



2021
2022

YEAR IN REVIEW

ROCKETSHIP
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Fifteen years ago, we opened our first Rocketship school in a church in downtown San Jose. We launched that first school with a bold mission and a steadfast conviction that all children can achieve success in school and life, regardless of zip code. In that first year, 160 families signed up to send their children to our first Rocketship school and the relationships we forged with our founding parents and the community we built became the backbone of our school that year and all the years that followed.

This last school year was a powerful reminder that great schools are relationship-centered. While we started the school year with health and safety protocols that once again limited our ability to fully engage parents on campus, by the second semester we were finally able to fully reopen and once again welcome parents to fully engage in our school community.

Building strong relationships between family and school requires more than community meetings, teacher conferences, and how schools often tend to engage families on school-based terms. It is about balancing the power structure between parents, teachers, and students. And it requires us to get out into our communities that we serve to deeply understand the whole context of our Rocketeers so we can truly serve the whole child and family. While the public education landscape has changed dramatically over the past few years, many of the core practices of parent engagement that defined our model from day one have become more relevant than ever.

High-performing public schools are the agents of change our communities and country needs now more than ever. By integrating **personalized learning** that meets the unique needs of each student, investing in **talent development** to empower educators to truly

master their craft, and unleashing **parent power** that honors parents as the first teacher and lifelong advocate for their child, we are providing powerful proof of what is possible in public education.

We've made a remarkable impact in our first 15 years, but Rocketship is still a work in progress. Just like the Rocketeers we serve, we never stop learning. We never stop thinking about how we can innovate new ways to serve our students, develop our talent, and support our parents to exercise their power as advocates for equity and excellence in their community. Together, our collective of parents, teachers, leaders, supporters and students are catalyzing a movement to transform the future for underserved communities across our country.

AT ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC
SCHOOLS, WE ARE
UNLEASHING POTENTIAL.



Preston Smith
Co-Founder & CEO

15 YEARS
5 REGIONS
27,508
ROCKETEERS

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STUDENTS
SERVED
LIFETIME

27,508

9,810 Rocketeers

77% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged

45.7% English Language Learners

85% Latino and Black

10% Special Education

2021-22
STUDENT
POPULATION



CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF UNLEASHING POTENTIAL

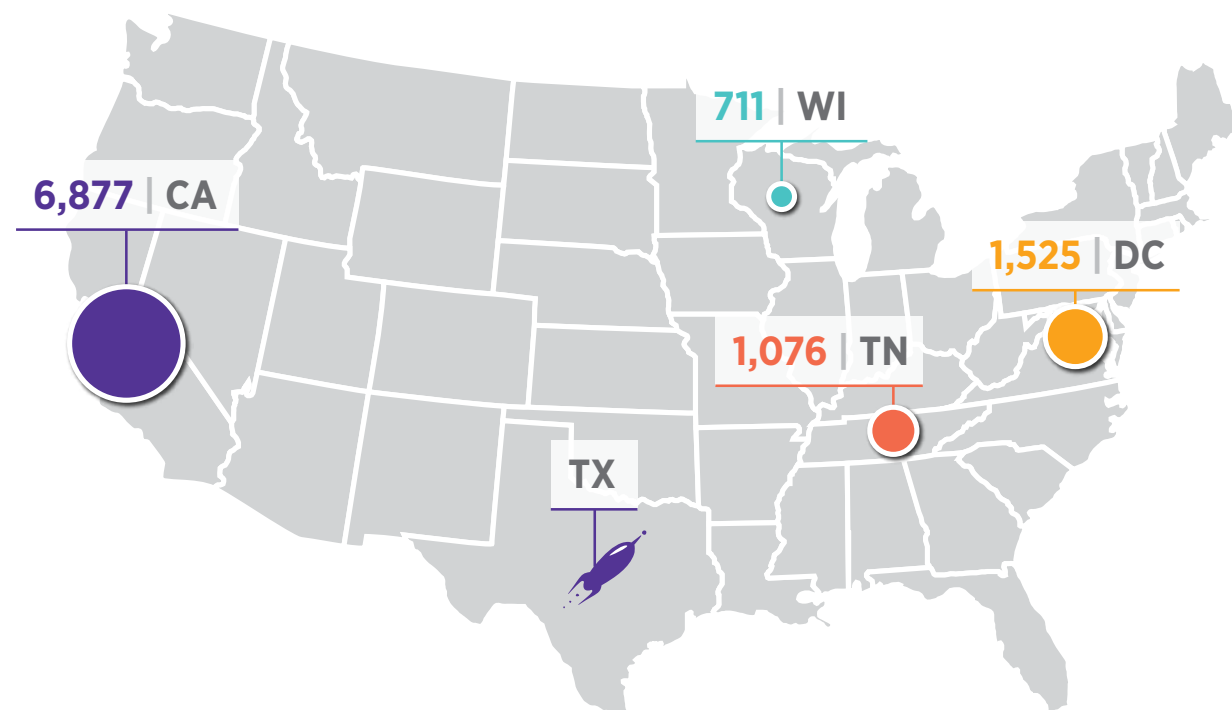


How Far We've Come

What started 15 years ago in a church in downtown San Jose with makeshift classrooms and 160 Rocketeers is now a national movement across five regions. In the 2021-22 school year, we served nearly 10,000 Rocketeers across 20 schools.

We have unleashed innovation and truly transformative change in our neighborhoods from San Jose to Washington, DC. Over the past 15 years, we have collectively served over 27,000 students. We have

Rocketeers who have graduated college and are working in state capitols, in high-tech labs, and advocating for their communities. We have excellent educators who are masters at their craft—pushing to new levels of pedagogical innovation every single day. And we have entire communities where parents are unleashing their voices and power to advocate for equity and excellence. We are truly unleashing potential, from coast to coast.



**UNLEASHING POTENTIAL IN
27,508 ROCKETEERS SINCE 2007**

15 YEARS OF UNLEASHING POTENTIAL

ROCKETSHIP LAUNCHES

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

2007

EXPANDING IMPACT

Rocketship network grows to seven high-performing schools in San Jose.

2012

PARENTS FLEX THEIR POWER

Rocketship parents organize the first ever Mayoral Candidates Forum in San Jose. Over 1,200 parents turn out to exercise their power and ask candidates running for public office about how they plan to address the region's achievement gap.

2014

ROCKETSHIP DC LAUNCHES

Rocketship Rise Academy launches as the single largest opening in Washington DC's 20-year history of charter schools. In their very first year, Rise Rocketeers score in the Tier 1 category—the highest performance ranking for DC Public Charter Schools.

2016

EARN'S 'BEST IN THE NATION' RECOGNITION

US News & World Report names nine Rocketship schools among the Best Elementary Schools in the nation. These rankings are based solely on test scores—meaning that our schools are among the top in the nation, even compared to schools in wealthier zip codes.

2019

ROCKETSHIP TEXAS LAUNCHES

Rocketship Public Schools Texas was approved by the Texas State Board of Education to open schools in Tarrant County. In August 2022, we opened the doors to our flagship campus in the Stop 6 community of Fort Worth.

2021

2009

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Our founding Rocketeers prove that demographics do not define their potential. Rocketship Mateo Sheedy crushes the California state assessment, scoring as high as Palo Alto Unified School District—located in one of the nation's wealthiest zip codes.

ROCKETSHIP WISCONSIN LAUNCHES

Our first school outside of California opens in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with over 300 Rocketeers—one of the largest ever school openings in the city with the nation's longest running school choice program.

2013

2015

ROCKETSHIP TENNESSEE LAUNCHES

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

2020

ELEVATING OUR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS MODEL

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we launched a new program to support families who were struggling with poor access to healthcare, food insecurity, lost wages, threats of eviction, and more. We call this program Care Corps and it is now an integrated feature of our program that further elevates our community schools model.





Relationship Centered

Our approach to personalized learning is focused on building deep relationships with our Rocketeers and their families. A strong relationship between family and school is the backbone of child development. At Rocketship, that starts with our annual home visits. At the beginning of every school year, our teachers visit the homes of every student they serve. This annual practice enables our educators to develop much stronger relationships with our families and a deeper understanding of how to best serve every Rocketeer. Home visits became even more important during the pandemic and continued to help us connect more deeply with students during the return to on-campus learning. Teachers and leaders across our network completed more than 9,111 home visits with families before Thanksgiving break. We continued meeting with families three more times throughout the year during family-teacher conferences and at monthly, community cafecitos where we kept parents informed about health and safety protocols and opportunities to support their child's learning and our broader school communities.

84%

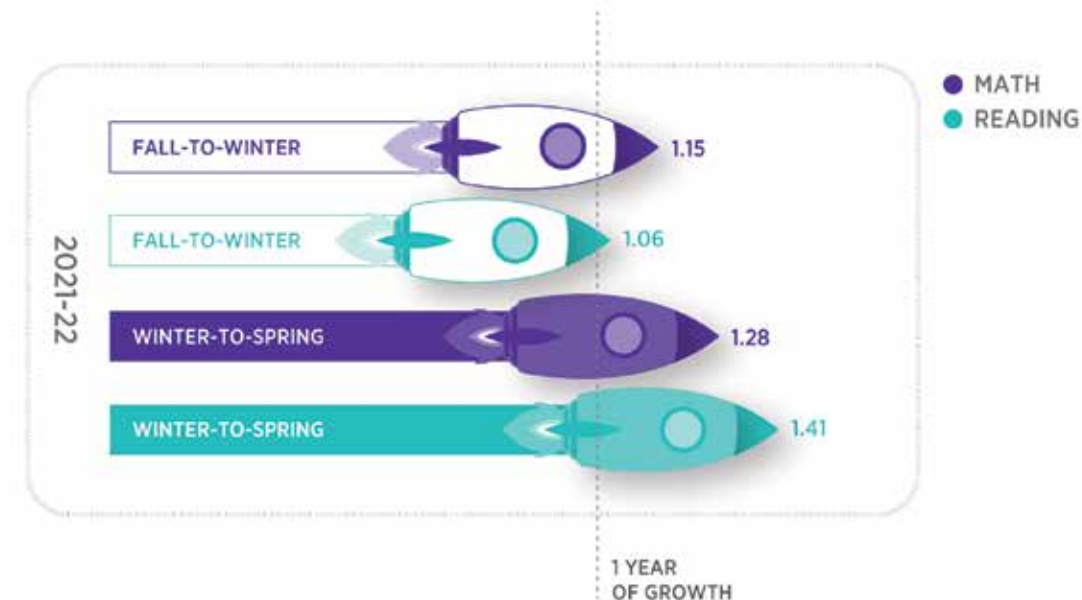
of families reported that their children were happy and excited to come to school each day

9,111

Rocketeers received a home visit from their teacher last year

8/10

families reported they were strongly satisfied or satisfied with Rocketship on our annual parent survey



Academic Recovery Gains Major Momentum

The 2021-22 school year was full of unprecedented challenges. As the Delta variant swept across the nation at the start of the school year, learning was once again disrupted with extended absences and quarantines for both students and staff. Key aspects of our model, including parent engagement in our classrooms and project-based learning in our Learning Labs, were once again put on hold. But no matter what, we pushed through and worked to provide the most robust and holistic learning experience possible. In the second semester, our schools began to settle into a more normal routine. In every region, we ended the school year with incredible momentum. Although we know a full recovery to the levels of excellence we achieved pre-pandemic will take multiple school years, we are encouraged by the progress our Rocketeers made by the end of the 2021-22 school year. On the nationally normed NWEA Map assessment, our Rocketeers achieved 1.4 years of growth in reading and 1.3 years of growth in math between our mid-year (winter) and end-of-year assessments (spring).

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. Rocketship's parent leadership team exists to help parents understand and exercise their power. We're committed to serving families and one key way we do this is by partnering with parents through each school's Parent Organizing Committee. We strive to elevate parent voices so they can create short- and long-term change in their community.

We believe every parent can become a parent leader. Parents who get involved in this work aren't elected and don't need any past experience. And as they learn about new issues affecting their community and acquire new skills, our parents are building power and creating change in their communities for generations to come.

In 2022, Rocketship parents harnessed their power and organized public actions in every region we serve. They held candidate forums for local elections for mayors, school boards, and city councils. And over 100 Rocketship families from California, Texas, and Tennessee traveled to Washington DC to attend a joint day of action in opposition to the Department of Education's proposed rule changes to the Charter School Program (CSP), which provides federal grant support for high-quality charter schools. In coalition with the National Charter Alliance, over 800 families attended a rally and press conference that generated [national media coverage](#) highlighting the bi-partisan backlash to the administration's proposed rule changes. In addition, Rocketship families met with Secretary Cardona's office as well as eight Congressional offices to provide direct feedback on the proposed rule changes. It was a magnificent display of parent power across our movement.



The Power of Parent Voices

“

“I never thought I'd be involved in politics. I didn't think my voice mattered. The community organizers showed me that advocacy is about fighting for a better future for our kids. It's about seeing the opportunity ahead and making it a reality.”

Eva Heredia,

Parent Leader, San Jose, CA

“Rocketship believed in me. I didn't believe I had a voice other than what other people told me to do. And in a matter of meeting a group of women in 2019 to now, I have so much belief in myself.”

Yolanda Seban,

Parent Leader, Fort Worth, TX

“I just thought it was the teachers and school leaders who made the decisions. But now being involved as a parent leader, I realized I can change my child's education.”

Graciela Rodriguez,

Parent Leader, Nashville, TN

“The Parent Organizing Committee has assisted me in finding and utilizing my parent power. I've learned how loud my voice is without shouting. Most importantly, I am developing the necessary skills needed to be an advocate for equitable quality education!”

leisha Wiggins,

Parent Leader, Milwaukee, WI

“If we all took a couple of extra steps to make our children's education much better we can make a big impact. We can all come together and rally for the change we want in our children. And that's something I love, at Rocketship we have a voice.”

Angel Curry,

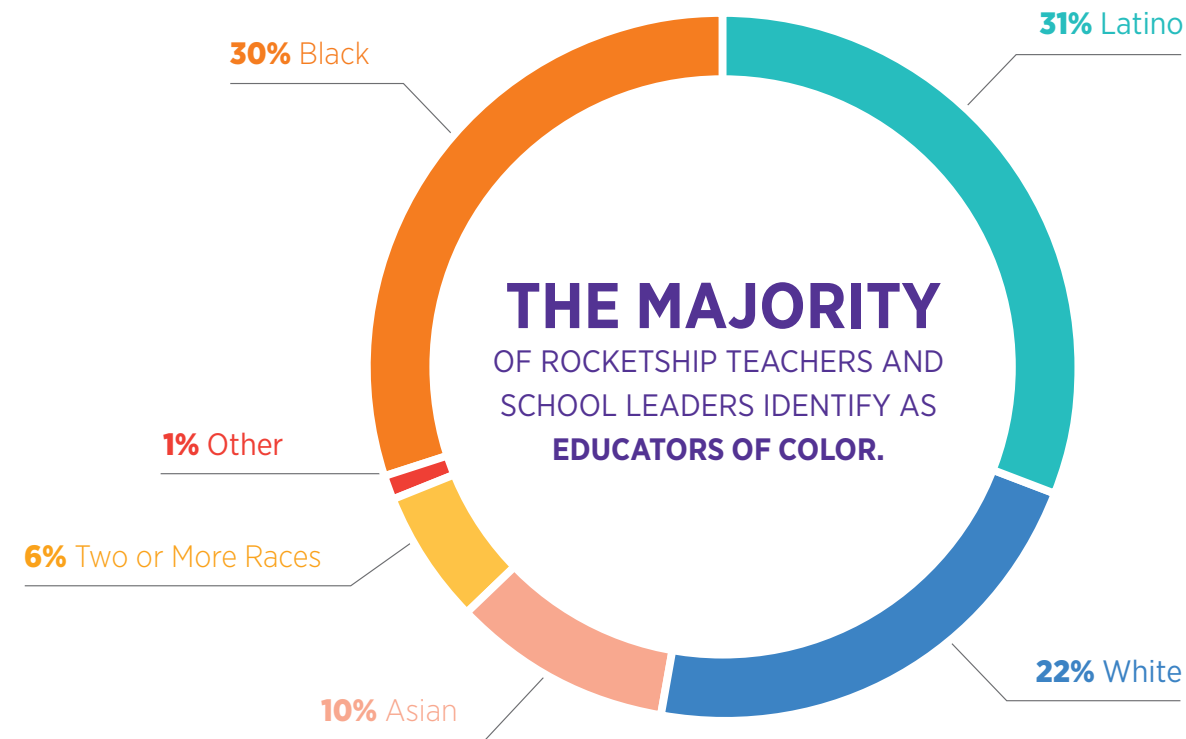
Parent Leader, Washington DC



Educator Diversity Benefits All Students

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 a recent federal [report](#) from the Institute of Education Sciences shows that America’s teaching force hasn’t increased in diversity. 79% of the nation’s public school teachers are white. 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. **The majority of our educators—78%—identify as people of color.**



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.



JetPacked

INNOVATIVE NEW PROGRAM EMPOWERS EDUCATORS & LEARNERS

Digital learning programs are now as common as textbooks in schools across our country. Three out of four schools nationwide are using digital programs to support student learning and the average school has access to anywhere from 40-60 online learning programs.

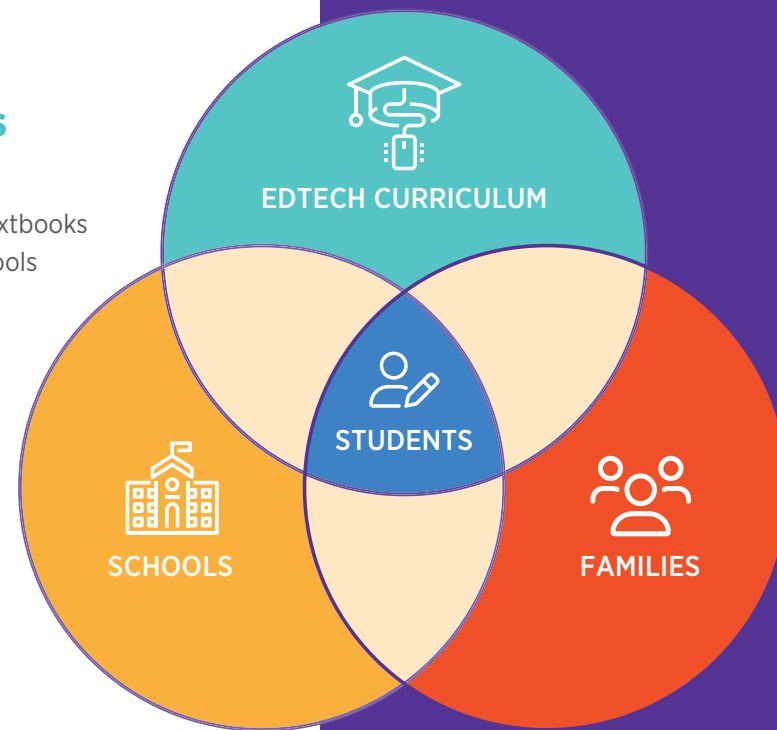
But teachers are losing hours of valuable time sifting through mountains of data for every student. And now more than ever, educators don't have time for that.

That's why Rocketship created JetPacked, a data platform that empowers teachers to personalize support for each and every student in a fraction of the time.

Unlike most data platforms that only cater to teachers or administrators, JetPacked reaches every person that supports our students' learning:

- Students get up-to-date and actionable data to help them reach weekly goals.
- Parents receive weekly texts and emails about their child's progress.
- Teachers have an easy-to-navigate dashboard with suggested interventions for each student.
- Administrators can see how each school is doing and more effectively tailor their professional development support.

Since launching the program in 2019, hundreds of educators within Rocketship and across other schools around the country have experienced the benefits firsthand. Thousands of students have reached new heights through effective, data-driven independent learning time.



“

“I didn't become a teacher to sit behind a computer and crunch data. I teach because I care about my students. I love seeing them grow and get one step closer to their goals – and JetPackED gives me more time and tools to do that.”

Mr. Angel

Teacher, Rocketship Fuerza Community Prep

Community Schools

To fully engage in their learning, children must feel safe, valued, and understood. We cannot accelerate learning if we don't put relationships at the center of our school models. And one model provides a blueprint for how public schools can build back stronger: community schools.

Community schools are like a neighborhood nerve center for families. They coordinate with local support programs to address the full range of possible learning barriers including healthcare, food assistance, counseling services, housing assistance, and more. They emphasize authentic family engagement and understand that a strong relationship between family and school is the backbone of child development. **Cultivating a strong connection with families** has been a top priority at Rocketship since we opened our first school. The last two years have underscored the importance of our relationship-centered school model and highlighted critical ways we can grow stronger. This year, in addition to having a mental health professional at every campus we hired a dedicated team member at every school to provide case management support and care coordination across our community partners to deepen our wraparound support for students and families.

In every crisis, there is an opportunity. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are transforming our public schools into more supportive and more joyful learning communities that ensure all students are prepared to thrive no matter what the future holds. We are building stronger and more resilient kids and communities by investing in our community school model.

“

“Schools are uniquely positioned to be hubs for community wellness and transformation. We have seen what is possible when we invest in community public schools, and our doors are always open to those who want to learn, grow and transform their communities.”

Maricela Guerrero,

Rocketship California Executive Director
in *The 74 Million*





ELEMENTARY- ONLY BY DESIGN



Changing 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 improve the entire public education ecosystem in the communities we serve.

Launching a Legacy

Madison Tlatenchi

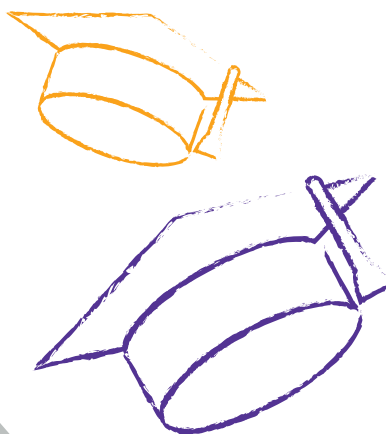
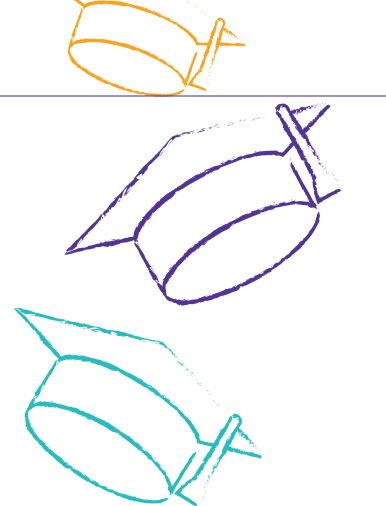
Alumna, Rocketship Los Sueños and Rocketship Spark Academy

I feel like I am on the edge of reaching my full potential. I accepted my offer of enrollment from the University of California, Irvine for their political science program. I am beyond excited for this next chapter of my life and working towards becoming an immigration lawyer so I can advocate for immigrants, just like my parents. As the first in my family to go to college, I feel more pressure to be a good example for my younger siblings, but at the same time, I am that much more motivated to succeed. I will make my family proud because of the legacy of persistence in attaining excellence that began in elementary school at Rocketship Los Sueños and Rocketship Spark Academy.

I am one of five children. My parents immigrated to California from Mexico in search of better economic opportunities. My siblings and I grew up in East San Jose. My older sister went to all the local neighborhood schools, but I was the first in my family to attend charter schools instead of local district schools. This key difference in my early education is the platform I needed to be the first in my family to reach college.

Rocketship's core values have really opened doors for me. Values like responsibility, respect, empathy, and persistence inspire me still to this day and are part of the reason I want to advocate for others in immigration law. I have carried a lot of the values and habits I learned at Rocketship through middle and high school. My classmates and I got used to helping each other, being a good school citizen, and being leaders. My teachers encouraged me with public speaking and praised me for speaking up and answering questions, even if the answer was wrong.

I know this is what my mom wanted for me all along—to be able to explore the wider world in the classroom and learn more about myself, my abilities, and my potential. Looking back, I now see my mom's choice to enroll me at Rocketship opened up a world of opportunities for my future. I am truly blessed.



“

“I had never had a principal know my name. Mr. Smith was the first one to not only acknowledge me, but know where I come from and recognize my mom and siblings. And Ms. Guererro was the first person to talk to me about college...Hearing and knowing about college made it so much more accessible because I knew what it took. And since our academics were so rigorous, I ended up being top of my class through college.”

Evelyn Rojas,

Alumna of Rocketship Mateo Sheedy and UC Santa Barbara
Current Care Corps coordinator at Rocketship Spark Elementary



“

“I am the first in my family to go to college and I will be the first engineer in my family after I finish college. I know I am a role model to my little cousins and siblings and that makes me feel good. It's kind of like being their superhero in terms of education.”

Salvador Vasquez,

Alumnus of Rocketship Si Se Puede &
student at UC Irvine



ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS CALIFORNIA



6,490 **ROCKETEERS** 73% **LATINO** 76% **SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED** 59% **ENGLISH 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 nearly 6,500 students.

As students returned to campus from COVID-19 closures, we knew that we needed to continue to invest in and expand our community school model. Our community schools are like a neighborhood nerve center for families. They coordinate with local support programs to address the full range of possible learning barriers for students including healthcare, food assistance, counseling services, housing assistance, and more. They emphasize authentic family engagement and understand that a strong relationship between family and school is the backbone of child development. Community schools help to build a strong foundation upon which our Rocketeers can achieve academic success. That is a major reason why seven Rocketship California schools were named to US News & World Report’s ranking of “Best Elementary Schools.”



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

Three schools earn California Distinguished Schools award



2021

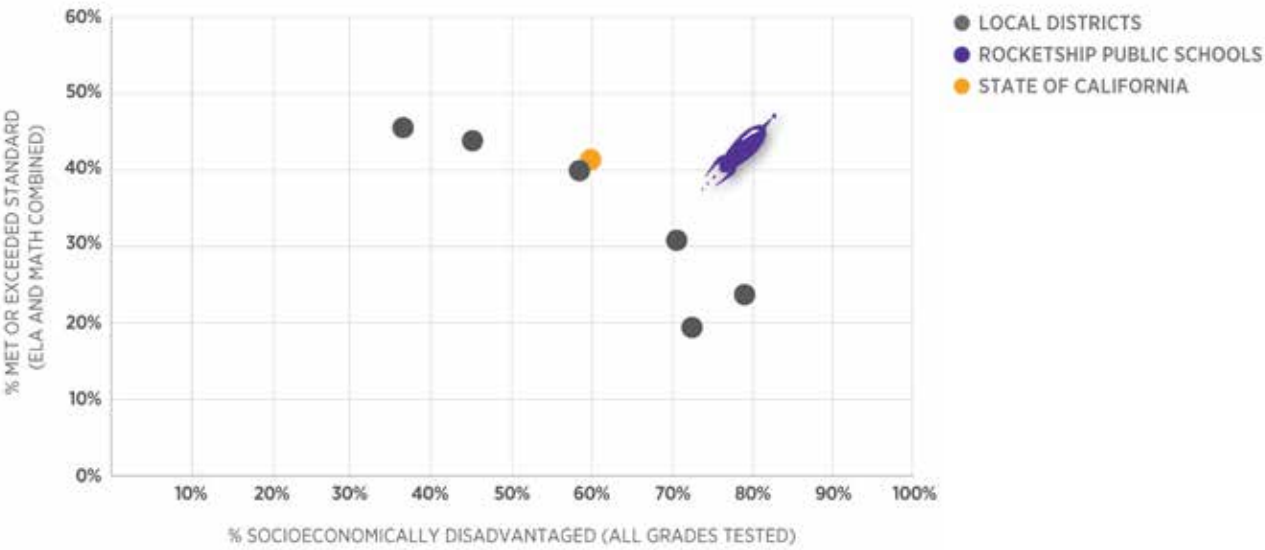
US News & World Report ranked 7 Rocketship schools Best Elementary Schools in the state and nation



2022

Rocketship receives Charter School of the Year and Pivotal Practice Awards

2021-22 CAASPP: GRADES 3RD-5TH ROCKETSHIP AND LOCAL DISTRICTS



Rocketship California Wins Noteworthy Awards

Among California schools that serve a similar population, Rocketship California ranked in the 89th percentile in English Language Arts and 94th percentile in math on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress in 2021-22. While our scores did dip from the heights we achieved before the pandemic, our schools are still outperforming their local district and the state average for socioeconomically disadvantaged students by considerable margins.

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.

Rocketship Public Schools California was also named the recipient of the California Charter Schools Association’s 2022 Hart Vision School of the Year, North. The Hart Vision Awards recognize organizations that serve California students with excellence, spotlighting our community schools model.

Ten Rocketship schools won the first ever ‘Pivotal Practice’ award from the California State Department of Education, which was created in 2022 to honor innovative practices implemented during distance learning during the onset of COVID-19 school closures in the 2019-2020 school year. Our other three schools were named “Distinguished Schools” by the California Department of Education in 2019.

Rocketship Parent Leaders Host 1,000+ San Jose Residents at Mayoral Candidate Forum

On May 19th, volunteer parent leaders from Rocketship Public Schools California led the largest Mayoral Candidate Forum of the political season with over 1,000 attendees. This is parent power in action. Our parents' power was on display every time a mayoral candidate answered one of the questions posed by our parent leaders and every time the candidates recognized the sea of parents in attendance who were listening closely to their responses. Thanks to this tremendous civic service led by our parent community, voters in San Jose went to the polls knowing where candidates for mayor stood on a range of important issues including immigration rights, gentrification, homelessness, and public education.



“

“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



Supporting the Whole Family

Care Corps is an expansion of Rocketship’s community schools model, which supports the whole child and families both inside and outside the classroom. Our Care Corps coordinators are full-time staff dedicated to helping families meet their basic needs so their children can thrive in school. Our families in California are among the hardest hit by the pandemic and need help rebuilding the most. Coordinators help them navigate support systems and get the assistance they need by overcoming language barriers, red tape, and lack of internet access to connect them to vital services.

Schools are uniquely positioned to be hubs for community wellness and transformation. We have seen what is possible when we invest in community public schools, and our doors are always open to those who want to learn, grow, and transform their communities.

ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS WISCONSIN



726
ROCKETEERS

95%
BLACK & LATINO

83%
SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

12%
SPECIAL EDUCATION

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.

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. Together, we are working to eliminate Milwaukee's achievement gap.



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



2020

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



2020

Parent Organizing Committee launches to ensure families' voices are heard by elected officials



2021-2022

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

Exceeding Expectations

Both Rocketship Wisconsin schools earned a four star Exceeding Expectations rating on the state report card in 2021-22. This is the first time both schools have been eligible for and received an Exceeding Expectations rating from the state. Not only that, but Milwaukee Rocketeers continue to significantly outperform students in Milwaukee Public Schools. Among Milwaukee schools that serve a similar student population, Rocketship Wisconsin ranks in the 92nd percentile in English Language Arts and 89th percentile in math.



Exceeds Expectations



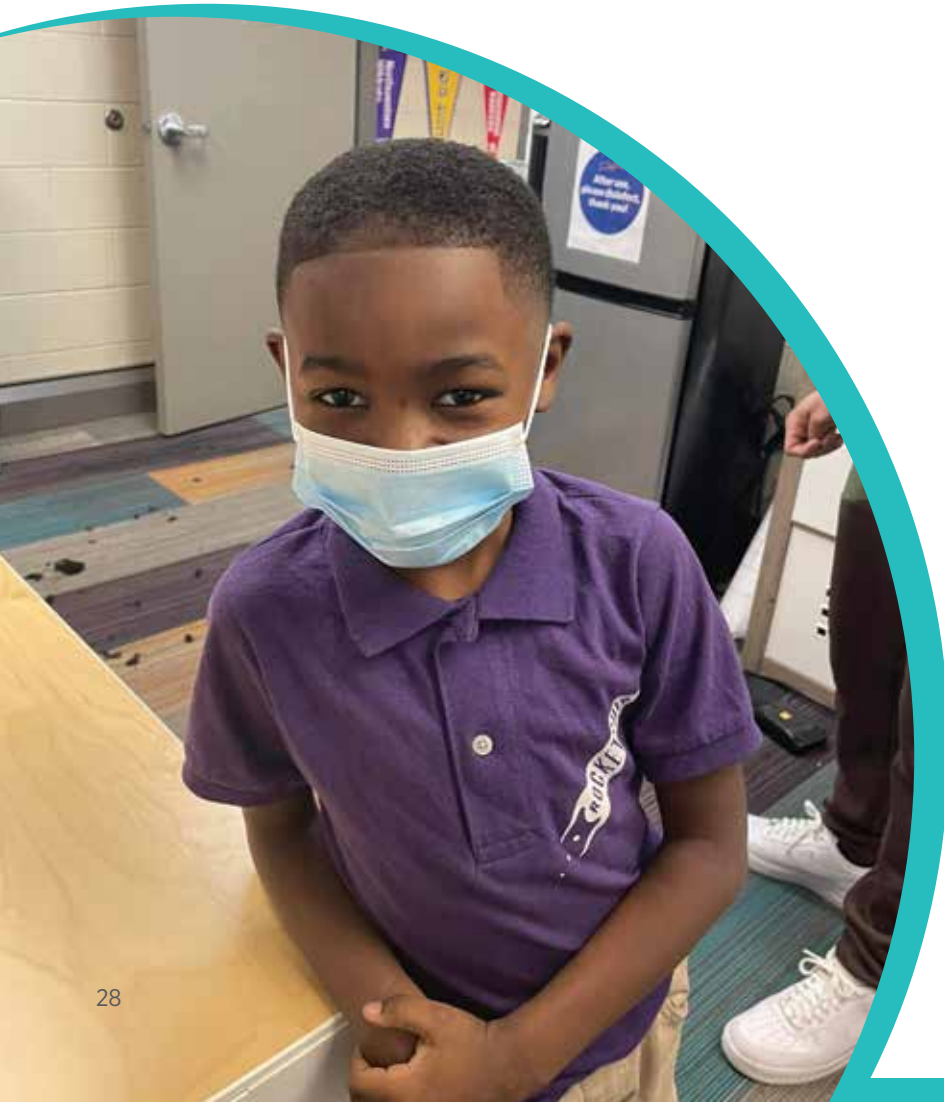


Celebrating Black and Brown Beauty with Hair Love Day

At Rocketship Wisconsin, we believe in the importance of instilling a strong sense of identity and pride in all of our Rocketeers, which is why we strive to make our lessons culturally relevant.

For Black History Month, the team at Rocketship Transformation Prep organized Hair Love Day, where local beauticians and barbers visited campus to talk about Black history, share stories about the cultural significance of barber shops in the Black community, and offer Rocketeers tips on hair care. Additionally, our girls were able to get their hair styled for free, and our boys received free haircuts!

After Hair Love Day, our Rocketeers were seen smiling confidently with their fresh hairdos. More importantly, they were able to learn about and experience Black and Brown culture in a community-based setting.



130+ Parents Organize Mayoral Candidates Forum

For the first time ever, over 130 parents from public district, public charter, and private choice schools came together to make their voices heard through a series of mayoral candidate listening sessions. The spring event was a tandem effort by Rocketship Wisconsin and City Forward Collective where parents were able to ask mayoral candidates about their priorities for our students, our neighborhoods, and our city. The event accrued over 1,000 views from parents across the city.

The goal of this event was not only to engage our local leaders and ask them difficult questions, but to show our own Rocketship parents the power they possess as individuals and as a community. After participating in such a monumental event, our parents left feeling energized and confident in their roles as valued community members.

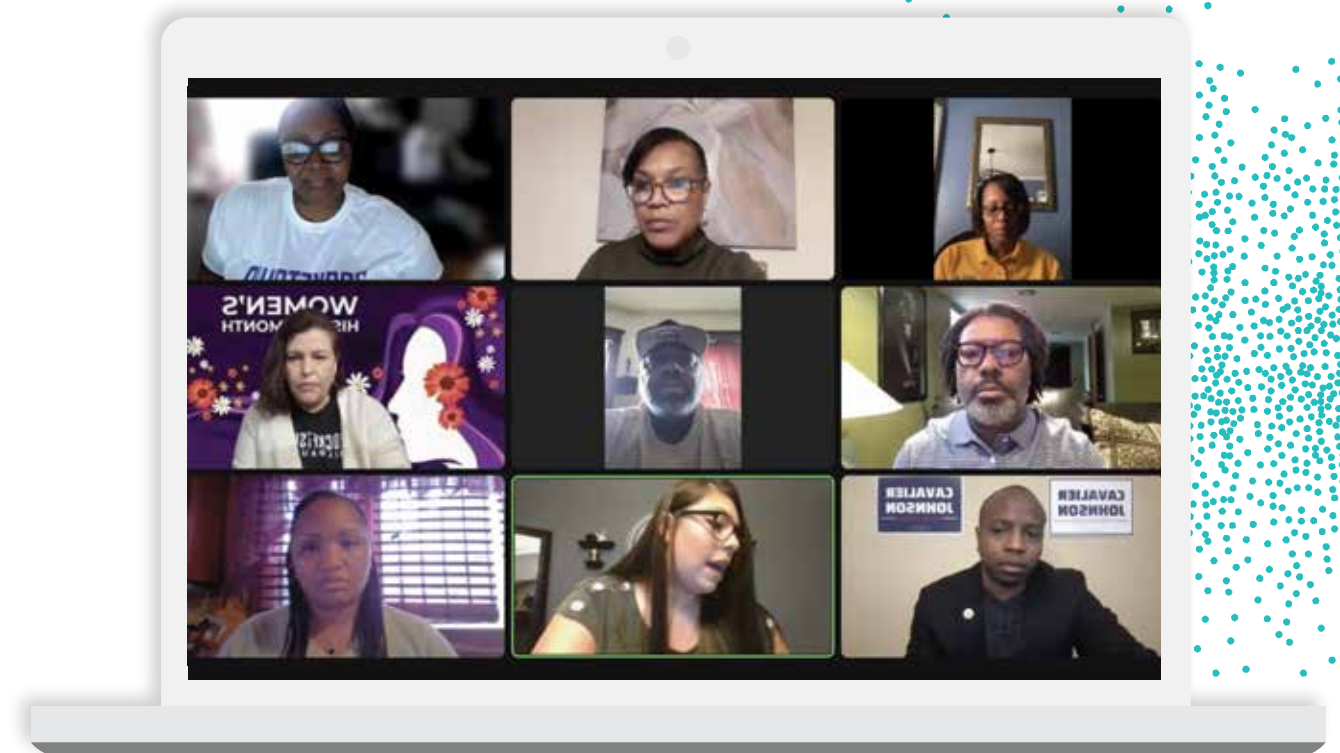
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“For the first time, I felt that my voice was truly valued and important in the politics of our city. But this is not the end—this is just the beginning of a dialogue that all of us parents expect to continue once our mayor is elected.”

Ieshia Wiggins,

Parent Leader, Rocketship Wisconsin

This excerpt is from an op-ed that was originally published in [Urban Milwaukee](#).



ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS TENNESSEE



1,041
ROCKETEERS

92%
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
& LATINO

80%
SOCIOECONOMICALLY
DISADVANTAGED

30%
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
LEARNERS

Our first school in Tennessee, Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary, launched in 2014. Rocketship United Academy opened in southeast Nashville a year later. Our two schools served nearly 1,100 students in the 2021-22 school year. Both are Title 1 schools, serving a majority of socioeconomically disadvantaged families, and both have been named a “Reward School,” the highest recognition for student achievement by the Tennessee Department of Education.

This year, we paved the way for our third school, Rocketship Dream Community Prep, to open in the Antioch neighborhood of Nashville. Eventually enrolling roughly 500 students, Rocketship’s third campus will continue to expand our impact into new communities in Tennessee.

Rocketship Tennessee is opening doors of opportunity and providing much needed options for families to choose a school that best meets the needs of their students. All Rocketship Tennessee campuses use the same core academic model, but each offers a unique enrichment program to meet the needs and desires of the community it serves. Rocketship Nashville Northeast focuses on STEM education, Rocketship United Academy is a multicultural school with an exceptional student government program, and our third school, which opened in August 2022, offers a music-enriched curriculum to help bring learning to life at Rocketship Dream Community Prep.

2014

Rocketship Tennessee opens Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary

2015

Rocketship United Academy, our most diverse campus, opens with a culture rooted in human rights and equity for all

2018

Tennessee Department of Education awards Rocketship United Academy “Reward School” status

2019

Rocketship Nashville Northeast recognized by state as “Reward School”

2019

Rocketship receives approval to open a third school with a music-enriched curriculum in Antioch

2021

Rocketship United Academy named Top School in Nation by US News & World Report

2022

Rocketship Tennessee breaks ground on its third campus and names it Rocketship Dream Community Prep



Leading The Way

In 2021-22, both Rocketship Tennessee schools earned a level 5—the highest possible score—on the newly released 2022 Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). This means that our Rocketeers are growing at a strong rate and are on the path to higher levels of achievement. After the unfinished learning resulting from COVID-19 closures and interruptions, it is encouraging to see our students progressing, which we know is the only way to reach our goal of closing achievement gaps.

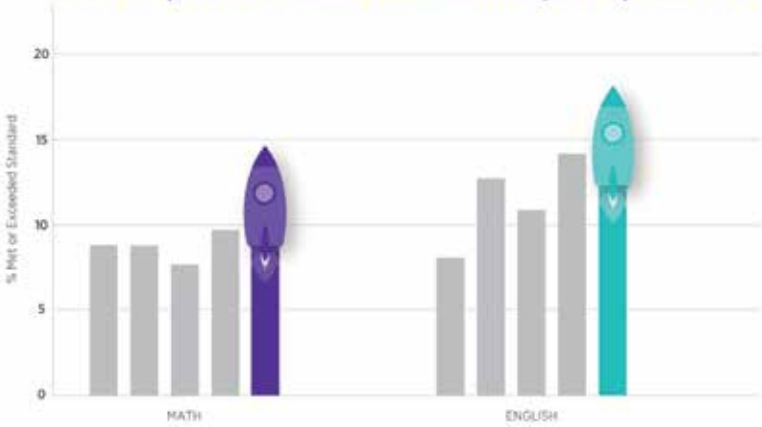
In addition, Rocketship United Academy earned the state’s highest honor again this year—being recognized as a “Reward School!” Rocketship United earned this honor by increasing the success rate of its mostly socioeconomically disadvantaged students at a faster rate than many other elementary schools in Nashville during the 2021-22 school year. This honor is only given to schools scoring in the top 5% of academic achievement and academic growth in the entire state of Tennessee. Both our campuses continue to outperform schools in their community. Among the cluster of elementary schools that feed into the same district high-school, Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary is the top performing school in its cluster in both reading and math. Rocketship United Academy is also the top performer in its cluster in reading and the second highest performer in math. By better preparing our Rocketeers in elementary school for the path to college and career readiness, Rocketship Tennessee is helping improve the greater system of public schools in Nashville.



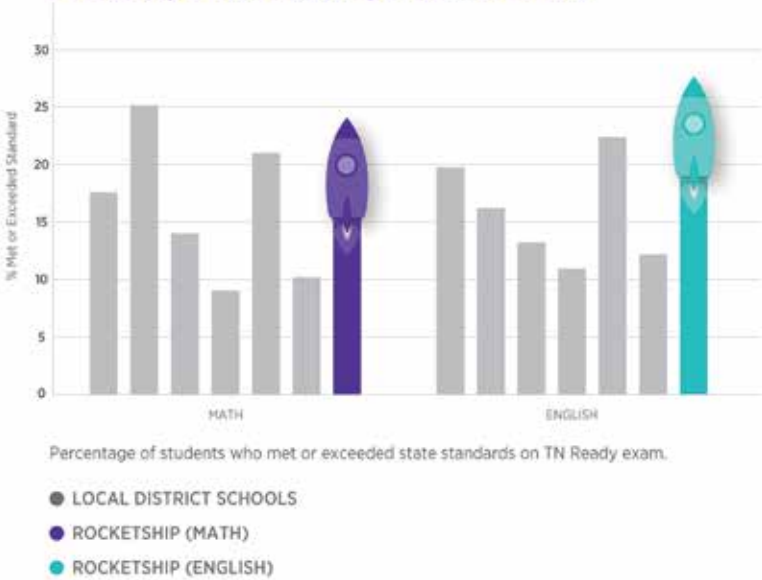
TOP PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN LOCAL CLUSTERS

Our Rocketeers’ performance on the TNReady state assessment put both our Nashville schools at or near the top of their local cluster in math and reading performance. (Nashville schools are arranged by the ‘cluster’ of schools that feed into a single high school.)

Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary in Maplewood Cluster



Rocketship United Academy in Glencliff Cluster





Learning in Harmony, Soaring Towards Opportunity

Throughout last school year, the Rocketship Tennessee team was working hard to bring our third campus, Rocketship Dream Community Prep, to life for the 22-23 school year. This third campus will serve the Antioch neighborhood of Southeast Nashville. Many families who attend Rocketship United Academy live in Antioch and are driving 45 minutes each way to give their kids a high-quality education. Knowing other families in their community were interested in Rocketship, our parents organized to demonstrate the need and demand to open a high-quality public elementary school in their community. Thanks to the voices of our families, a new school in Antioch was born, built on the hopes and dreams of the community it will serve.

Rocketship Dream Community Prep features a music program to help bring learning to life for a diverse community of learners. Studies have shown that music education prepares students to think critically, take risks, and persevere through challenges. Music is also a form of communication that brings people together from different races and cultures. Antioch is a diverse community with families from many different cultures and countries, and we are committed to making this school a reflection of our community. Music will be the shared language of our new school in Nashville. Together, we will learn in harmony and soar towards opportunity.



“

“I always thought it was the teachers and school leaders who made the decisions and just sent home letters. But now being involved as a parent leader, I realized I can change my child’s education.”

Graciela Rodriguez,
Parent Leader,
Rocketship Tennessee

Parents Lead “5th Grade for All” Campaign

At Rocketship Public Schools, Parent Power is at the heart of everything we do. When our families see something in their community that they want changed, we encourage them to take it upon themselves to organize and take action. Last year, our parents at Rocketship Nashville Northeast demonstrated this power with their “5th Grade for All” campaign.

The goal of the campaign was to amend Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary’s charter to allow for the addition of 5th grade. Middle schools had historically started in 5th grade, but Metro Nashville Public Schools began to transition 5th grade to elementary schools in north Nashville and start middle schools in 6th grade. Charter schools were not initially considered part of this transition but our parents wanted the same opportunity to keep their students at Rocketship for 5th grade. Without the change, our Rocketeers would have to attend a separate elementary school just for fifth grade before going on to middle school. Parent leaders felt a strong sense of inequity that the school district was not considering the voices of parents of charter school students.

Our parent leaders participated in six Parent Organizing Committee meetings where they were trained and challenged to activate and unleash their parent power. As a result of intentional collaboration and preparation, our parent leaders held four successful research meetings with school board members which helped them gain the support they needed. On the night of the Metro Nashville School Board meeting, over 50 parents provided public comments. The board room was filled to capacity and we had to continuously bring in more chairs to accommodate the growing number of supporters for our parent’s campaign. At the end of the meeting, the vote was approved and Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary will begin serving 5th graders in the 2022-23 school year!

ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS WASHINGTON DC



1,553
ROCKETEERS

94%
BLACK

74%
AT-RISK

22%
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 over 1,500 Rocketeers every day—students who have the potential to be DC's next leaders and creative thinkers.

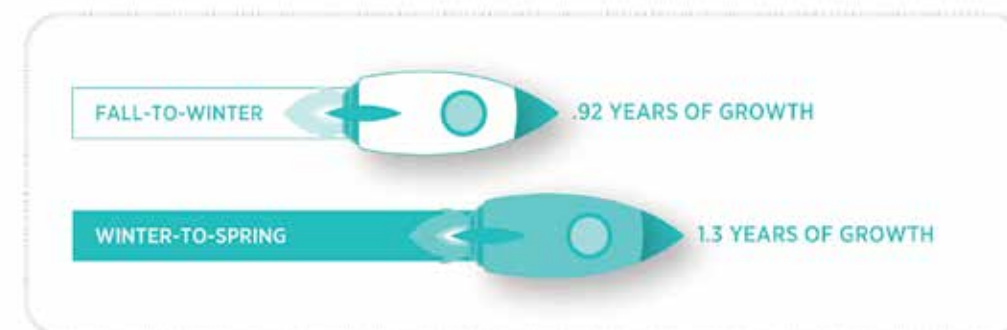
While schools are beginning to look more like they did pre-pandemic, we know the effects of this global health crisis weigh heavily on our DC students, families, and staff. One way Rocketship DC is supporting our Rocketeers' recovery is through investing in the well-being of our entire school communities, especially the well-being of our staff. Teachers can't sustainably meet the social, emotional, mental, and academic needs of our students if their needs aren't also being met. That's why Rocketship DC is rethinking how schools approach wellness and mental health support for our entire school community. By caring for the whole child, whole family, and whole educator, we will unleash our potential.

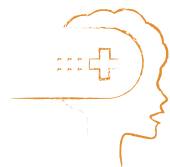


Return to In-Person Learning Accelerates Academic Growth

The COVID-19 pandemic took a significant toll on our students' academic performance over the last two years. Across all DC public schools, student achievement fell to the lowest point in more than five years. At Rocketship DC, strict public health regulations for DC schools led to high rates of student and staff absences and limited our ability to execute critical aspects of our academic program, including our rotational model. The first half of the school year was particularly challenging for our students and staff. In the second half of the year, as some restrictions were relaxed and in-person learning began to return more fully, we saw much stronger academic growth. From winter to spring, our DC Rocketeers achieved 1.27 years of growth in ELA and 1.13 years of growth in math on the nationally normed NWEA MAP assessment. Despite our Rocketeers encouraging growth in the second semester, we know that COVID impacted our DC schools most severely and the road to full recovery requires the consistent implementation of our full model and ongoing commitment to provide a joyful and rigorous academic experience that allows our Rocketeers to unleash their amazing potential.

2021-22 READING GROWTH SCORES





My D.C. charter schools required staff to be vaccinated. Here's what happened.

By Candice Bobo, Executive Director, Rocketship Public Schools Washington DC

As we planned for reopening schools this fall, our biggest worry was how to make up for lost learning time and address the social and emotional tolls a year of isolation had taken on our students. I wish I could say that's where our focus has been. Instead, the increased spread of the delta coronavirus variant, just as the school year started, forced us to shift our attention to the most basic elements of running a school: keeping students healthy, safe and in the classroom.

After welcoming our 1,500 elementary students back to our three campuses, it quickly became clear that a vaccine mandate for staff was the only way to provide a stable learning environment, especially because our students are too young to be vaccinated. So on Sept. 1, we announced a policy that all employees of Rocketship Public Schools, D.C. must be fully vaccinated against the coronavirus by Oct. 29.

We were one of the first charter school networks in D.C. to make vaccination a condition of employment, and we applaud D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser (D) for requiring all schools — district, charter and private — as well as all child-care providers to do the same. By mandating the vaccine, we can all keep our staff safe and our kids in school and try to heal from the trauma of this pandemic.

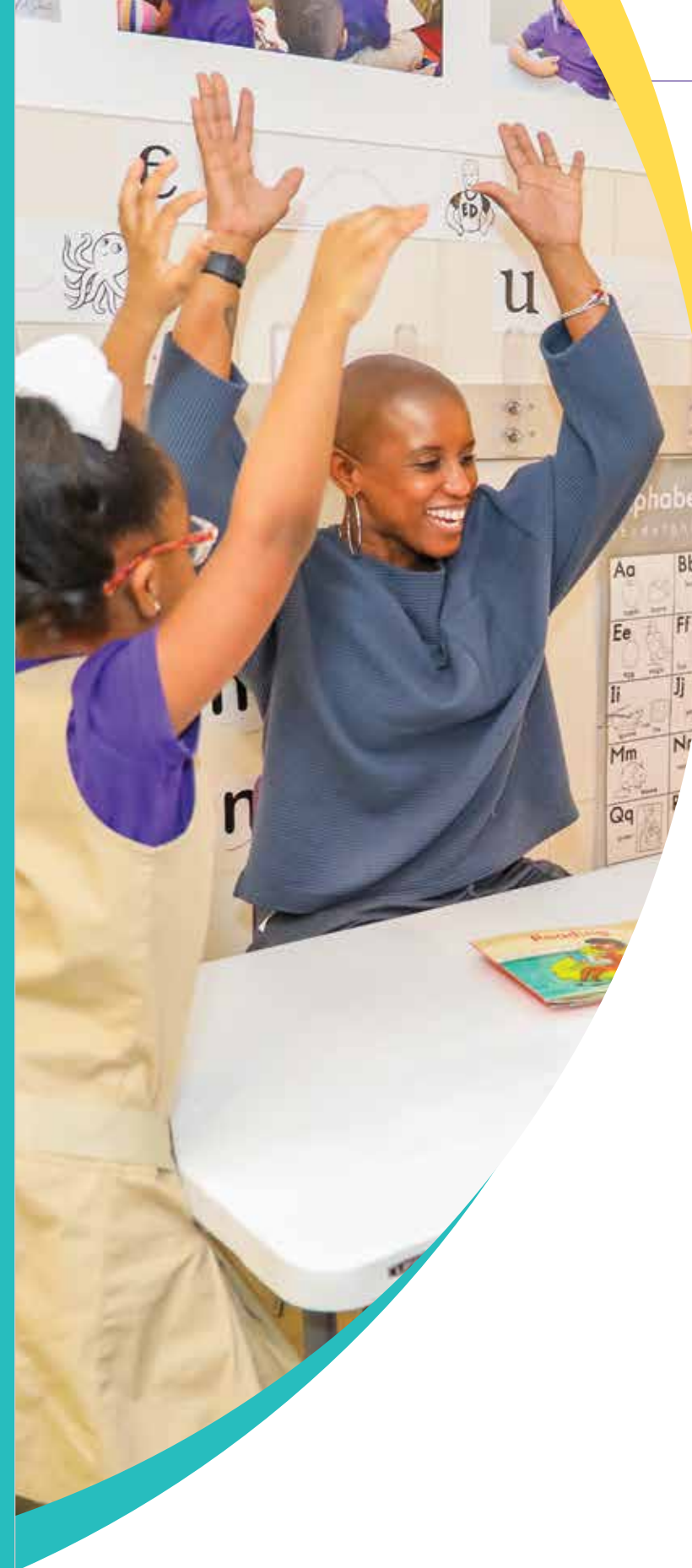
This essay was published in *The Washington Post*.

The Washington Post

Over the past six months, we have offered our staff many opportunities to learn about the vaccines and help them make an informed decision. We even hosted a webinar with Dr. James Hildreth, an immunologist who sits on the FDA's vaccine advisory committee. Though I understand that vaccination is a personal choice, it is a choice that affects the health and well-being of our entire school communities. The time for waiting was clearly over.

Our mandate has largely been met by appreciation from staff who will feel safer working in a space where they know all adults have been vaccinated. The families we serve have also expressed that this decision has brought a much-needed sense of relief from the anxiety and uncertainty of this school year.

We expect this will be the experience of most schools and child-care providers as they implement Bowser's new vaccine requirement. It's a policy they should welcome, not fear. By working together, we all can protect the health and well-being of our children.



The Key to Helping Students is Investing in Teachers

By Candice Bobo, Executive Director, Rocketship Public Schools Washington DC

Helping at-risk students thrive during the best of times is a challenging job. Their life circumstances and backgrounds often put them at a disadvantage. Now, their families have been the ones hardest hit by the health and economic consequences of the pandemic. Their mental health is suffering as a result — which, combined with two years of disrupted learning, has made academic gains even harder.

We believe the key to helping students right now is to invest in the well-being of our teachers. We recognize that the well-being of teachers and students is deeply interconnected. That's why we are rethinking how schools approach wellness and mental health support for school staff — not just students. Our employee wellness program includes professional development to give teachers practical tools for managing their well-being. Our teachers also have access to individual counseling through a third party and get multiple breaks throughout the school day. Each school also has the flexibility to design its own initiatives to support a positive staff culture, which have included everything from support groups to cafe carts.

All of us connected to education — whether as educators, parents or engaged citizens — have to recognize that the well-being of teachers and students is deeply interconnected. When adults experience stress and its physical manifestations, children who are around them acutely sense it. The bottom line is that we have to invest in the health of families, students and teachers to truly support our students' emotional and academic needs, and to forge a path back to normalcy. That is what we are doing at Rocketship D.C. and we encourage other cities, districts and schools to do the same.

This essay was published in *The 74 Million*.

The74

ROCKETSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

T E X A S

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, and endeavors to establish an equitable and excellent educational environment that serves all children. By focusing exclusively on elementary education, our model is designed to help improve 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 children, partner with educators, and hold leaders accountable. This is how our elementary-only model is designed to help improve the entire public education system in Tarrant County.

Fueled by Local Leaders



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In March, founding families of Rocketship Texas met to brainstorm ideas for the name of our first school in Fort Worth. Serving the Stop Six neighborhood—a historically Black community steeped in pride and tradition—our families wanted a school that creates new opportunities for the future and honors the rich legacy of their community. After a series of lively discussions, parents voted to name their school after Dr. Dennis Dunkins, the late educator who worked tirelessly to bring excellent schools to Stop Six and support more principals of color in local schools.

Rocketship Dennis Dunkins Elementary opened in August 2022. Focusing on personalized learning, partnering with parents, and serving as a hub for community services, our new school is preparing today's dreamers to become tomorrow's leaders, like Dr. Dennis Dunkins.

Dr. Dennis Dunkins was a pillar of the Fort Worth educational community. For decades, he worked for the Fort Worth Independent School District and was instrumental in promoting school choice. He played a crucial role in creating magnet programs and was a champion for education excellence in the Stop Six community. As one of the founders of the Fort Worth Area Alliance of Black School Educators (FWAABSE) and the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators (TABSE), he worked tirelessly to solicit more principals of color to serve the local school district.

“

“I am so proud to be part of a community of parents and staff who chose to celebrate Dr. Dennis Dunkins’ legacy as part of our Stop Six neighborhood,” said founding Rocketship parent, Erica Garner. “We want to showcase the pride and beautiful, vibrant legacy of Stop Six by having a great school full of joyful learning. We hope that every day we will live out Dr. Dennis Dunkins’ legacy and create a better future for our kids.”

Erica Garner,
Founding Rocketship Parent





Parents Leading the Way in Fort Worth

On April 21, 2022 volunteer parent leaders from Rocketship Public Schools Texas led their first-ever political forum with candidates running in local elections.

Several parents shared the stage with candidates for the Fort Worth Independent School District Board and Fort Worth City Council. Parents asked candidates critical questions related to education, city resources, and community safety. This inspiring event elevated parents' voices and reminded the community that their vote is not only their voice but also sparks meaningful change. Thanks to the organizational efforts led by our parent leadership community, families in Southeast Fort Worth were better prepared to cast their vote!

Rebuilding Trust in the Community

By **SaJade Miller**, Superintendent, Rocketship Public Schools Texas

Frustration and fear. Those are the dominant forces shaping our experience with public education since COVID-19 took hold two years ago. Finding common ground to forge a path forward feels all but impossible lately. But the challenges we are confronting today are symptoms of a much deeper problem. If left untreated, it won't just fade away when this pandemic ends.

Great schools are relationship-centered. But in too many schools those relationships have been allowed to atrophy. Fundamentally, relationships are about trust. And judging by the steep decline in enrollment in public schools across the nation, including here in Fort Worth, parents are losing trust in their local schools.

If we want to restore trust in our public schools, then we need to re-balance the power structure between parents, teachers, and students. We need to rebuild relationships by centering our work on our shared purpose – to give every child every opportunity they deserve to make the most of their life.

Building strong relationships between family and school requires more than community meetings, teacher conferences, and the typical ways schools tend to engage families on school-based terms. It requires educators to get out into the community to deeply understand the whole context of your student so you can truly serve the whole child.

This has been our guiding philosophy at Rocketship Texas from the very beginning. And before we even launched our first school, I knew our approach was truly taking root when one of our founding parents, Yolanda Seban, told me "I know the difference between well-intentioned organizations with prescriptive approaches and those that truly serve the needs of our community by listening to our needs, treating us as equals, and showing us the dignity and respect we deserve. Every neighborhood deserves a Rocketship, a place where parents are given a voice and real input in shaping what their child's educational journey will look like."



This essay was published in the *Fort Worth Star Telegram*. **Fort Worth Star-Telegram**

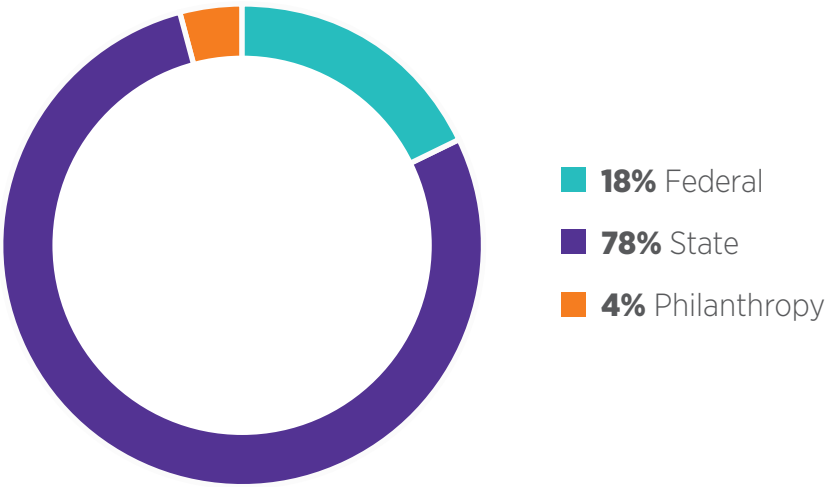
FINANCIALS

Rocketship is building a scalable and financially sustainable non-profit school model that propels student achievement in underserved communities across the country. In 2020–21, 96% of our funding came from public sources. School-based expenses accounted for 85% of our spending.

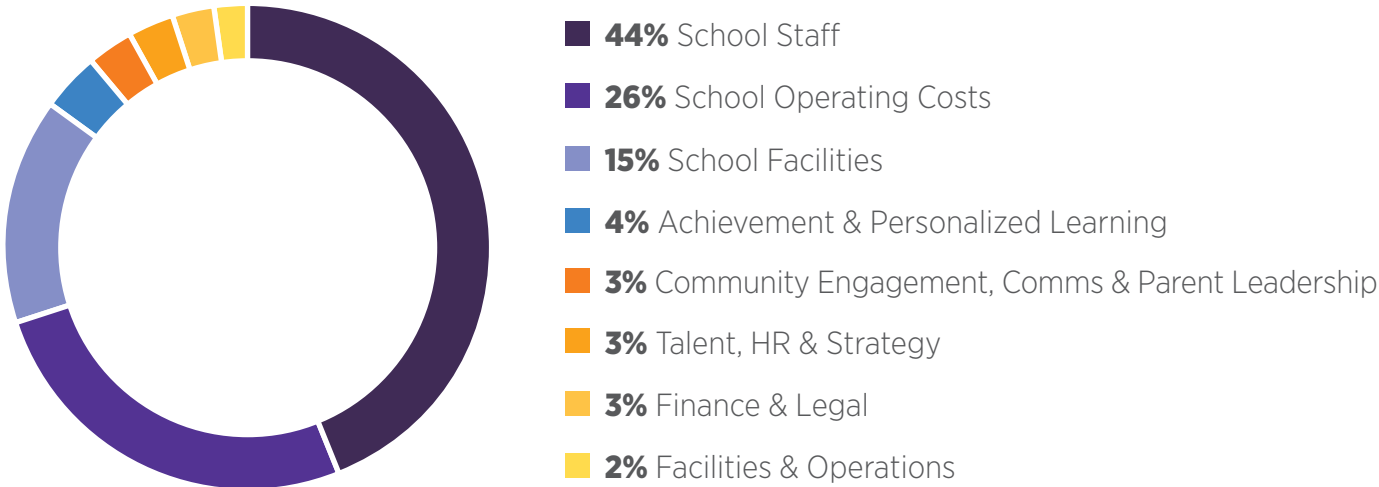
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Fully enrolled schools reach financial sustainability within three to five years of launching. Each region is financially sustainable at five to eight schools. Our Bay Area region is our first fully sustainable region, meaning that our 13 schools and the regional team supporting them operate solely on public funds.

REVENUE



EXPENSES



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