



# 2021 REPORT CARD

In 2021, the tolls of a prolonged pandemic shaped our work—from extended virtual learning, to evolving health protocols, to volunteer and staff shortages, to meeting scholars where they are emotionally and academically. We faced these challenges with urgency and hope.

This is a time of rebuilding—for schools and educators, for our scholars and their families, and for us as an organization as we seek to address compounding educational inequities in our communities.

Our scholars are brimming with talent and big dreams. Their commitment and yours fuels our mission to close the opportunity gap through empowering, relationship-focused academic support.



## 2021 Highlights



### RETURNED IN-PERSON

*Reconnected face-to-face with scholars, families, and school partners after 18 months of distance learning*



### DIRECTLY ADDRESSED PANDEMIC IMPACTS

*Provided scholars with targeted, small group academic and social-emotional support*



### EXPANDED IN BALTIMORE

*Launched a new Achievement Center at Highlandtown Elementary/Middle School #237*

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*You can always find your place at Higher Achievement. It's been three years since I joined, and it's been one of the most helpful experiences in my life, in almost every way.*

Aras, 8th grade scholar

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## OUR SCHOLARS

No two scholars are alike, but all leave our program with the confidence and skills to succeed in high school and beyond.

### RACE/ETHNICITY



### GENDER



## 2021 BY THE NUMBERS

543

SCHOLARS  
SUPPORTED

330

VOLUNTEERS

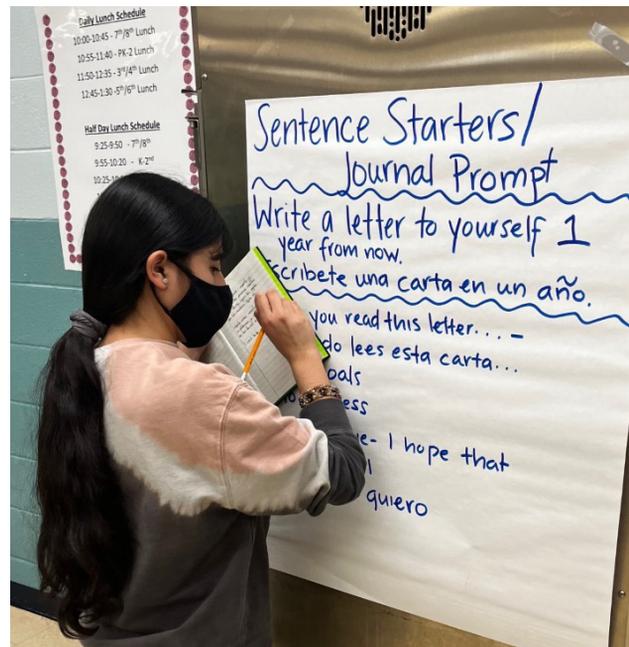
35

WEEKS OF  
ACADEMIC  
ENRICHMENT

71%  
IN READING

69%  
IN MATH

SCHOLARS EARNING AN  
**A OR B GRADE** IN THE  
FIRST QUARTER OF THE  
2021-2022 SCHOOL



# HIGH SCHOOL READINESS

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Higher Achievement made a big investment in our scholars in 2021 by **expanding small-group high school readiness mentoring to engage scholars of every grade level** as they explored their options for the future, identified their interests and goals, grappled with social justice community topics, and practiced their writing and communication skills.

On top of classes, hobbies, and participation in Higher Achievement, 8th-grade scholar Elijah spent hours in the spring of 2021 diligently applying to and preparing for high school.

His parents and Higher Achievement staff helped Elijah identify his options for best-fit high schools, and his mentor Mr. Matt supported Elijah during his application essay writing process. **“I can talk to Mr. Matt about everything,”** said Elijah. “We talk about how our week is going and he helps me with school projects and high school applications.”

Elijah’s hard work and pursuit of his goals paid off, and he is now in his freshman year at his top-choice high school.



“

**I love to see them dream out loud...I’ve been asking them ‘What do you want to do when you grow up?’ and their dreams come out: ‘I want to be a doctor’ or ‘I want to be a lawyer.’ I get to encourage that and show them that it is possible.**

Cassandra Nunez, mentor

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# STRATEGIC RESPONSE

Higher Achievement's strategic response to interrupted learning as a result of COVID-19 supports the most urgent academic, social, and emotional needs of middle school youth.

*Students in the U.S. were behind an average of **four months** in reading by the end of the 2020-2021 school year.*

MCKINSEY & COMPANY

Scholar-reported social-emotional skills linked to school engagement **increased by 35%** from the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year to the end.

**35%**

## Academic enrichment and social-emotional learning.

Scholars participate in small-group literacy tutoring, blended learning time aligned with their in-school lessons and academic goals, and social-emotional skill-building.

## College prep high school readiness.

Caring adult mentors work with scholars weekly to take steps to identify, apply, and enroll in college preparatory high school programs. Curriculum and activities are grounded in our four social justice pillars—voice, freedom, justice, and solidarity.

## THANK YOU

*Higher Achievement has been able to ramp up our supports for scholars during uncertain times thanks to the unwavering dedication of our volunteers, funders, and community partners.*

### TOTAL EXPENSES\*

**\$5.96 million**

### TOTAL NET ASSETS AT YEAR END\*

**\$6.21 million**

*\*from unaudited organization-wide FY21 data*



**HIGHER  
ACHIEVEMENT**

Baltimore • DC Metro • Richmond  
[higherachievement.org](http://higherachievement.org)