



**Ready
Set
Excel**

STEM SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Impact Report

2020



FY 2020 Snapshot

Supported students



from

16

schools

Beechwood School
Charles Armstrong School
Garfield Community School
The Girls' Middle School
Greene Middle School
Holy Family School – St. Francis Center
JLS Middle School
Kennedy Middle School
KIPP
Nativity Catholic School
Northstar Academy
Our Lady of Mount Carmel School
Sacred Heart Schools
St. Elizabeth Seton School
St. Matthew Catholic School
Stevenson Elementary

650

Science Placement tests administered this year.



CONFIDENCE

96%

of students* reported improved math confidence as a result of attending a program.



Parents* reported a positive change in their student's math mindset after the program.



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Cover: Isabel took part in Ready Set Excel's Summer 2020 program. She is pictured here at home conducting one of the experiments using a math kit provided by RSE.

Message from our Founders



New Status

This has been an exciting year for **Ready.Set.Excel** (RSE). After four years of developing and piloting our math programs, we received non-profit status in June 2019. Our new status has considerably enhanced our ability to work with schools and after-school programs promoting math foundation skills as a gateway to STEM opportunities.

We believe it is essential to change a student's negative mindset about math as early as possible before they become overwhelmed, lose interest and deem themselves "not a math person".

New Challenges

Covid-19 restrictions mandated remote summer programs and introduced new challenges. We partnered with three after-school summer programs, and offered our first distance-learning summer math class for middle schoolers. We offered scholarships to students who needed financial help. We engaged students with a variety of online and hands-on (home kits) approaches. It worked! The students enjoyed the class so much they wanted it to last longer! Changing a student's mindset is the critical step to progress.

“

This is not math - this is fun!

- RSE Summer Program student

”

New Opportunities

In 20-21, we're excited to be partnering with two after-school programs launching **RSE STEM Champions** - a school-year round program helping students reach grade-level expectations in key math topics. This program provides constant monitoring and support to address confusion and gaps to build self-confidence and prevent the students from falling into catch-up mode.

Strong Supporters

Our deepest gratitude to all the educators who have generously shared their experience and suggestions with us, hosted our pilots and provided invaluable feedback. Thank you for trusting us to do right by your students. You are our partners in the creation of **Ready.Set.Excel**. We are in awe of your energy and creativity in the classroom and, in this time of the pandemic, doing it remotely.

We are forever grateful to Mindy Rogers, and the Mindy and Jesse Rogers Family Fund for believing in our mission and ability, and supporting us the past 3 years. Her generosity and continued support has made our success possible.

Going forward, we are eager to engage with new organizations and donors to deepen our impact on the community.

We hope that you will enjoy reading about our accomplishments.

With gratitude,

Maya and Asavari

About Ready.Set.Excel

Our Mission: STEM Success for All Students

Our Purpose

Our goal is to empower every student to become confident and successful in high school math and science.

Ready.Set.Excel (RSE) believes students with a strong math foundation are better equipped to succeed. Students entering high school without mastering basic math concepts taught in elementary and middle school struggle in math and science, avoiding classes that can prepare them for careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Their struggle often results in low academic self-confidence.

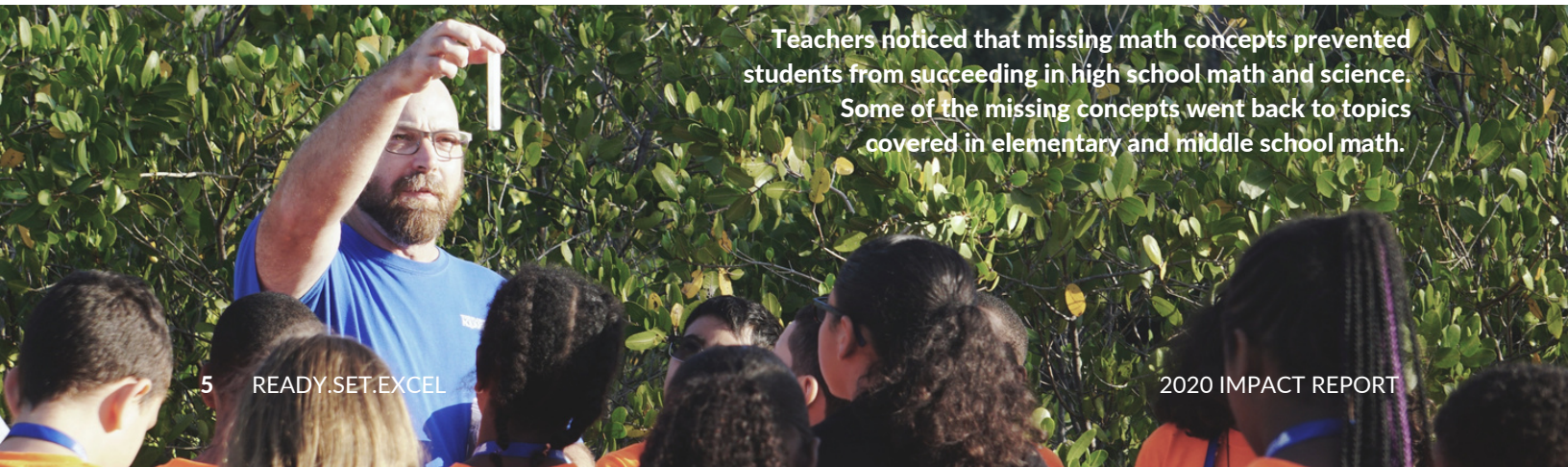
Starting in middle school, we partner with teachers, schools, and after-school programs, to identify students with gaps in foundational math and fix those gaps. In high school, demanding schedules prevent teachers from going back and addressing earlier gaps. Students that participate in our programs leave with improved math skills, and more importantly, increased confidence in their math ability.

Our Story

The idea for **Ready.Set.Excel** began with three parents and a high school science teacher. Each school year, the science teacher witnessed the impact missing math concepts had on students' success in the classroom. These parents, engineers, experienced first hand the importance of math for success in STEM careers. All understood that a common issue was holding students back from succeeding in math and science: **gaps in understanding key math concepts taught in elementary and middle school.**

Although this issue can impact any student, students of color and economically disadvantaged students are disproportionately impacted.

The parents and teacher desired a way to level the playing field, ensuring all students mastered the basic math skills needed to become confident and successful. Together they developed programs to identify and teach the missing basic math knowledge critical for high school and STEM success.

A photograph showing a male teacher with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue t-shirt, holding a small white rectangular object up in the air. He is looking at it intently. In the foreground, the backs of several students' heads are visible as they look towards the teacher. The background consists of dense green foliage.

Teachers noticed that missing math concepts prevented students from succeeding in high school math and science. Some of the missing concepts went back to topics covered in elementary and middle school math.

Highlights 2019-2020



SUMMER PROGRAM PILOT



This year we piloted our own program over Zoom, incorporating a hands-on curriculum. Using the **new** RSE Middle School Diagnostic Assessment, student data was provided to the teacher to inform instruction. **Scholarships** were awarded to students who otherwise might not have been able to attend.

BUILDING MATH CONFIDENCE

HOSTED BY



For the second consecutive summer, **Ready.Set.Excel** supported the BMC program, working with 21 rising 9th-grade students from eight Bay Area middle schools. In the **three-week** summer program, the class **improved 8% overall** in math. Algebra scores **improved 12%**.



FCE reached out to **Ready.Set.Excel** for help with their summer math program for rising 7th graders. FCE's long-term goal is to promote early reinforcement of foundational math skills, better preparing these students for high school science. RSE provided pre- and post-program diagnostic assessments, hands-on kits, and individual student recommendations to help address student gaps.

SOPHIE'S SCHOLARS



Ready.Set.Excel provided math assessment testing for 45 students in the Sophie's Scholars summer program. We measured student math progress before and after attending the program. This is our second year to work with Sophie's Scholars. We are now providing longitudinal tracking data for the program.



RSE STEM CHAMPIONS PROGRAM



Launched this year, our STEM Champions program provides year-long, after-school help to students and community organizations. Drawing from learning platforms already familiar to teachers and students, RSE's Content Experts have curated resources that can be customized to the specific needs of a student. Organizations are now able to tailor learning resources to specific student needs.

Highlights 2019-2020

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT



Recognizing the need to provide an assessment focused on early math concepts and skills unique to middle school students, **Ready.Set.Excel** created a specialized middle school diagnostic assessment.

BIOLOGY PLACEMENT TEST



Building upon the success of RSE's High School Chemistry and Physics placement tests, a Biology placement test was added. This test helps place incoming 9th grade students in the best-level Biology class. Over the past three years, RSE has conducted over **1,300 science placement tests**.

"The Ready.Set.Excel assessment has allowed us to better manage science class enrollment. The results allow us to accurately place students in the science level best for them at the start of the school year."

- HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHER



MATH/ SCIENCE KITS



Ready.Set.Excel assembled and delivered custom math/science kits directly to homes of students attending the RSE pilot summer program. These kits kept students engaged and excited, enabling them to experience math in a real-life way.

READY.SET.EXCEL TEAM EXPANDS



We added two Content Experts, a Quality Assurance (QA) engineer, and a Business Development professional. Our Content Experts are teachers, one with 25-years experience developing mathematics curriculum, the other a current middle school math teacher at an underserved school in the Bay Area. Our QA engineer has 8-years experience ensuring the smooth delivery of software products and services. Our Business Development leader has 10-years experience with a major science museum supporting STEM education.

Our Programs

1

MATH FOUNDATIONS – MIDDLE SCHOOL

This program focuses on six foundational math areas key to preparing students for high school success. At the heart of this program is the **Ready.Set.Excel Middle School Diagnostic Assessment**. Designed specifically for 6th-8th graders, it focuses on concepts and skills from higher elementary grades through eighth grade. Student progress is measured against clearly-defined, grade-level expectations. By monitoring progress throughout middle school, gaps are quickly identified and can be effectively addressed, establishing a solid grounding in these math areas.

2

STEM READINESS – HIGH SCHOOL

High school students can struggle in science due to confusion in math concepts taught in middle school. Typically high schools focus on preparing the freshmen for algebra and do not review the foundational math skills critical for science. **Ready.Set.Excel's High School Adaptive Assessment** identifies individual student gaps in these critical areas. The results enable an academic intervention program to be tailored to the needs of each student. Testing the students at the start and end of the program demonstrates their progress and instills confidence in their abilities.

3

STEM CHAMPIONS

The STEM Champions program partners with after-school programs to help struggling math students. Student math gaps are diagnosed with the appropriate **Ready.Set.Excel** Assessment. Using the results, RSE offers the teacher curated resources customized for each student. The resources are from reputed online sources including Desmos, Prodigy, and IXL. The teacher selects the best math gap remedy approach for their program. Interim mini-assessments track students' improvement. A checkpoint assessment at the end of the program tracks students' overall progress.

4

SCIENCE PLACEMENT

High school science classes require the application of middle school arithmetic and algebra concepts - for example, the ability to plot and interpret graph data, or to balance a chemical equation. **Ready.Set.Excel's** Science Placement tests for Biology, Chemistry, and Physics provide a view of the student's math skills. This can help the school in recommending the appropriate level science class. Placement at a level commensurate with their math skills enables the student to focus on learning and enjoying science instead of struggling with the underlying math concepts.

RSE's Pilot Summer Program hits the sweet spot.

"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade" - this is the mantra RSE adopted when COVID-19 hit our community. Students faced the shut down of in-person classes, were not able to hang out with friends, and missed out on school-related activities. Learning was impacted and many fell further behind.

Ready.Set.Excel was ready to help. We decided to pilot our own summer program. We combined our expertise in online assessments, researched innovative learning methods, and secured a teacher to work with the students. Hugo Torres, an experienced middle-school math teacher, and one of our Content Experts, stepped in and taught the class. Hugo is engaging, fun, and smart.

To get the kids talking and participating, Mr. Torres started each class with a question. Early on he asked, "What is your favorite ice cream flavor?" Everyone had an opinion on this. To further engage his students, RSE assembled and delivered hands-on Math/Science kits to each student's home. The kits provided a fun and immersive experience, piquing student curiosity in math and their own abilities.

The class was having so much fun they pleaded with Mr. Torres to start each day 15 minutes early.

At the end of the class, students and their parents were surveyed. Every student told us their math confidence had "improved" or "improved a lot" as a result of the program. Parents noticed a positive change in their child's attitude toward, and confidence in math.

At the end of the program, Mr. Torres sent notes of encouragement to each student along with their favorite ice cream. Sweet!

“

The projects and experiments were great. My son was excited about receiving the materials and getting started on the projects during class. He especially loved using the plants. Great for motivation.

- PARENT

(My child) hasn't been this excited in math and Zoom sessions in a long time!

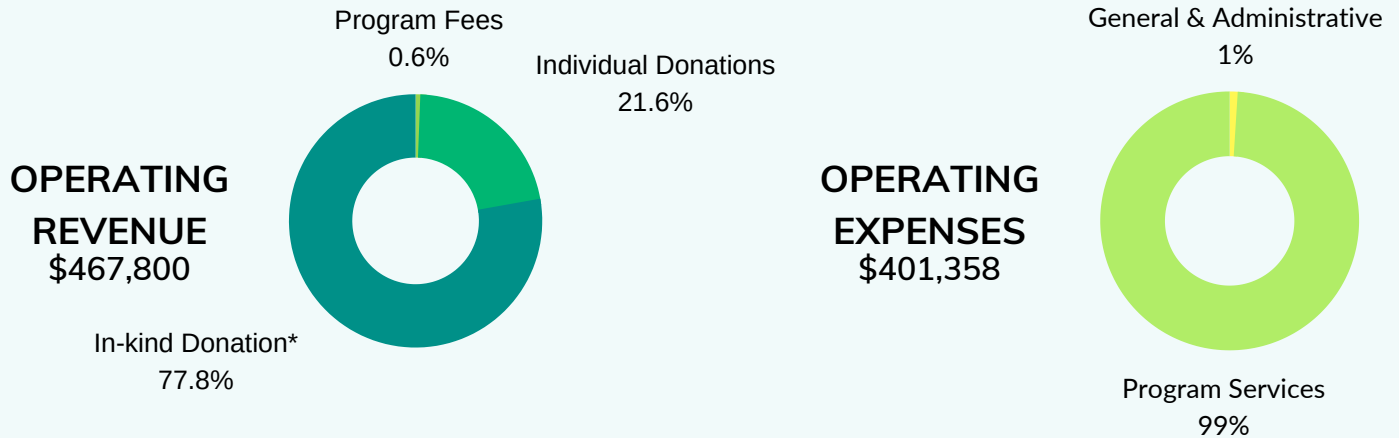
- PARENT

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Our Financials

FYE June 30, 2020



* In-kind donation reflects software programming hours donated by the founders in 2019-20. In each of the prior 3 years, the founders donated similarly.

Next Year

After school programs often have (volunteer) tutors to help students with homework. Students who are struggling with grade-level math often need help with earlier concepts. With **Ready.Set.Excel STEM Champions**, we partner with these programs to diagnose student gaps and provide targeted student data to the tutors. In addition to regular school work, tutors can spend time on helping students bridge their gaps. **Ready.Set.Excel** will provide teaching resources, hands-on kits and mini tests to help students progress.

We are also developing a school-year long intervention program to help high school freshmen struggling with foundational math. We are partnering with EPAA's math and science teachers to design and create diagnostic assessments.



We thank you for your ongoing support of our program.

A special thank you to the following individuals and their organizations:

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Nativity Catholic School - Amelia Stone
Sacred Heart Schools - Diane Sweeney
Sophie's Scholars - Elaine Barry
Anil Srivastava

Our Team

Maya Srinivasan - Co-Founder and President
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