



2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT





EMERALD
ACADEMY



A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It is a privilege to be part of the team at Emerald Academy, and I continue to be encouraged by the meaningful progress our scholars are making.

Emerald Academy's mission is to prepare urban scholars for the college of their choice and community leadership. Our faculty and staff focus on academic excellence, effective teaching, a highly relational culture grounded in high expectations and robust parent and community engagement.

I hope you see through these pages the dedication of everyone connected to Emerald Academy – scholars and their families, faculty and staff, alumni and others throughout the community.

One notable highlight from the 2021-2022 school year: Emerald Academy was named a **Changemaker Charter School** by the Tennessee Charter School Center. This distinction is for schools that are in the top 25% of all public schools in the state for an increase in the percent of students proficient over pre-pandemic (2019) scores in English Language Arts (ELA) and/or Math, along with Tennessee Value-Added System scores (academic growth) of Level 3 or above in the same areas.

I believe that honor, plus additional results you'll read about, demonstrate the academic progress our scholars are making and how the achievement gap is closing each day. Thank you for your commitment to education and for believing with us that we can change the trajectory for our city's students.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Emerald Charter Schools, we are grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

Steve Diggs
President, Emerald Charter Schools

SCHOLARS CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS AND OUTPERFORM PEERS IN KNOX COUNTY AND ACROSS STATE

Emerald Academy scholars are closing achievement gaps and outperforming their peers in reading and math. The 2021-2022 statewide assessment data shows that Emerald Academy saw its overall proficiency rate rise more than three percentage points compared to the 2020-2021 school year.

With this increase, Emerald Academy achievement levels have not only recovered, but **exceeded**, pre-pandemic proficiency. Scholars at Emerald Academy had faster growth in math when compared to their district peers in Knox County.

“We are very proud of the success our scholars achieved,” said Emerald Academy School Director Carlissa Martin. *“This is a testament not only to their hard work but also to parents, faculty and staff who are working to prepare them for college and community leadership. These significant gains are critical as we continue to scaffold and build toward our goal of becoming a Reward School.”*

Emerald Academy serves a diverse population of scholars, with a majority economically disadvantaged. According to the TNReady data, Emerald Academy’s economically disadvantaged scholars outperformed their peers in every major metropolitan district in Tennessee: Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville.

“These results are the reason I came to work at Emerald Academy,” said Megan Cohan, a sixth-grade teacher whose scholars achieved some of the highest results in school history and outperformed the district average.

“We believe all children can achieve at a high level, and I, along with the rest of the teachers in the building, come to work every day to help make that a reality,” Cohan said.





A FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

Erin Borden first heard about Emerald Academy through a friend whose children were already enrolled. She wanted a place where her daughter, now first-grader, Maisy, could grow academically and be supported along the way.

While Borden admits that it is fast-paced and can be a lot of work, it's doable, and she enjoys seeing Maisy's growth through her improving test scores. She feels that Emerald Academy pushes Maisy to learn more while also meeting current academic needs.

Borden believes Emerald Academy is preparing scholars to succeed as they look toward the future and pursue further education. She likes that scholars are already working toward independent learning and is confident Maisy will be ready to meet that challenge in high school and college.

Maisy loves the library and reading, and she tries to be part of book club every month.

"It really encourages her," said Borden.

“*Maisy consistently wants to meet all of her reading goals so she can receive a free book every month as part of book club.*”

As a parent, Borden is impressed by the communication the school provides, including through online platforms and other means.

"It is so helpful to stay connected with her teachers and be on top of things. The staff really cares about Maisy not just while she's at school, but outside of school, too."



Borden appreciates that everyone on staff at Emerald Academy wants to help scholars succeed and is laying a solid foundation for them. *“Maisy absolutely adores Mr. Stanley Upton (the school custodian). He’s always happy to see and greet her.”*



“Whether it’s Mr. Upton, or any of the other faculty or staff, the school is very family oriented. You can tell they really care.”



FROM INAUGURAL YEAR TO PRESENT

Kimberly Dailey saw the opportunity to enroll now seventh-grader, BJ, into Emerald Academy in 2015, during its inaugural year. She wanted a change for her son and became one of the first families to attend Emerald Academy when BJ was in first grade.

The school immediately accommodated BJ's needs, and there's been remarkable change in his academics and behavior since enrolling.

“His progress is phenomenal,” said Dailey. *“It’s due to the staff and the academic structure. I’m so pleased – he has received some special services, and he’s slowly coming out of those ... and I know Emerald Academy faculty were instrumental in helping with that progress.”*

BJ emphasized that his teachers have made a difference in both his school experience and his life. He said they push him to strive for excellence. His teacher last year, Ms. Brooks, made a particular impact when it came to test-taking.





FACT:

Emerald Academy is the top-performing urban middle school in Knox County for the second year in a row, based on the percentage of students performing on or above grade level.

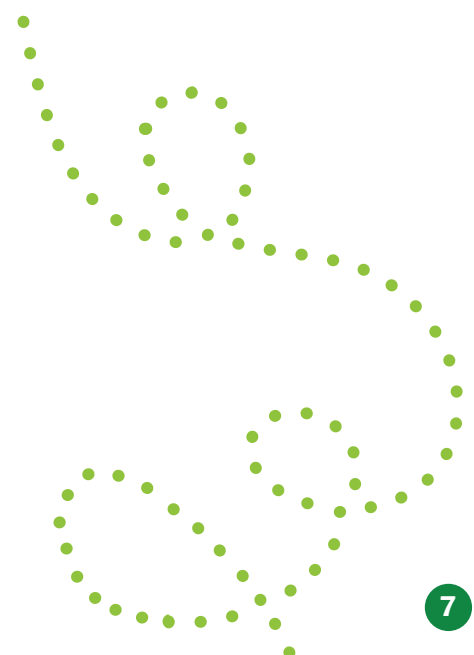
“She taught me how to have self-confidence when I take tests, and how to reduce anxiety going into them. With her help, I started getting more questions right and my grades increased,”

BJ said.



Dailey appreciates the interactive style of teaching which helps scholars better retain information. Her son also enjoys the incentives that come along with the interactive learning style – he says it helps him understand concepts, be more involved and have fun opportunities with his friends.

BJ has high aspirations for the future and sees himself as an entrepreneur. It is most important to Dailey that BJ continues to learn and progress and is prepared for high school and beyond. She believes that Emerald Academy is helping BJ learn how to advocate for himself, and she is so thankful for the difference the school is making.





FOCUSED ON COLLEGE AND THE FUTURE

When Lanita Puckett enrolled her daughters at Emerald Academy, she was looking for a school that would encourage and challenge them.

“For us, the ultimate goal is college,” said Puckett, *“and I know they have been pushed and challenged and are prepared to get there because of their time at Emerald Academy.”*

She appreciates the rigor of the academics and the support that is provided along with it. *“If there is a struggle or a time of discouragement, the smaller classes allow teachers to focus on the scholars, give them the help they need and encourage them as individuals,”* she said.

Puckett’s daughter, Amara, is a seventh-grader at Emerald Academy, and sister Amala is an Emerald Academy alumna and freshman at L&N STEM Academy.

Amala says her time at Emerald Academy helped prepare her for high school, and even college. *“When I got to L&N, I was told that it would probably be fast-paced and hard to keep up, but I wasn’t worried. I knew I had it down because I had already been doing it all through middle school at Emerald Academy, so it was an easy transition,”* she said.

Amala enjoys music, and proudly wears a necklace with a microphone charm to represent that interest. She has big plans for the future and has her eyes set on attending an Ivy League school to study business. *“It’s a lot of pressure to go to such a rigorous school, but I know I can do it. I made it clear to my Emerald Academy teachers in the eighth grade that I wanted to go to an Ivy League school, and they said they’d help me get there,”* she said.

At the time of enrollment, then sixth grader Amala was very resistant to the change, especially regarding the uniforms. Now, she thanks her mom, laughing that she might have been a little dramatic in her young age, and feels the move to Emerald Academy was an excellent decision.

“I would tell other students that if they have bigger goals in life and there is something they are striving for, if their parent says they are going to Emerald Academy, they should do it because it’s great! Don’t be scared,”

Amala said.

“I feel like enrolling my daughters here was the best thing I could have done!”

-Emerald Academy parent Lanita Puckett



OUR MISSION

Emerald Academy's mission is to prepare urban scholars for the college of their choice and community leadership.

OUR GOALS

Long-Term Goal

By 2025, Emerald Academy will be a reward school, as measured by Tennessee's revised accountability system.

Near-Term Goal

Growth: 70% of scholars will meet their growth goals on the NWEA MAP assessment.
Achievement: A majority of scholars will perform on grade level.

OUR VALUES

High Expectations

We believe everyone can achieve.

Excellence

We keep learning so we can be the best.

Respect

We treat others the way we want them to treat us.

Teamwork

We work together.

Commitment

We press on, even when it gets hard.





BEYOND THE CLASSROOM – ATHLETICS AT EMERALD ACADEMY

Through partnerships with Emerald Youth Foundation, Knoxville Youth Athletics and Knoxville Independent School League, scholars have the opportunity to participate recreationally and competitively in a variety of team sports including:

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Cheerleading
- Soccer
- Track & Field
- Volleyball

Learn more about our sports and other extracurricular activities at emeraldacademy.org.

FACT:

Emerald Academy has a flourishing FCA chapter - one of the largest in the area with more than 60 scholars attending weekly.



FELLOWSHIP OF
CHRISTIAN
ATHLETES



School Director Spotlight: It's Personal

For Carlissa Martin, who was named School Director during the 2021-2022 academic year, there was never really any discussion about whether she would attend college.

Martin was raised in Knoxville where she attended Northwest Middle School and then went on to graduate from Hardin Valley Academy.

“I always made good grades academically, but the culture of different schools was sometimes a challenge for me,” shared Martin. *“As a bi-racial student, I didn’t cleanly fit into any category, and it was sometimes harder for me to find where I belonged.”*

Martin initially pondered a career in law and even completed internships in the legal field. One of those internships allowed her to serve with a guardian ad litem, who is someone appointed by the court to look out for the best interests of a child.

Through that experience, she ultimately decided that education was her calling. *“It was this internship that made me desire to reach families and young people on the front end – before their stories got to that point.”*

Following high school, Martin earned her associate’s degree at Pellissippi State Community College before going to the University of Tennessee where she studied education with a focus in urban and multicultural studies. After that, she obtained a master’s degree from UT in elementary education.



“Growing up, college was really in our family’s DNA,” said Martin. *“I knew that I was expected to go, so it was always more about what I would study and where I would go than whether or not I would attend.”*

Martin understands, however, that this isn’t the default position for many families, and it is what initially drew her to Emerald Academy, Knoxville’s first and only public charter school. Internships with inner city schools also confirmed what Martin knew: *“I saw things were just not well with inner city education, and I wanted to do something about it.”*

She joined Emerald Academy’s faculty immediately following college graduation – the second year it was open. Martin initially served as a second-grade teacher and was quickly elevated multiple times until being named School Director.

What attracted her to Emerald Academy was the opportunity for impact, the ability to offer different curriculums and to act nimbly to respond to the needs of scholars. This, coupled with the closeness and familial community of the staff, immediately sold her on wanting to work at the school.

Emerald Charter Schools board member, Dr. Kala Gray, is appreciative of Martin’s leadership.

“Carlissa’s passion for Emerald Academy and our scholars is clear and evident. She is invested in the community, has roots here, and is exactly the type of leader I would want leading my own children’s school,” said Gray.



Martin is encouraged about what lies ahead for Emerald Academy scholars, faculty and staff. *“It is such a privilege to lead this incredible school,”* she said.

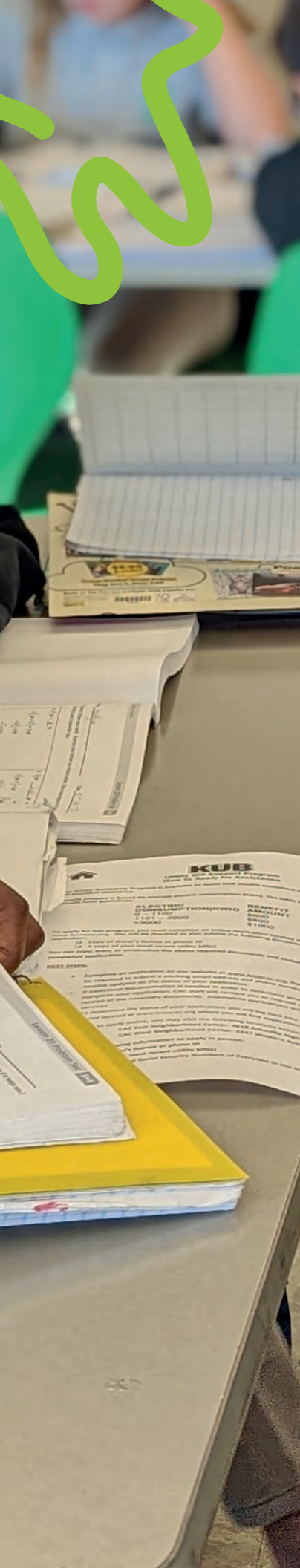




FACT:

Emerald Academy's Black scholars outperformed their 3rd – 8th grade peers across every major metropolitan district in Tennessee in both reading and math.





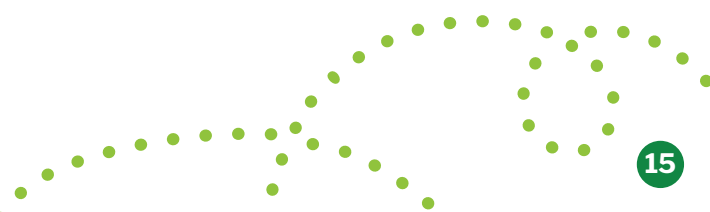
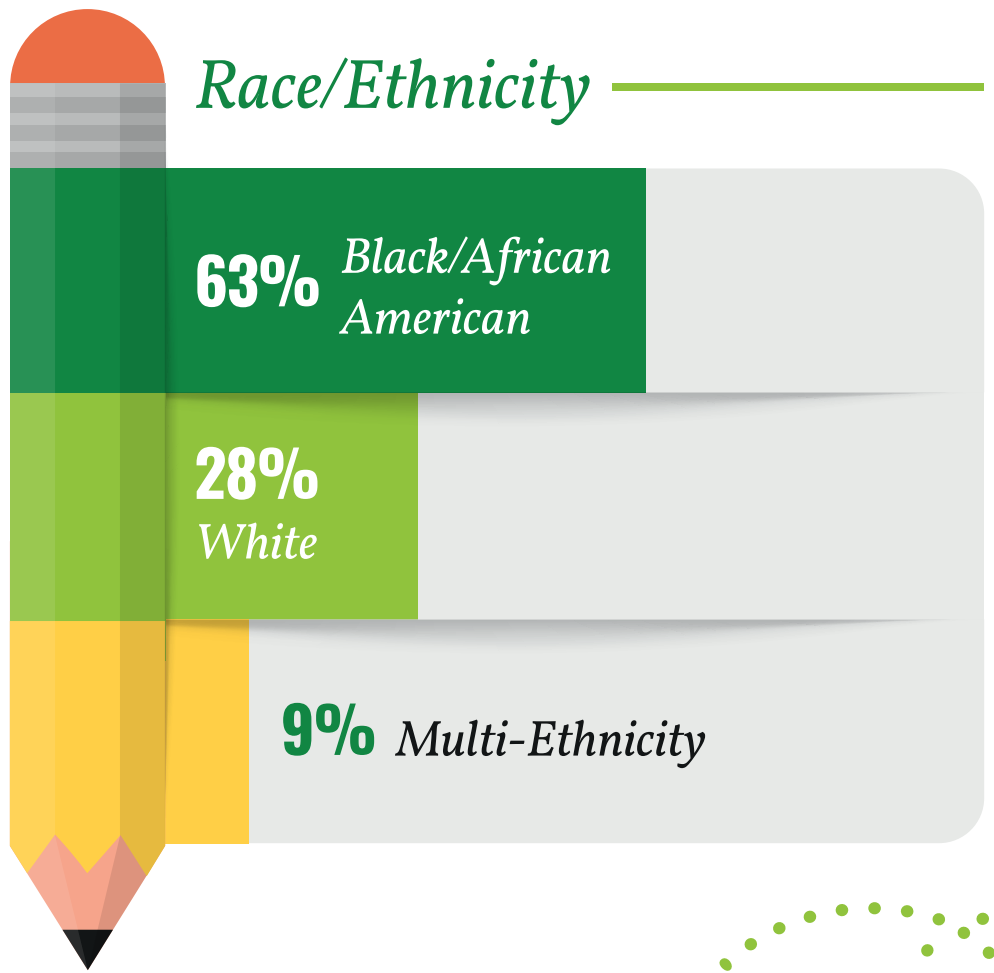
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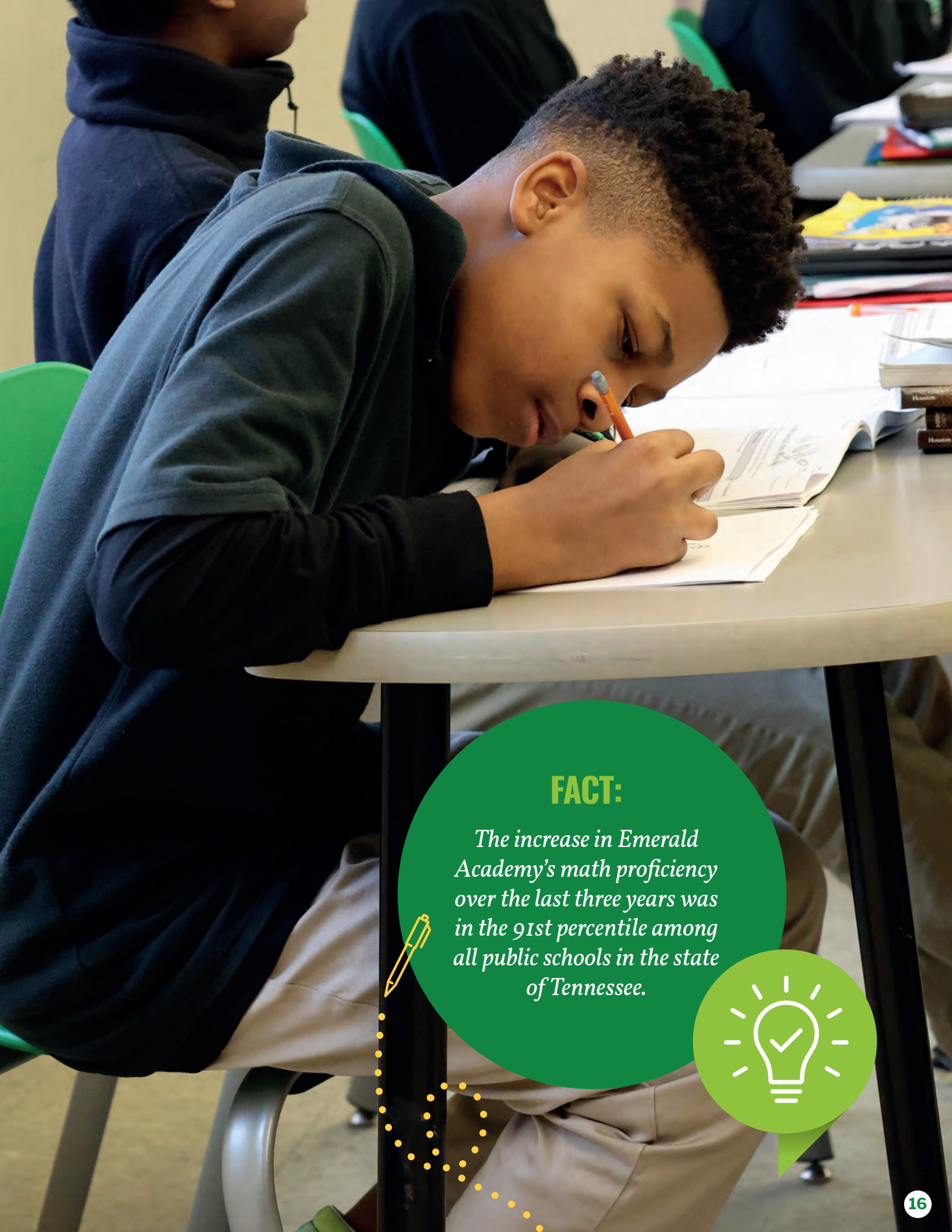
455

Scholars

84%

*of Scholars Live in
City Neighborhoods*



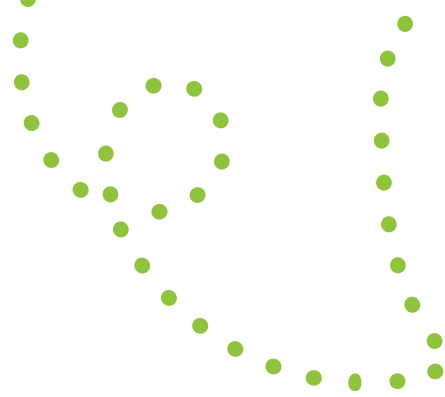


FACT:

The increase in Emerald Academy's math proficiency over the last three years was in the 91st percentile among all public schools in the state of Tennessee.



YOUR SUPPORT IS IMPACTING CITY SCHOLARS



2021-2022 Financial Report

Total Revenue		Total Expenses	
	\$5,598,771		\$5,310,526
Public Funding	\$4,720,255	Personnel	\$3,709,624
Contributions & Grants	\$ 868,287	Transportation & Services	\$ 571,037
Miscellaneous	\$ 10,229	Supplies & Materials	\$ 770,148
		Depreciation	\$ 201,699
		Miscellaneous	\$ 58,018

At June 30, 2022, fiscal year-end, Emerald Charter Schools' assets included \$1,480,927 in cash and accounts receivable.

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