



# BUILDING — ON OUR — FOUNDATION

ASPIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
GRATITUDE REPORT

# 2023





**15,200+ SCHOLARS**  
**36 SCHOOLS**

Bay Area · Central Valley · Los Angeles



# LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Dear Aspire Partner,

Looking ahead toward Aspire's 25th anniversary in the fall, we spent this school year revisiting our Vision and Mission to ensure they reflect the fullness of who we are, what we believe, and the impact we seek. I am deeply proud of Aspire's roots, and incredibly humbled to lead an organization that is committed to learning and evolving in partnership with those we serve—our scholars, families, and communities.

Our refreshed Vision and Mission statements are a result of many months of shared conversation and work among Aspire scholars, families, teammates, and partners. Through community conversations, surveys, and focus groups, we strived to ensure the foundation we set this year encompasses the hopes and dreams of our broader community. Together with our Core Values and Equity Commitments, I see our refreshed Vision and Mission as bold

reflections of our organization's growth mindset and steady progress to create the world we want to see, in service of our communities. As we continue this collective work to bring our Vision and Mission to life, we are deeply grateful for the philanthropic partners who help encourage us to aim higher and allow us to bring many essential programs and supports to our scholars and teammates.

This was a year of building our renewed foundation, and we are excited to celebrate this milestone with you in this year's Gratitude Report.

In partnership,

**Mala Batra, CEO**  
Aspire Public Schools



## OUR VISION

**ASPIRE SCHOLARS ARE PREPARED  
AND EMPOWERED TO BUILD A  
FULFILLING AND LIBERATED  
FUTURE FOR THEMSELVES AND  
THEIR COMMUNITIES.**

## OUR MISSION



Provide a rigorous, joyful academic experience that cultivates our scholars' skills, talents, and gifts, such that they may pursue and persist in college or any post-secondary pathway that is authentic to their identities.



Promote inclusivity and disrupt systems that have historically oppressed marginalized communities, including Black, Latino/a/x, Indigenous, and People of Color.

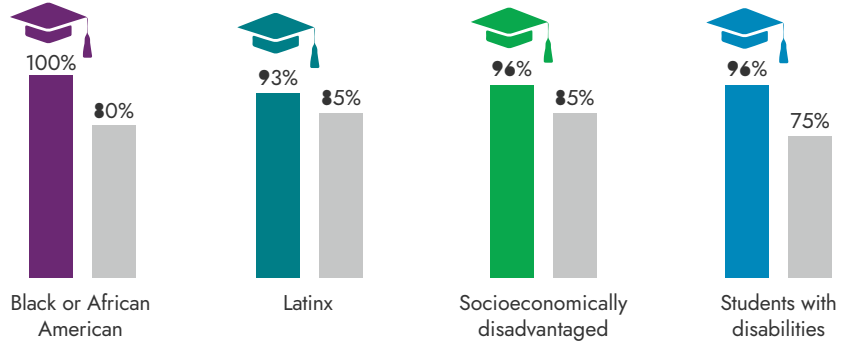


Nurture our scholars' pride in their abilities, identities, and communities.

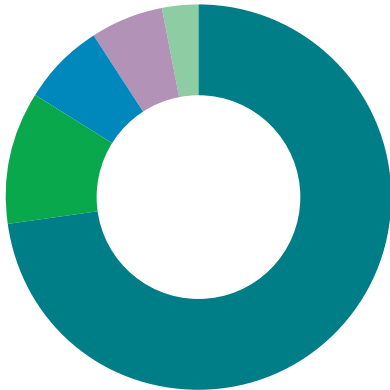
# OUR GRADUATION RESULTS

**95%** FOR ASPIRE SCHOLARS  
VS **87%** IN CALIFORNIA

## 2022 ASPIRE VS. CA GRADUATION RATES



# OUR SCHOLARS



- 73% Latinx
- 11% Black or African American
- 7% Multi-racial + Other
- 6% Asian
- 3% White



79% qualify for a free or reduced-cost lunch



54% speak a language other than English at home



11% receive Special Education services



**THE NUMBER ONE ADVICE THAT I GIVE TO YOUNGER STUDENTS IS TO MAKE AN EFFORT TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR TEACHERS AND THE ADULTS ON CAMPUS. MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN MADE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE ADULTS AROUND ME. I GENUINELY LOVE SEEING MY TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, AND STAFF AT SCHOOL EVERYDAY.**

**Lindsey Nguyen**

Aspire Benjamin Holt College Preparatory Academy senior



**IN OUR SCHOOLS, OUR MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS WORK TO BUILD MEANINGFUL AND TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS, AND THROUGH THESE CONNECTIONS THEY ARE ABLE TO SUPPORT SCHOLARS ON PROSOCIAL SKILLS AND TOOLS TO CARE FOR THEIR OWN WELL-BEING. WE ADDRESS THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF OUR SCHOLARS BY PROVIDING IMMEDIATE RESOURCES ALONGSIDE LONGER-TERM INVESTMENTS IN FUTURE SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT.**

**Cora Palma, Ph.D.**

Aspire Director of Mental Health Services





“

**I LOVE HAVING MY CHILD ATTEND ASPIRE BECAUSE THE TEACHERS GENUINELY CARE FOR HIM. THEY ARE VERY ATTENTIVE TO HIS NEEDS, NOT JUST ACADEMICALLY BUT EMOTIONALLY AS WELL. I FEEL CONFIDENT THAT MY CHILD IS GETTING A WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION AND THAT WE ARE WORKING AS A TEAM TOWARDS HIS SUCCESS.**

**Rocio Carrillo**

Aspire Firestone Academy parent



# OUR MISSION



## RIGOROUS AND JOYFUL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

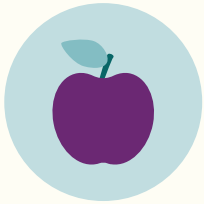
Nationwide, nearly half of all students perform below grade level in at least one subject, most often reading or math.\* To address this, Aspire has adopted a multi-pronged approach to ensure our scholars are receiving a rigorous and joyful academic experience that cultivates their unique skills, talents, and gifts.

\*According to a December 2022 School Pulse Panel Survey



## TARGETED LITERACY INTERVENTION

When scholars returned to campuses last fall, we committed to providing robust reading instruction and ample supplemental interventions to support scholars who missed instruction during Distance Learning. Teachers and schools utilize “The Science of Reading” to ground instruction in research-based, structured foundational skill development that includes both language comprehension and word recognition.



## INVESTING IN OUR TEACHERS

Joyful schools are led by joyful educators. We know that burnout is driving teachers out of the classroom in unprecedented numbers, so we are investing in wellness coaching for our educators. Through both individual and group coaching, educators strengthen their social-emotional competencies and improve their holistic well-being.



*This partnership is through a grant-funded opportunity provided by edwell.*



## BUILDING OUT POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS

Reflecting our commitment to our mission, our secondary schools provide multiple post-secondary pathways to scholars, including the opportunity to earn an associate’s degree by the time they graduate high school. For example, Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy is partnering with Laney College to build out a multi-course Engineering Design program for high school scholars that will allow them to obtain college credit and real-world experience.



*This partnership is made possible through a K12 Strong Workforce Program Grant from the California Department of Education.*

## OUR MISSION



## INCLUSIVITY AND EQUITY

Aspire is committed to providing equitable opportunities for our students, families, and teammates. We use an equity lens to examine our policies, practices, and systems at Aspire to strive for all groups to increase access and benefit from our work. This belief is woven throughout our core values.

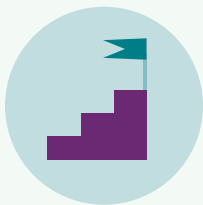


## LIFTING UP BLACK EXCELLENCE

We lift up Black Excellence—programs that teach about, celebrate, and honor Black culture—throughout our schools. Throughout the year and especially during Black History Month, our schools celebrate Black excellence and bring together scholars and families to experience projects and performances dedicated to Black creatives in our country's history. Black Student Unions (BSUs) are at most Aspire secondary schools and many of our elementary schools.



*This enrichment program is made possible in part by Charlie & Karen Couric.*



## CREATING EDUCATOR PATHWAYS

Through a partnership with Rivet School, Aspire teammates can enroll in an accelerated, affordable bachelor's degree program to help aspiring educators expedite their pathway toward becoming teachers. Additionally, Aspire offers a teacher residency program in partnership with Alder Graduate School of Education. Over the course of one year, teacher residents apprentice in an experienced teacher's classroom while earning a master's degree and California Teaching Credential.



## SERVING SCHOLARS WITH DISABILITIES

Aspire brings students of all abilities into shared classrooms in a co-teaching model that pairs special and general education teachers. This research-backed approach has demonstrated that all students benefit socially and academically when students with disabilities are included in general education classrooms.



*This opportunity is made possible through a partnership with the CHIME Institute, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.*

# OUR MISSION



## ABILITY, IDENTITY, AND COMMUNITY

We strive to create safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning environments where students feel pride and connection to their schools.



## POST-SECONDARY SCHOLARSHIPS

Through the generosity of our donors, the Aspire Public Schools Foundation offers 29 scholarships totaling almost \$50,000 to Aspire graduating seniors as they embark on their post-secondary pathways. Recipients are selected through a robust application process, and they exemplify tenacity, the ability to be agents of change, and a commitment to creating a culture of belonging in their communities.



*This scholarship program is made possible by a multitude of donors, including recurring gifts from Richard & Theresa Crocker and Charlie & Karen Couric.*



## INCREASED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Coming out of the pandemic, we are focused on the mental health and well-being of our scholars. Our goal is to support every scholar's needs in a timely, caring, and equitable manner. Our schools have increased their use of individual and small group sessions to address issues including self-regulation, grief and loss, social skills, and healthy relationships.



*This work is made possible through support from the Ballmer Group and the Rogers Family Foundation.*



## FOCUSING ON TEAMMATE WELLNESS

We aim to take care of the people who care for our scholars, so that we all flourish in our school communities. For example, we partnered with Generation Thrive (created by The Warriors Community Foundation and Kaiser Permanente) to provide our Bay Area schools education and wellness programming including yoga, dance classes, and healthy cooking demonstrations.



*This partnership is made possible by Aspire Board Member and Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy alumna, Ay'Anna Moody.*

# OUR APPRECIATION

## INVESTORS (\$250,000+)

Ballmer Group  
Hastings Education Fund  
Kenneth Rainin Foundation  
Silicon Schools Fund  
Steven Merrill and Katie Budge

## PRINCIPALS (\$100,000-\$249,999)

Beth and Michael Hunkapiller  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
The Green Foundation  
Hastings Growth Fund

## DIRECTORS (\$50,000-\$99,999)

Anupam and Kavita Mishra  
Joyce and Robert Wisner  
Leslie and George Hume  
Rogers Family Foundation  
William Zimmerman Foundation

## ACHIEVERS (\$10,000-\$49,999)

Billy Harris  
Beth and Brian Grossman  
Charles and Karen Couric  
Cori and Tony Bates

## ACHIEVERS (CONT.)

Franklin and Catherine Johnson  
Foundation  
Great Public Schools Now  
Irene S. Scully Family Foundation  
Javier Cabra Walteros  
Jonathan and Kimberly Garfinkel  
Kay Hong and Jamie MacQuarrie  
Lene and Steve Joy  
Lorea Martinez and John Rethans  
Quest Foundation  
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation  
Richard and Theresa Crocker  
Warriors Community Foundation

## SUPPORTERS (\$1,000-\$9,999)

Amy Frost

Anna Brady

Anthony Barkett

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Ben Archibald and Steph Albert

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Burnham Benefits Insurance Services

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Law Office of Young, Minney &  
Corr, LLP

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Molly Wood and Dagny Maidman

Nathan Crum

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Paritosh and Nisha Somani

Sai Selvaganesan

Shishir and Anjali Mehrotra

Steve Dauber

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Tom Keiser

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Uvas Foundation

Vishal Patel

W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone  
Foundation

Walmart

Warren Felson and Lucy Sun

Wendy Marquez





## FRIENDS (\$500-\$999)

Al Bennett and Rudi Berkelhamer  
Andrew Trott  
Brooke Kuhn  
Carol Ornelas  
Esperanza T. Rivera  
Google  
Jane Bryson and Jeremy Milo  
Jennifer Natta

Jocelyn Tseng  
John Maddox  
Liangliang Sengco  
Liat Bishko  
Lissa Nakamura  
Lynzi Ziegenhagen  
Mandeep Gurm  
Michele Freed

Paul Tietz  
Peter Mueller  
Robert Lister and Ana Chang  
Sydney and Scott Tanner  
Veeral and Ami Desai  
Vision Service Plan  
Wells Fargo

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## ASPIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Beth Hunkapiller**, Board Chair  
Julissa Arce  
Anthony Barkett  
Kay Hong  
Christina Laster  
Lorea Martínez  
Ay'Anna Moody  
Carol J. Ornelas

## ASPIRE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

**Liat Bishko**, Board Chair  
Raphael Akinsipe  
Beth Grossman  
Billy Harris  
Beth Hunkapiller  
Sai Selvaganesan



# OUR CORE VALUES

Our communities (predominantly Black and Latinx) persist in a system that does not adequately educate everyone. Aspire Public Schools aims to transform the disproportionate outcomes that are a product of that system. We believe that this set of core values can guide how we think and work together toward greater racial, social, and gender equity across our schools and communities.



**BIENESTAR  
(WELL-BEING)**



**CULTURE OF  
BELONGING**



**COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIP**



**AGENCY + SELF-  
DETERMINATION**



**JOY**

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Please scan the QR code to learn more about Aspire Public Schools:

