Worth community. Revitalizing properties with a myriad of security concerns and creating vibrant, joyful schools full of kids learning is truly incredible to see.”

Gyna Bivens,
Mayor Pro Tempore, Fort Worth



“

“I’m so thankful to be part of a parent-led forum at Rocketship Texas! My children have attended both local charter schools and Fort Worth ISD schools. I will advocate for great schools for all of our children.”

Jeanette Martinez,
Fort Worth City Council, District 11
(First Latina ever elected to serve on the Fort Worth City Council)



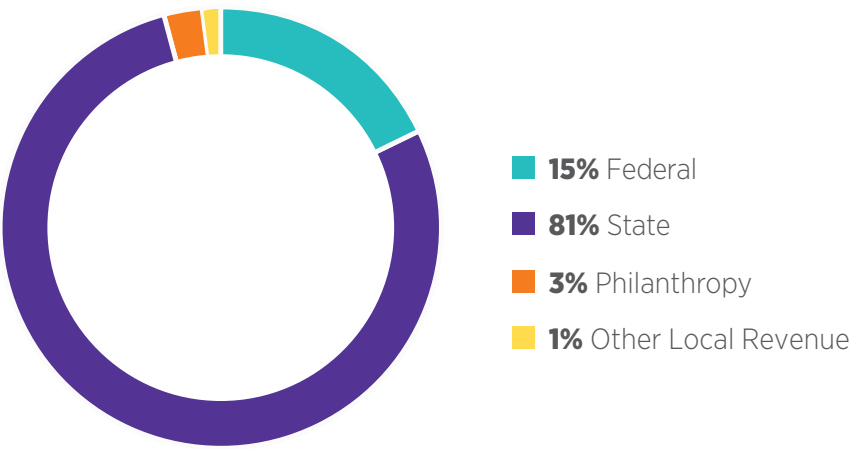
FINANCIALS

Rocketship is building a scalable and financially sustainable non-profit school model that propels student achievement in underserved communities across the country. In 2022–23, 96% of our funding came from public sources. School-based expenses accounted for 84% of our spending.

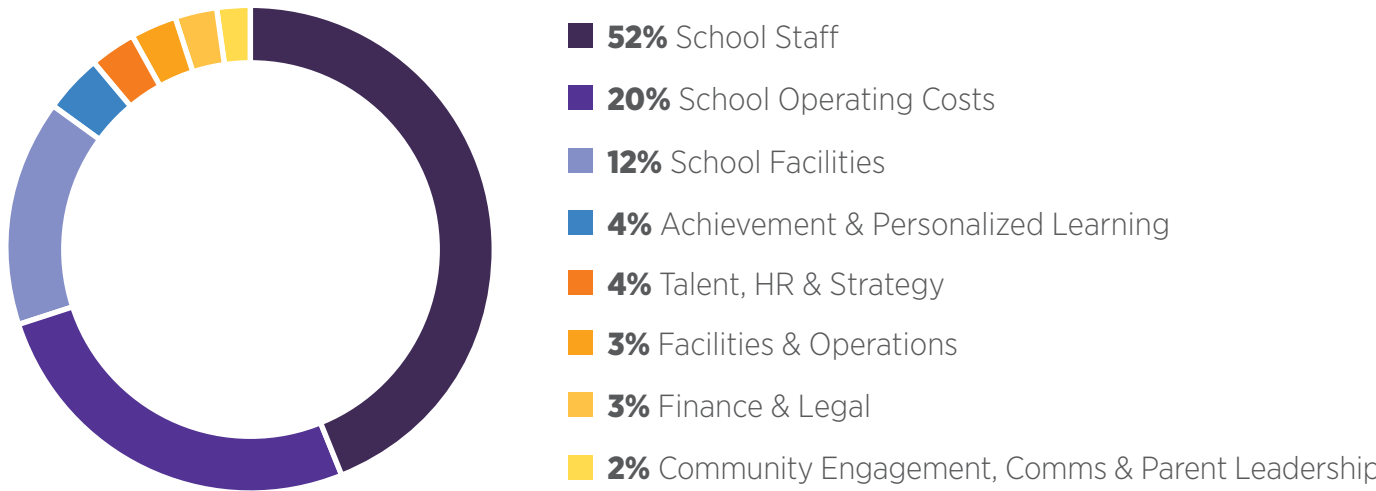
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Fully enrolled schools reach financial sustainability by their fifth year of launching. Each region is financially sustainable once it operates between three to eight schools. Our California region was our first fully sustainable region, meaning that our 13 schools and the regional team supporting them operate solely on public funds. Tennessee, home to three campuses, is now our second sustainable region. While we’re proud to continue to drive toward financial sustainability, philanthropic support remains critical to our ability to innovate and expand our impact.

REVENUE



EXPENSES



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