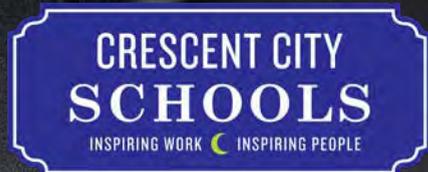


2017 ANNUAL REPORT



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When we co-founded Crescent City Schools, our sights were set on turning around one failing school at a time. When we began working in schools in 2011, our network was comprised of one school, Harriet Tubman Charter School, that served 500 students. Since then Crescent City Schools has expanded and added two schools to its network: Akili Academy, a slow-growth charter school that joined the network in 2012, and Paul Habans Charter School, a turnaround school that Crescent City Schools chartered in 2013. **Over the past eight years, Crescent City Schools has grown to be a charter management organization that serves nearly 2,000 students across the city of New Orleans.**

2017 was a significant year, not only for our network, but also for the state of Louisiana. As a network that chooses to do school turnaround work, 2017 was the first year that there were no failing schools in our network. We joyfully embrace the challenge of whole-school turnaround and celebrate interim milestones like these as our schools continue to improve. 2017 also marked higher expectations for students across the state, as Louisiana further increased the importance of students performing at Mastery and above on state tests. We believe that through continued work by our staff, students, and families, our children can meet this more rigorous bar for excellence. Given that the bar has been raised, we also applaud the Louisiana Department of Education's decision to include student growth as a factor in schools' performance scores. **We believe that looking at student growth, meaning how much a student actually learns and improves from one year to the next, is a truer measure of a school's value, and we are thrilled that each of our schools earns a grade of "A" for that metric.**

Despite the significant growth that our network has experienced over the past eight years, our founding beliefs, motivations, and values remain unchanged. They continue to guide us in our work. We continue to believe in the potential of every child, continue to equip and empower our school leaders and staff to carry out their work, and continue to engage our families in their children's education. We thank you all for your belief in us and in the students of New Orleans.

Sincerley

Kate Mehok (left)
Co-Founder
Chief Executive Officer, Crescent City Schools

Julie Lause (right)
Co-Founder
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.

2017 Highlights

A

progress letter grade received by all schools in CCS network for student academic growth in 2016–2017

61%

of 8th grade students in the CCS network accepted in high-performing high schools

100%

All schools in the CCS network have received charter renewals due to student academic performance



OUR SCHOOLS



tubmancharterschool.org

623

Students enrolled in grades PreK–8



83%

of 8th graders who scored Basic or above on state assessments for ELA

70%

of 8th graders were accepted into high-performing high schools

Top 5

In half of tested areas, Tubman was in the top five performers in the district



akiliacademy.org

557

Students enrolled in grades K–8



1

One of only seven K-8 schools in the city to grow a letter grade in 2017

2nd

District ranking for student academic growth of all K-8 schools in the city

19th

Rank out of 78 in Orleans Parish for students scoring at Mastery and above in ELA



habanscharterschool.org

630

Students enrolled in grades PreK–8



20pts

The increase in Habans's School Performance Score over the past two years

12th

Rank out of 78 in Orleans Parish for student academic progress

+18

Rise in the rankings for students scoring Mastery and above in Orleans Parish, from 53 in 2016 to 35 in 2017

THE MULTI-AGE MONTESSORI CLASSROOM

Fostering independence and a love for learning at Harriet Tubman Charter School



BACKGROUND

In the 2016–2017 academic year, school leaders at Harriet Tubman Charter School entered into an exciting new chapter by implementing a Montessori-inspired curriculum for its kindergarten, first, and second grade (K-1-2) students. Montessori education is designed to foster independence, love for learning, and increased focus and attention span.

Unlike a traditional, teacher-directed classroom, the K-1-2 classrooms at Tubman give students the opportunity to choose work for themselves and work independently at their own pace. The teachers prepare the environment so the shelves in the classrooms are full of math, science, English language arts, and social studies learning activities. These activities, known as “works,” are designed to engage the learner, increase in rigor to match the ability of individual students, and provide instant feedback to enable children to recognize and correct mistakes without adult intervention.

Students join a classroom composed of children from kindergarten, first, and second grade levels and stay with their teachers for multiple years. Students learn independently as well as in fluid groups to address their unique learning needs, and students benefit from the presence of older and younger peers.

In addition to incorporating Montessori principles, Tubman’s K-1-2 program follows a standards-based approach to teaching. Tubman students still have standards-based instruction using Tier 1 curriculum during their day, but also get long, uninterrupted blocks of time to practice works that are connected to the standards. For ELA and math, each of the works on the shelves connects to a teaching unit and set of standards. Although some works stay on the shelves all year, other works change periodically to complement the direct instruction. Tubman also rotates its science and social studies works between classrooms to expose all students to geography, the scientific method, observation skills, the seasons, and weather.

RESULTS

In its first year of implementing a K-1-2 Montessori program, Tubman has positively impacted its students in a number of ways. Students were able to stay with problems for a longer time, demonstrated an increase in their ability to focus on tasks, and developed a profound sense of ownership over their work. The new program has also directly impacted their academic progress. Students who have participated in the program for the past two years are projected to perform at 73% Basic+ and 49% Mastery+ on state tests in 2017-2018. This represents a 20-point performance growth from years past.



36%

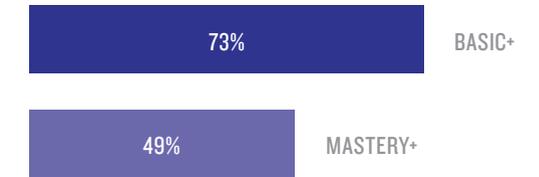
of 2nd grade students in 2017 performed at the three highest performance bands* in both Math and ELA, representing an increase of 10 percentage points relative to 2016.

**Measures of Academic Progress*



Photo provided by The New Orleans Advocate/ Matthew Hinton

State Test Performance Projections for 2017–18



This school is an innovative school that is doing things creatively for its families and for its children. It’s also a great example of how the school came in, took over in a situation that was troubled, and has really turned it around. This is a school that is on the rise and that’s great news for education in New Orleans.

John White, Superintendent
Louisiana Department of Education

THE AURORA PROGRAM

Every Day is a New Beginning

BACKGROUND

Crescent City Schools first piloted the Aurora Program for its network of three schools in New Orleans in the fall of 2016. This highly individualized program is designed to accommodate the educational and behavioral needs of scholars who, despite ongoing interventions in their home schools, continued to struggle in the traditional school setting.

For Aurora’s pilot year, the goal was to establish the program in a separate location with at least two classrooms serving 12 total students in grades K-3. Aurora exceeded this goal, serving 14 students in grades K-3.

The Aurora school day includes time for academic work, social and emotional learning, and enrichment classes. The program has a small student to teacher ratio (8:1), and each classroom has a full-time paraprofessional for additional support. Staff regularly monitor and review progress towards IEP goals, and the Director of the Aurora Program, Emma Weiss, works directly with the Special Education Department from each scholar’s sending school to keep them updated on scholar progress. The ultimate goal of the program is for students to develop habits and strategies that enable them to be successful in a classroom setting.

In a city where students are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder at rates three times higher than the national average, there is a strong need for programs like Aurora. In terms of providing a continuum of care to children in the city, Crescent City Schools believes that the Aurora Program



fills a vital gap in the continuum of care available to children in New Orleans, providing a much-needed choice between a traditional school-based environment and a clinical setting for students with the most extreme behavioral disabilities.

RESULTS

The students who participated in the Aurora’s pilot year benefited enormously from the program.

As a result of its successful first year, Aurora has expanded the grades served in 2017-2018, adding students in grades 4 and 5 to the program. Additionally, due to the need for programs like Aurora, Crescent City Schools has begun offering seats to students from outside of the Crescent City Schools network.

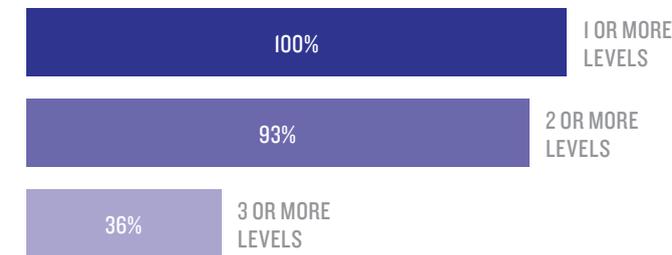


Before going to Aurora, Christopher struggled a lot with his homework and he would get so frustrated and just give up. Once he started at Aurora, he loved to do his homework and he had a smile on his face every day.

Verna Taylor, grandmother to Christopher Taylor, 3rd Grader, Harriet Tubman Charter School



Student STEP Literacy Improvement for 2016–17



71%
100%

of students experienced a decrease in the number of out of school suspensions

of parents indicated that they believed that Aurora staff cared about their child



The Aurora Program creates an environment where students feel safe, cared for, and open to learning. Whether a student refuses to do work or easily gets overwhelmed, they come here because something about their “go-to” behavior is not setting them up for success in school. Because we work in such small settings at Aurora, we can slowly help students learn how to do the right thing instead of falling back to their old habits.

Cortney Foster, Special Education Teacher
The Aurora Program

DEVELOPING THE WHOLE CHILD

The Crescent City Schools network strives to offer students the opportunity, not only to grow academically, but also to develop their character and pursue extracurricular interests. Students are given a wide range of enrichment activities: music, art, drama, physical education, clubs to pursue non-academic passions, team sports, drumline, and dance. When paired with efforts of teachers to make classrooms as engaging as possible, these type of enrichment programs create an environment that inspires students to develop lifelong passions and interests.



At Akili, I've been able to play basketball, baseball, football, and soccer. Basketball is my favorite! I've learned how to mentally prepare myself, to be disciplined and respectful, and to show good sportsmanship. I really want to be a player that my teammates can trust and count on.

Calvin Turner, 8th grader
Akili Academy



Being in the Tubman drumline gives me the opportunity to do lots of fun things around the city, like march in parades. I like to play the cymbals because they are lightweight, and they are kind of the center of the band. They also keep everyone else on tempo.

Arbany Johnson, 7th grader and drumline member
Harriet Tubman Charter School

CRESCENT CITY CHARTER LEAGUE

As the number of students served by Crescent City Schools continues to grow, the network expanded its afterschool athletics programs to create the Crescent City Charter League.

In partnership with PlayNOLA, the league was developed with the idea that interscholastic sports competition is an important element to providing a great school experience for all students. The inaugural fall season included flag football and volleyball for middle school scholars, with teams from Harriet Tubman Charter School, Paul Habans Charter School, Jefferson RISE Charter School, and ENCORE Academy. The winter season featured boys and girls basketball teams and the spring season included co-ed soccer. Based on its successful first year, the Crescent City Charter League plans to expand, both in terms of the sports offered as well as the number of schools served, in the near future.



Partnering with Crescent City Schools to build the Crescent City Charter League has allowed playNOLA to further accomplish an important part of its mission: to provide, through competitive athletics, a fun and positive outlet for children around New Orleans.

Lavonzell Nicholson, Founder/CEO
playNOLA

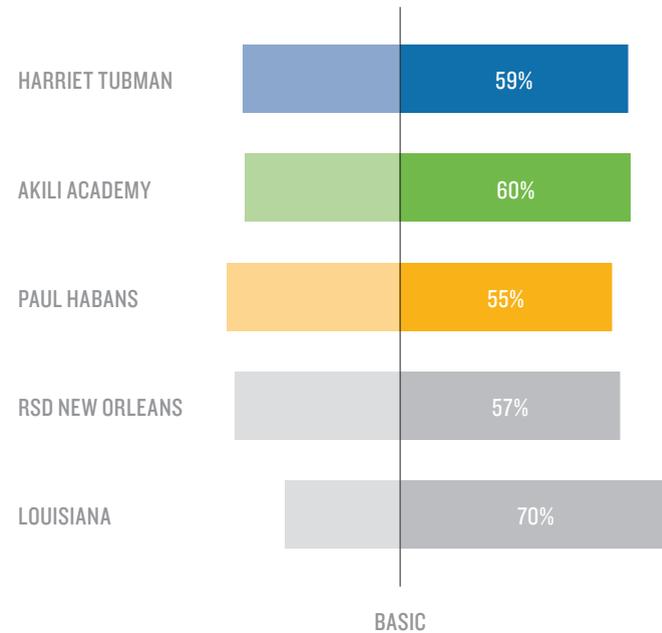
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Crescent City Schools assumed operations of Harriet Tubman Charter School in 2011, and student achievement has steadily grown since that time. In 2015, its fourth year of operations, Tubman moved from 27th to 5th in the K-8 school rankings for the Recovery School District. As a result of students' performance on state exams, Tubman is in the midst of a six-year charter renewal, awarded by the Louisiana Department of Education in 2016.

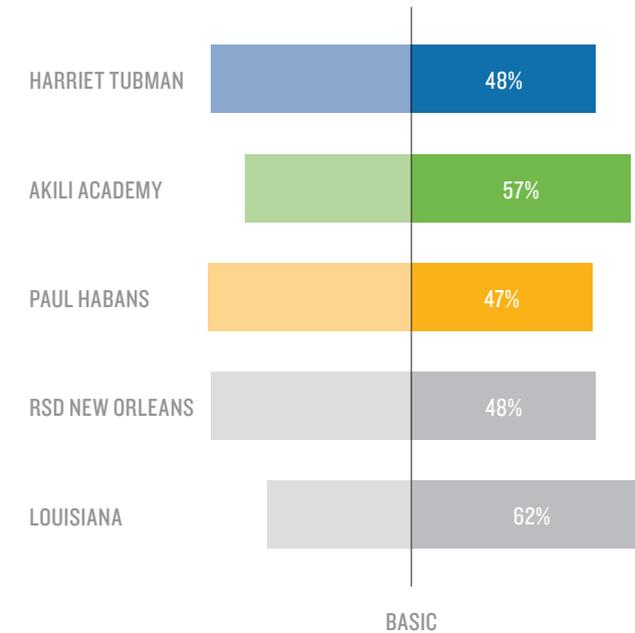
In 2017, Akili Academy was one of only seven K-8 schools in the city to grow a letter grade, and boasted the second highest growth of all K-8 schools in the city. As a result of its students' achievements, Akili received a School Performance Score of 70, moved from a D to C grade, and was given a six-year renewal of its charter.

Paul Habans Charter School, which was a failing school when Crescent City Schools assumed operations, has improved its SPS by 20 points in the past two years, and received a three-year renewal of its charter in 2017 due to its students' academic progress.

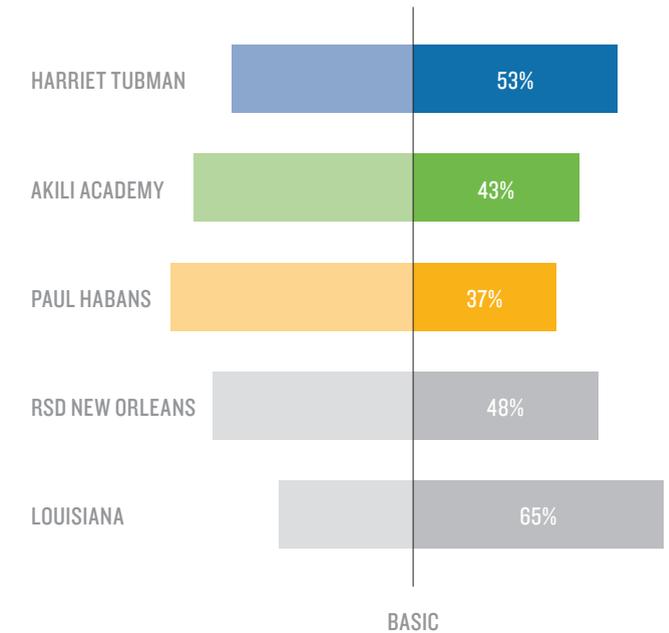
ELA achievement of "Basic" or higher



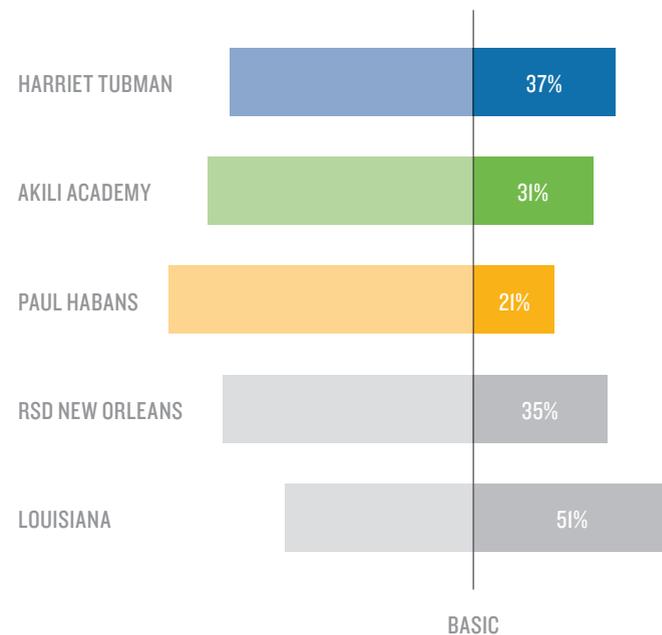
Math achievement of "Basic" or higher



Science achievement of "Basic" or higher



Social Studies achievement of "Basic" or higher



THE PATH TO COLLEGE

The most important decision that students can make on the path to college is where they attend high school. Crescent City Schools wants all of its students to attend high-performing, challenging schools that will ensure they are meeting the academic standards for college entry. This college-bound focus begins early, starting with the youngest scholars, and is maintained across all grades at each of the schools in the network. Choosing where a student will attend high school is the next important chapter of our students' lives and staff members at Tubman, Akili, and Habans work closely with students and their families to help them make this important decision.

Students begin gearing up for the high school admissions process at the end of the seventh grade. Preparation for this next chapter can assume many forms: high school field trips, family nights to discuss parents' questions, and alumni visits are just a few ways that staff acquaint students with the many options for high schools in the city. Staff encourage students to prioritize high schools where a high percentage of students go on to attend college and the school culture prioritizes academic achievement. Teachers work with students and their families throughout the high school application process and attend the high school graduation ceremonies of as many former students as possible.



We sit down with students and talk out where they want to go, for high school and in life. And then we figure out how they can get there. There really is a spark that lights up in students when they realize that you can help them navigate the road to high school.

Angelo Cross, Director of Family & Community
Harriet Tubman Charter School



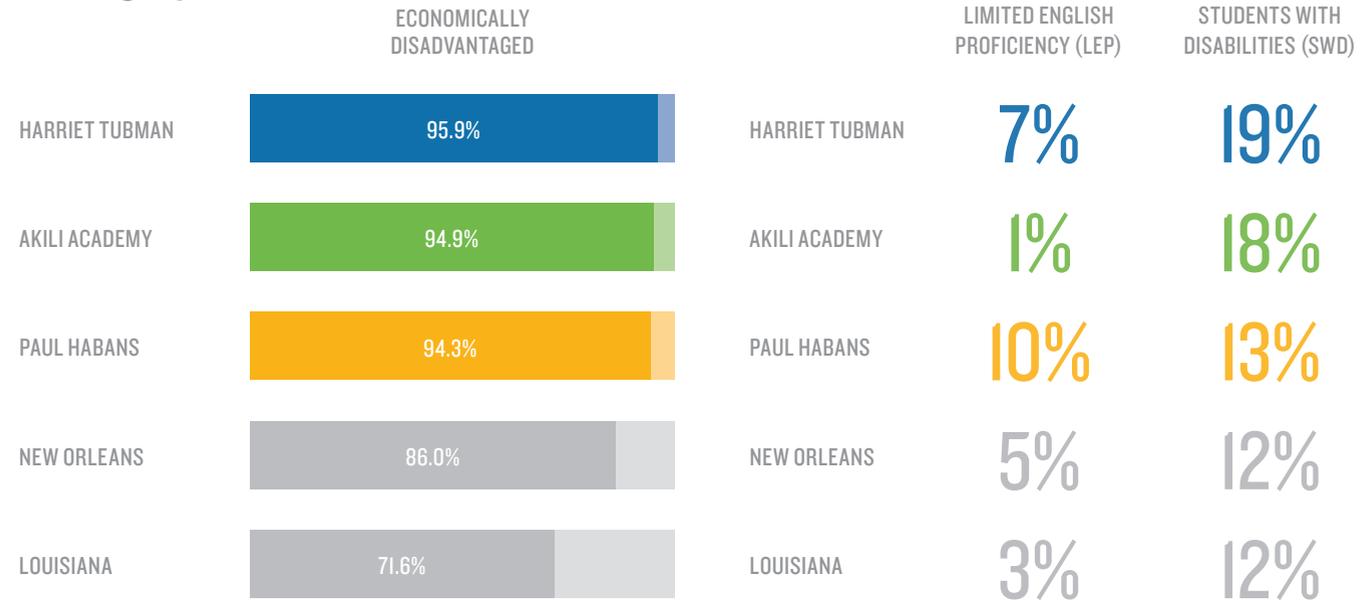
Tubman's high standards really helped me become a good student in high school. When I started at St. Augustine, my teachers really admired the way that I carried myself coming out of middle school. I made the honor roll all four years in high school. I was able to do it because Tubman had prepared me.

Perre' Barbarin, Tubman alumnus
Freshman at the University of St. Francis

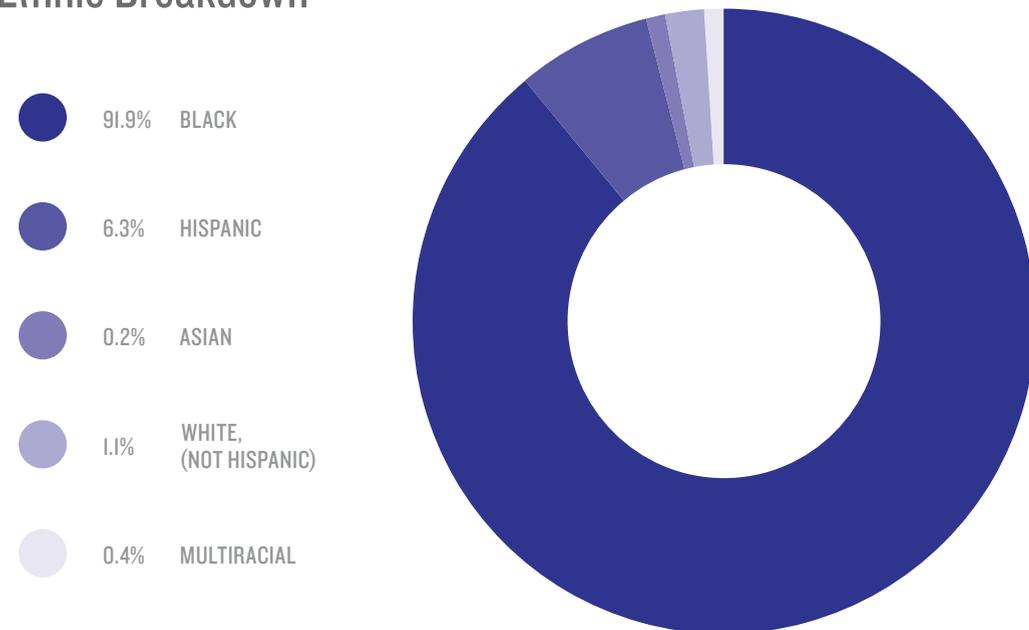


OUR STUDENTS

Demographics



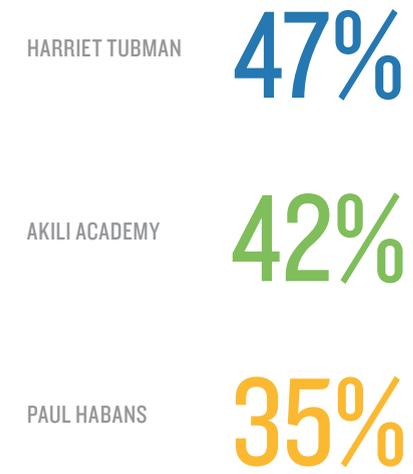
Racial/Ethnic Breakdown



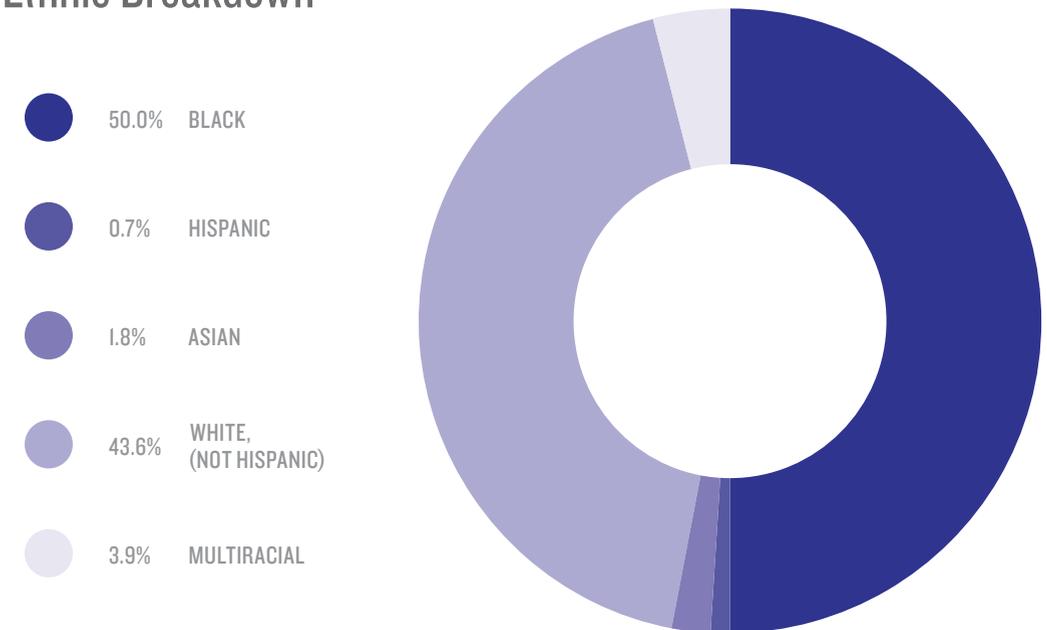
OUR STAFF

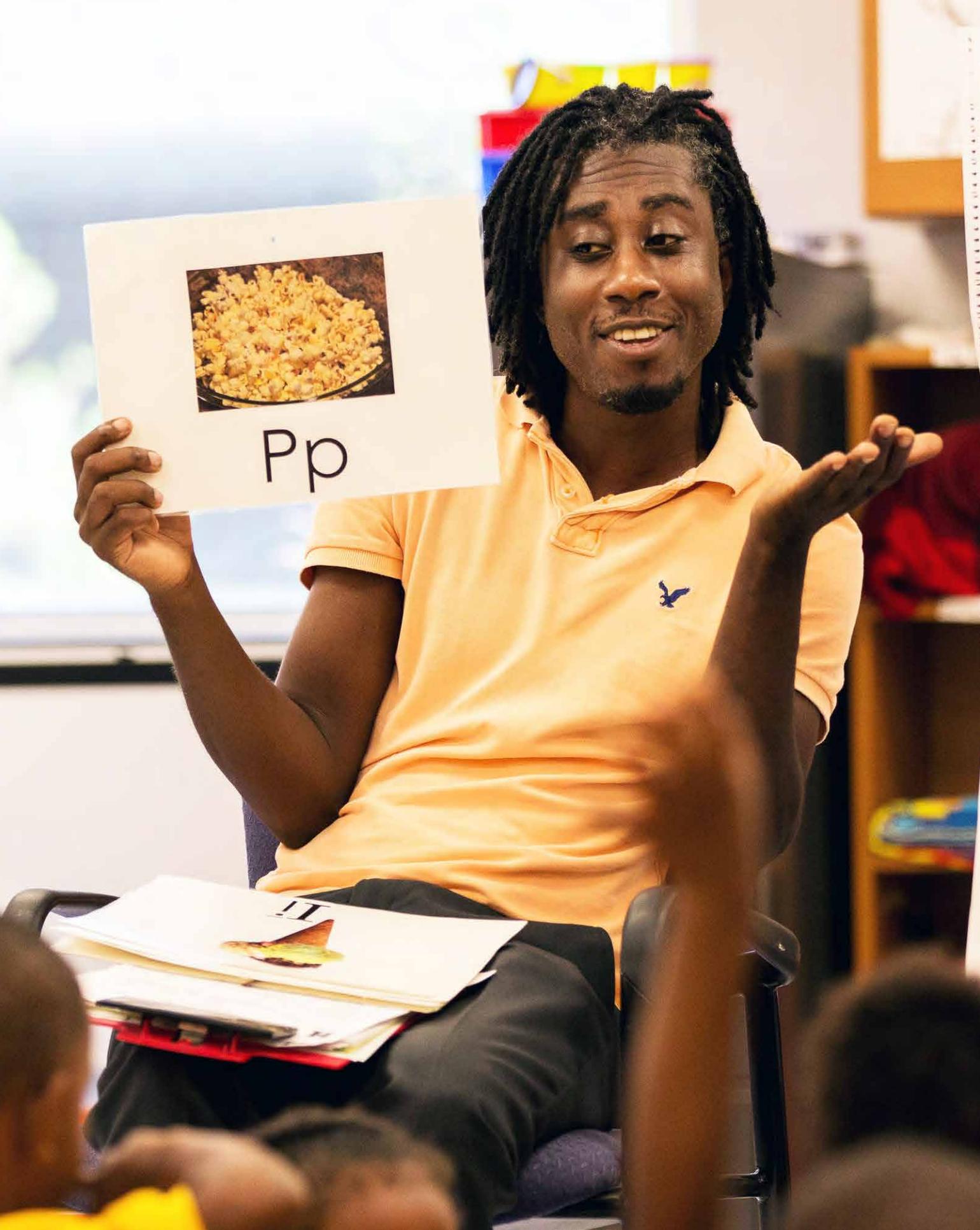
Experience

Teachers with 4-plus years of experience



Racial/Ethnic Breakdown





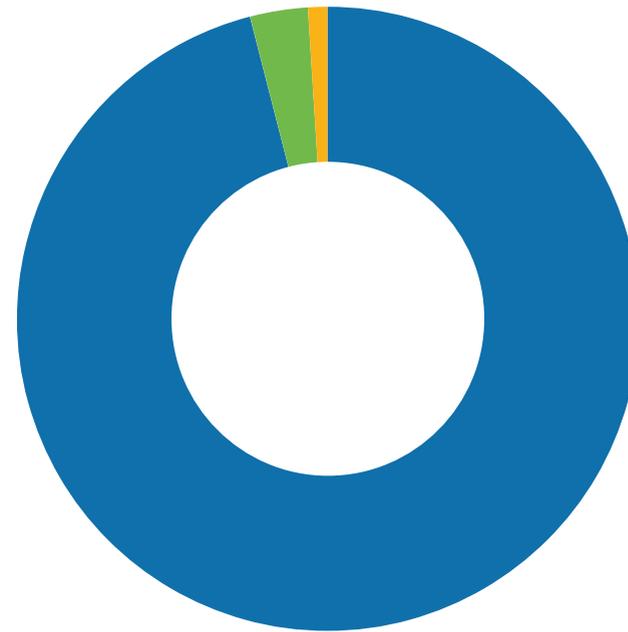
As a PreK teacher, I am given the responsibility of building a foundation for students' love of education. I have been at Paul Habans for three years, so it has been rewarding to see the scholars I had in my first year here grow and succeed past their time in my classroom.

Jihad Id-Deen, PreK teacher
Paul Habans 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 1,900 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, enrichment opportunities, and specialized programs we provide 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
- 2.9% DONATIONS
- 1.0% OTHER

Expenses



- 30.0% GENERAL EDUCATION
- 14.5% SPECIAL EDUCATION
- 8.8% STUDENT SUPPORT
- 5.5% ENRICHMENT & EXTRA-CURRICULARS
- 9.1% FOOD SERVICES
- 6.8% TRANSPORTATION
- 6.4% SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
- 7.4% ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT
- 2.4% TECHNOLOGY
- 6.4% FACILITIES
- 2.1% OTHER
- 0.6% SECURITY

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Morgan Williams



I have the opportunity to visit each of the schools in the Crescent City Schools network on a regular basis, as we (the Board of Directors for Crescent City Schools) rotate our monthly meetings between Harriet Tubman Charter School, Akili Academy, and Paul Habans Charter School.

Although the hustle and bustle of the school day has usually ended hours before my arrival, I see the physical evidence of the hard work of learning that students and teachers are doing every day. As I pass by one classroom, I see that our youngest students have been learning about big “P” and little “p” and that their teacher has creatively highlighted some of the many wonderful things in this world that begin with that letter (penguin, pumpkin, pineapple, to name a few). Meanwhile, the bulletin boards outside of classrooms for older students reveal that they have been exploring the world of science, with colorful diagrams demonstrating the complexity of a cell’s structure.

Signs are mounted along the walls that display the school’s values as well as quotes that are meant to meaningfully inspire students, day after day, as they walk through the halls and rooms of their school. As I recently walked through the halls of one of our schools, one quote in particular, a Chinese proverb, stood out to me: **“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”**

What made this quote strike a chord with me was that Crescent City Schools began investing in its students in 2011, when the organization first assumed operations of Harriet Tubman Charter School. Seven years later, we are beginning to see some of the long-term impact of the work that has been done by our students, teachers, and staff. As you read earlier in this report, we now have alumni who are just beginning college, where they are continuing to build upon the skills and knowledge they’ve acquired up to now. Our alumni already have testimonies of their successes in high school and successful transitions to college. As our alumni blaze a trail and make a name for themselves, our staff are still here, working with the next generation of college-bound students.

And while we continue on in our mission to prepare students for college, we also imagine what stories our students will be telling over the next 5, 10, and 15 years. I am eager to hear where they are and what they are accomplishing.

Thank you for supporting education in New Orleans and for your dedication to our students.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to be the initials 'B. S.' with a stylized flourish.

Bob Stefani

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