

# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

CRESCENT CITY  
SCHOOLS

INSPIRING WORK  INSPIRING PEOPLE

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When we co-founded Crescent City Schools in 2010, we had a clear vision of the kind of organization we thought would make a difference for New Orleans’s students and families. We had each worked for more than fifteen years in education, and we were excited to create an organization that would give school leaders the freedom to adapt to the needs of students and create environments where educators could thrive.

At a time when the city needed fast progress in its failing schools, we were one of the first organizations to **prioritize K-8 school turnaround** work. Rather than re-start a school with just a few grades, whole-school turnaround gives families stability and is a quicker route to providing all children in New Orleans with a high-quality school. We are still committed to doing difficult, but important, work for the most families we can.

**Our principals have the academic expertise and inspirational leadership** to direct our autonomous charter schools. Our leaders make decisions on everything related to their buildings, and with this autonomy we have ushered in fast school turnaround, innovative programs, and stable school communities.

From the start, we have relied on a **lean CMO central team** that provides limited, but important, consolidated services to the schools in the areas of financial oversight, staff recruiting, fundraising and development, and school leader management. We believe that the best way to raise student achievement is to ensure that resources and decision-making remain close to students and families. Therefore, we have housed important academic and school culture roles inside our schools and not in a central office.

Because we know that the people in the building matter the most to our students and families, we focus our financial resources on **hiring and developing our incredible staff**. We believe spending money and energy to develop the adults in our building is the best way to raise student achievement, and we put considerable resources into creating work environments where teachers thrive and stay.

Seven years later, we still believe in our founding ideas and know that our focus on the development of the people in our organization forms the foundation for great things. It is the tireless dedication of our staff, the day-to-day perseverance of our students, the enthusiastic involvement of our parents, and the faithful support of our partners and donors that enable us to build a better New Orleans, for our students and for us all.

Sincerely,

Kate Mehok  
Chief Executive Officer  
Crescent City Schools

Julie Lause  
Principal  
Harriet Tubman Charter School

# OUR MISSION

*The mission of Crescent City Schools is to support and develop open enrollment charter schools that raise student achievement and prepare students for college.*

Established in 2010, Crescent City Schools was founded on the belief that all students deserve great schools. Crescent City Schools is a Charter Management Organization (CMO) founded by two veteran educators, Kate Mehok and Julie Lause, in order to address the specific need of transforming failing schools.

Crescent City Schools fosters the performance and improvement of schools and provides the support structure necessary for schools to achieve success. Our organization provides sound methodology and implements best practices for teaching and learning to create a model that transforms the lowest-performing schools into excellent educational institutions.

## 2016 Highlights



In more than half of the classrooms at Tubman, students outperformed the state.

# 76%

of 8th grade students in the Crescent City Schools network were accepted into high-performing high schools

# 14pts

After only 3 years under operation by Crescent City Schools, Paul Habans Charter School exited failing status and grew its School Performance Score by nearly 14 points

# 90%

of Akili 8th graders who took the high school Algebra I End of Course exam passed





*I'm definitely going to college. I want to be the first woman in the NBA. And I want to be a teacher. I think my school is helping me learn what I need to do all those things.*

Jada, 5th grader  
Paul Habans Charter School

# OUR SCHOOLS

Harriet Tubman Charter School, the first school in the Crescent City Schools network, opened in 2011 and moved from a grade of F to a grade of C in its second year of operation. Located in Algiers, Tubman focuses on both academic challenge and intervention for struggling students. Tubman's Montessori-inspired, combined-grade K-1-2 program is unique in the city. Each homeroom community stays with their teachers and peers for three years, and K-1-2 students are instructed in mostly small groups, with a focus on independence, deep practice of skills, and academic focus.

Since joining the Crescent City Schools network in 2012, Akili Academy has expanded to serve students in grades K-8 and has more than doubled its student population, from 240 to nearly 550. Housed in the historic William Frantz Building in the Upper Ninth Ward, Akili has implemented a personalized learning program since 2014, which has allowed staff to better support and challenge scholars. By using a combination of whole group instruction, personalized learning software, and small groups, Akili staff are able to meet all students where they are and ensure that they are on the path to college.

Paul Habans Charter School, the most recent addition to the Crescent City Schools network, welcomed its first students in August 2013. In the past three years, the student population has nearly doubled to more than 600 students in grades PreK-8. Habans promoted its first eighth grade class in May 2016 and relocated to its permanent, state-of-the-art campus in Algiers in June 2016.

## Harriet Tubman Charter



VALUES

Unity  
Responsibility  
Excellence  
Courage

Students enrolled in grades PreK-8

547

7th

District ranking; Tubman ranked 15th in the city, including selective schools

Highest-performing RSD school on the West Bank

1st

2/3

of the tested areas, students performed in the top 5 in New Orleans

[tubmancharterschool.org](http://tubmancharterschool.org)

## Akili Academy of New Orleans



VALUES

Teamwork  
Grit  
Excellence  
Enthusiasm  
Kindness

Students enrolled in grades K-8

535

90%

of 8th graders who took the high school Algebra I End of Course exam passed

of 3rd graders scored Basic or above in Math

86%

5th

District rating for Akili 8th graders performing at Mastery or above in ELA

[akiliacademy.org](http://akiliacademy.org)

## Paul Habans Charter



VALUES

Perseverance  
Excellence  
Courage  
Community

Students enrolled in grades PreK-8

547

14pts

School Performance Score (SPS) growth, Habans exits failing status as a result

of 8th graders scored Basic or above in ELA

68%

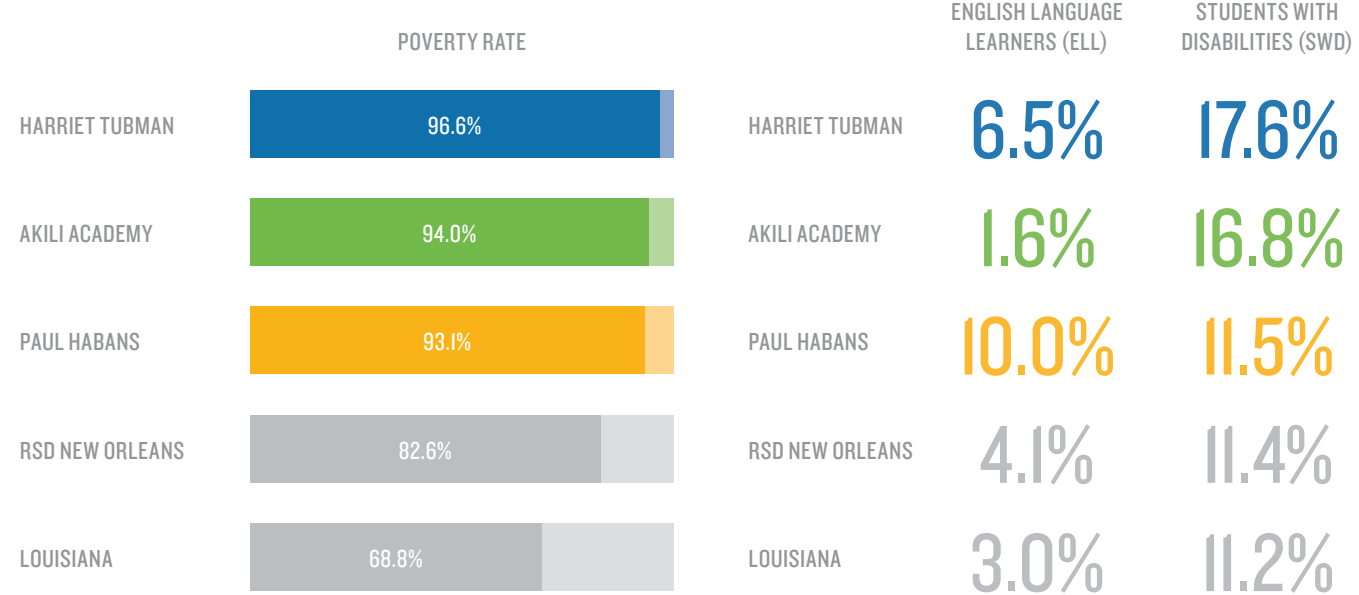
3rd

Growth rank for students performing at Basic or above for elementary schools in New Orleans

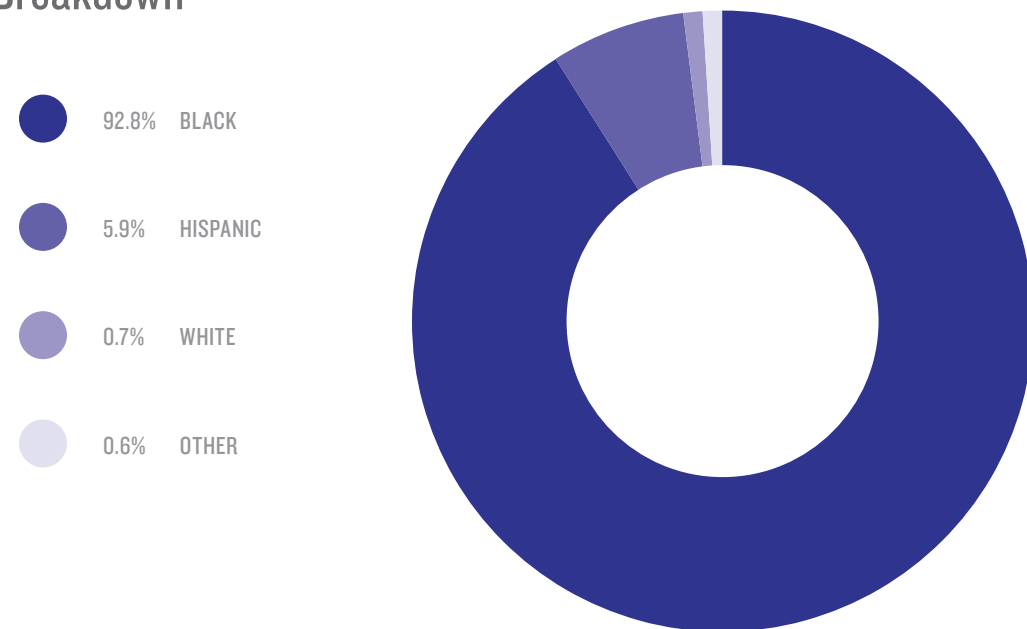
[habanscharterschool.org](http://habanscharterschool.org)

# OUR STUDENTS

## Demographics



## Racial Breakdown



Teachers at Akili help me learn, not by giving me the answers, but by asking me to think about things in another way, or giving me a little hint. Once, in music class, I was having trouble learning to play “When the Saints Go Marching In” on the piano. My teacher helped by reminding me how to read what the music was telling me. After that, I just kept trying and trying until I got it right.

Ronnia, 2nd grader  
Akili Academy



“When my family moved here last year from Honduras, it was really hard. I didn’t know how to say “hi” or tell people my name. But my teacher Mr. Karel really helped me. He kept pushing me and helping me learn English. If there was a new student coming to America from Honduras, I would tell them, don’t be nervous. It’s not easy to learn English, but you can do it if you don’t give up.”

Michael, 7th grader  
Harriet Tubman Charter School

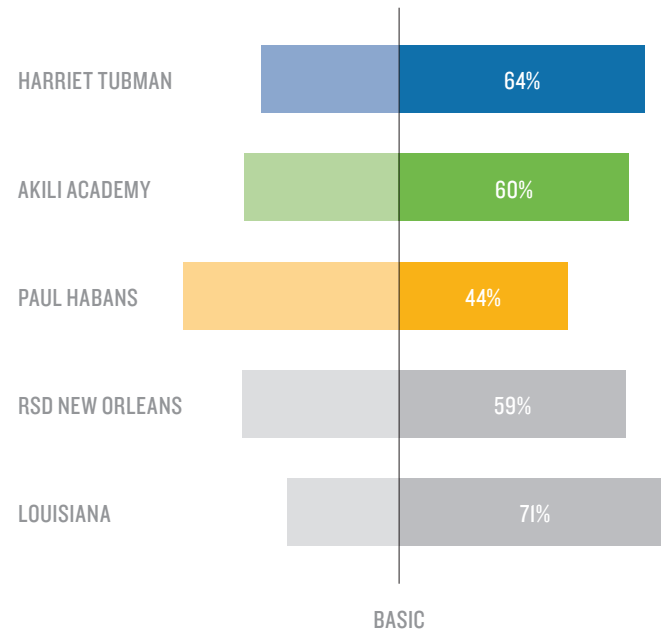
# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Harriet Tubman Charter School has steadily raised student achievement since 2011, when Crescent City Schools assumed operations. In its fourth year, Tubman moved from **27th to 5th** in the K-8 school rankings for the Recovery School District. In 2016, Tubman was rewarded for this academic achievement with a six-year renewal of its charter from the Louisiana Department of Education.

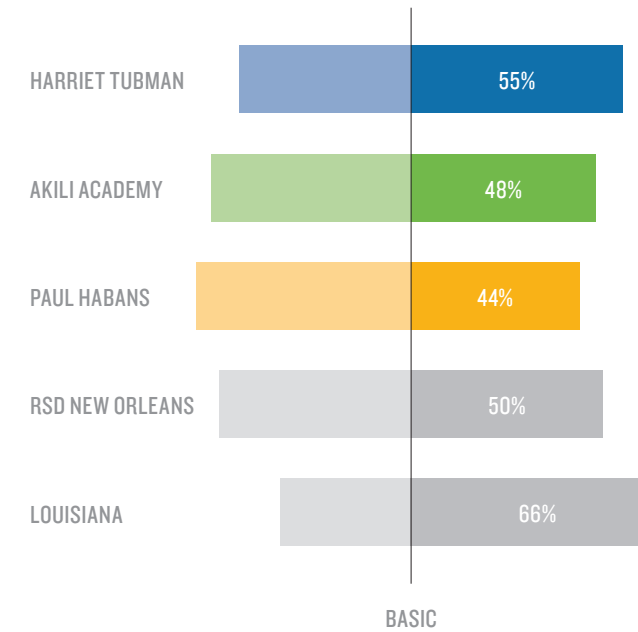
Akili Academy's commitment to meeting all students where they are, and ensuring that they remain on the path to college, has enabled students to make great academic strides. In 2016, **90% of Akili 8th graders** who took the high school Algebra I End of Course exam passed, and 80% of Akili third graders scored Basic or above in Math.

In 2016, after only three years of operation under Crescent City Schools, Paul Habans Charter School exceeded the Recovery School District and state average growth, both in percent of students scoring Mastery+ as well as the percent of students scoring Basic+. Overall, the percentage of students scoring Mastery or above increased from 10% in 2015 to 15% in 2016. As a result of these achievements, Habans officially **exited failing status** and continues its progression towards academic excellence.

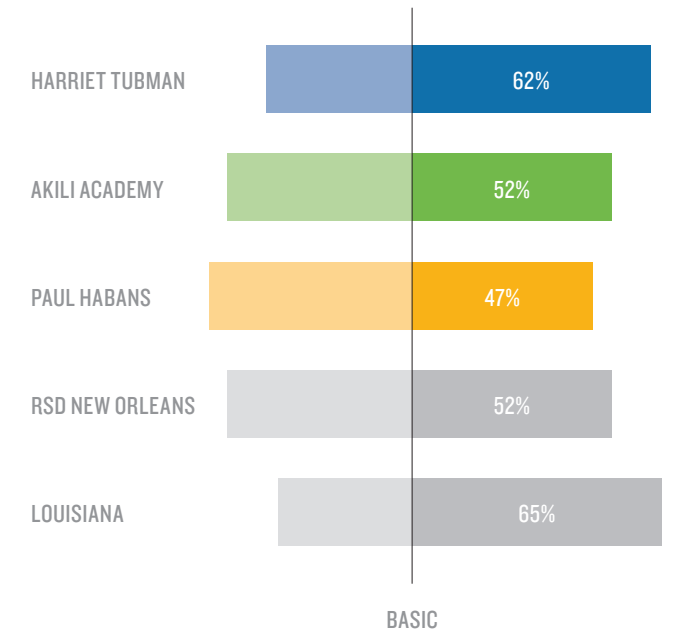
## ELA achievement of "Basic" or higher



## Math achievement of "Basic" or higher

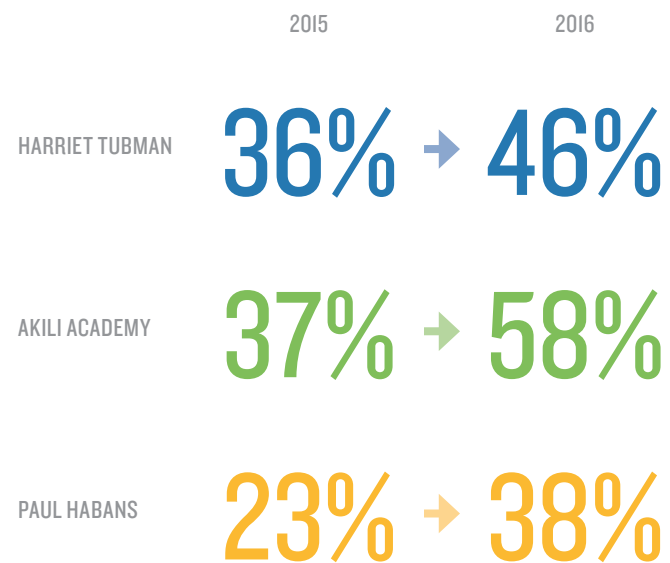


## Science achievement of "Basic" or higher



## Annual Reading Growth

Percentage of students reading on or above grade level





*We currently have six children attending Paul Habans, and we wouldn't want them anywhere else. Being part of the Habans community means that when my children leave my house in the morning, they are going to a place that is like a second home to them. Habans staff aren't just teachers, they are family.*

Shantan Davis, Parent  
Paul Habans Charter School

# OUR STAFF

## Experience

Teachers with 4-plus years of experience

HARRIET TUBMAN **41%**

AKILI ACADEMY **38%**

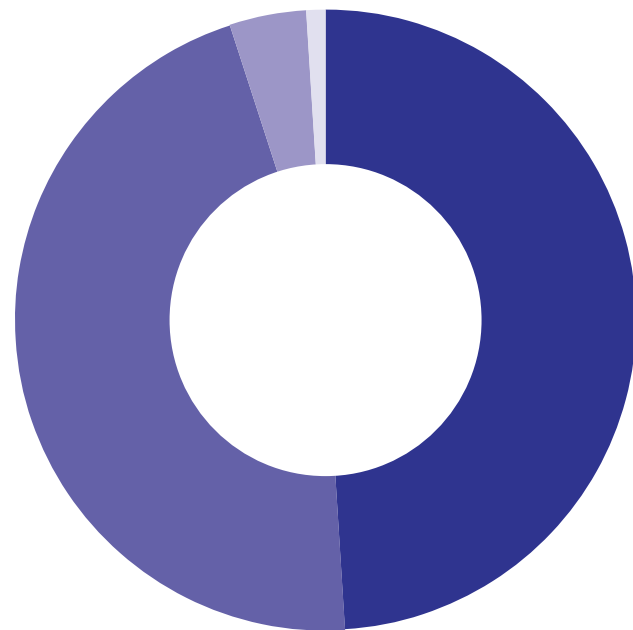
PAUL HABANS **40%**

**54%** new hires in 2015–2016 from Greater New Orleans area

instructional staff in 2015–2016 with master's degrees **26%**

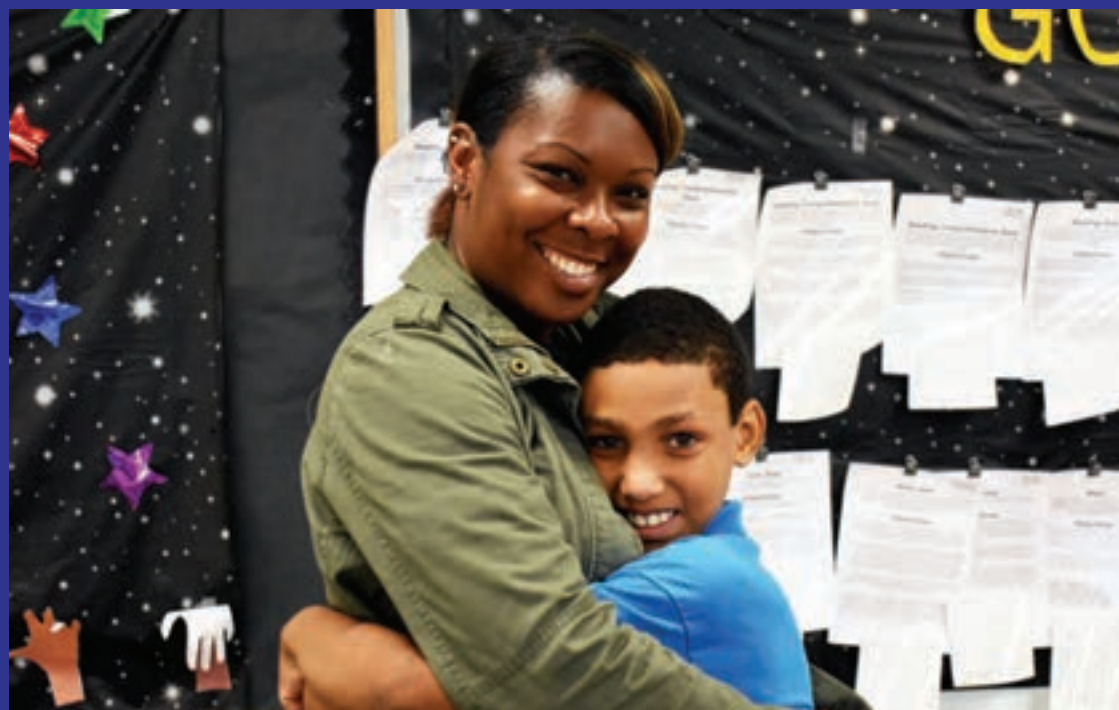
## Racial Breakdown

- 49.2% BLACK
- 46.7% WHITE
- 3.3% ASIAN
- 0.7% OTHER



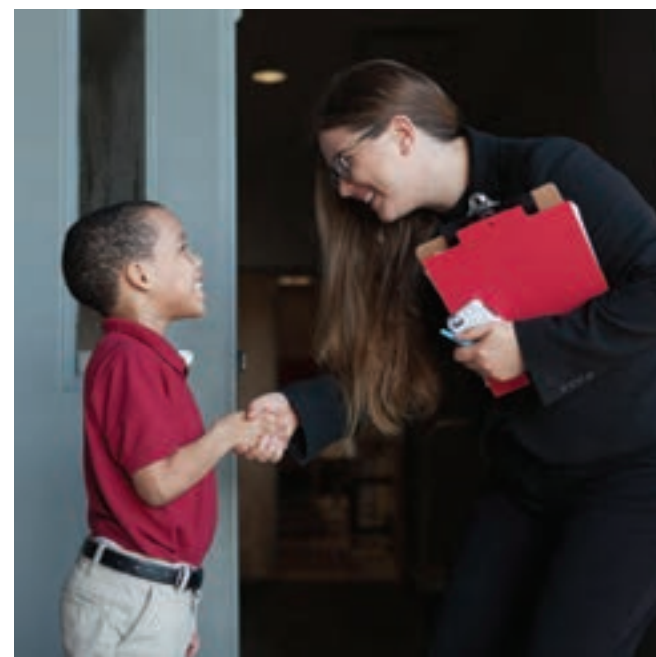
What I love about my job is that I get to read with kids, write with kids, and discuss books all day with kids. Sometimes, when I pass through the lunchroom, I overhear my students talking about the characters in the books we read, and it's awesome to hear that what we are learning in the class is becoming part of their conversations. Moments like that really motivate me as a teacher.

Steven Gamache, 8th grade English teacher  
Paul Habans Charter School



At this point, I've worked in the school system for 12 years, and, to me, working in special education feels like being part of a family. Parents release their children into our care- knowing that they need extra attention and extra love- and they trust us with them. This year, my classroom has a total of 14 students who have mild to moderate cognitive impairment, so their needs really vary quite a bit. The growth that I have seen my students make is incredible. For one child, their goal may be to learn the alphabet. For another child, it may be to learn how to read. But every child will learn. Every child will grow. Every child will achieve. That's something that drew me to special education- my belief that all students are truly capable of learning.

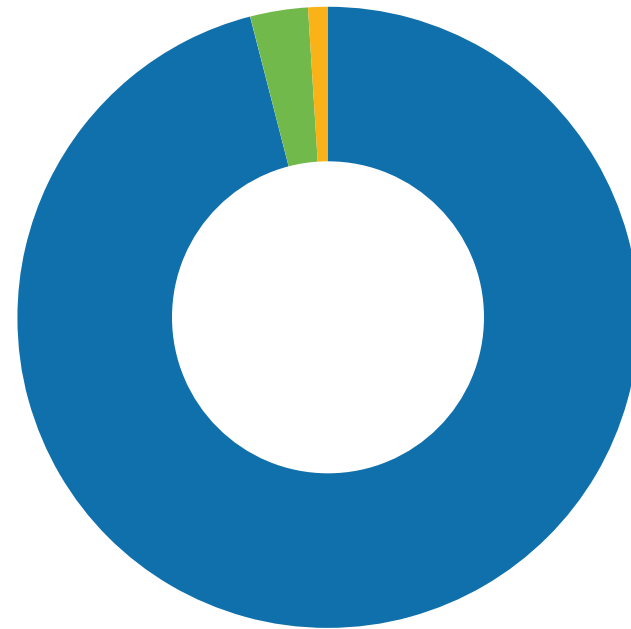
Chiante Cunningham, Special education teacher  
Harriet Tubman Charter School



# FINANCES

Crescent City Schools designs each of its schools to operate sustainably on public funds. However, in order to truly meet the needs of the more than 1,600 children we serve, our schools offer extracurricular activities, innovative programming, and other enrichment opportunities. These programs enhance the quality of our students' education and require us to pursue additional philanthropic dollars. We believe that the extracurricular activities and enrichment programs we provide to our students are critical to their successful development, and we thank all of our donors for supporting the children of New Orleans.

## Revenue



- 96.2% GOVERNMENT REVENUE
- 3.0% DONATIONS
- 0.8% OTHER

## Expenses



- 31.1% GENERAL EDUCATION
- 12.2% SPECIAL EDUCATION
- 7.1% STUDENT SUPPORT
- 6.5% ENRICHMENT & EXTRA-CURRICULARS
- 9.4% FOOD SERVICES
- 6.8% TRANSPORTATION
- 6.8% SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
- 8.7% ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT
- 2.7% TECHNOLOGY
- 5.4% FACILITIES
- 0.6% SECURITY
- 2.0% OTHER



*What motivates me every day as a teacher is knowing that a student is willing to try. Since I work in a classroom for students who are two or more grade levels behind, students often come to me at the beginning of the year feeling very discouraged. To help them turn that around and get up to grade level is an amazing feeling.*

Cristina Bowser, 3rd grade special education resource teacher  
Harriet Tubman Charter School


# BOARD & DONORS

Whenever I visit one of the schools in the Crescent City Schools network, I am struck by the enthusiasm in the building. The excitement of teachers and students alike is almost tangible, and I think it is a testament to our teachers' ability to stoke and fan into flame students' passion for learning. Walking through the halls of our three schools, I am just as likely to overhear an eighth grade classroom animatedly discussing the politics behind America's War of Independence as I am to see kindergarteners eagerly raising their hands (while sitting on the colorful rug in the center of the room), trying with all their might to be the one the teacher calls on to answer the question of how many purple dots they see.

Public education in New Orleans has been a topic of great interest in our city for much of the past decade. With the many conversations surrounding data, enrollment, and percentages, it is easy to get lost in the numbers and forget that, behind each proficiency or mastery score, there is a student. And while the results are absolutely essential to evaluating our city's progress in public education, it is just as important to remember the people behind the results- staff and students alike- and examine the journey taken to get to those results.

From what I have witnessed at Crescent City Schools, the journey is challenging, but filled with curiosity and enthusiasm. The students are engaged and exploring connections between what they learn in the classroom and the world around them. And staff are laser-focused and absolutely certain that every child can and will learn. To me, those sound like the key ingredients for success. I am proud to represent Crescent City Schools and want to express my gratitude to every person and organization that supports and enables our work.

With sincere thanks,



JP Hymel, Board Chair

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