

# Rocketship Futuro Academy Charter School Request for Renewal

Board Meeting: October 26, 2020  
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# Background

- August 10, 2015: MDUSD Board originally denied petition to form Rocketship Futuro Academy
- March 10, 2016: State Board of Education approved appeal to form Rocketship Futuro Academy
- July 27, 2020: Rocketship submitted renewal to District
- September 14, 2020: Board conducted public hearing
- October 11, 2020: Staff posts recommendation
- October 26, 2020: Board votes to grant or deny renewal



# Procedural Background

- Education Code 47605.9(b): Effective July 1, 2020
- Charter School authorized by SBE seeks renewal first from district that originally denied petition
- If granted by District, MDUSD becomes authorizer
- If denied by District, Charter School can appeal to SBE
- SBE would review District's decision for "abuse of discretion"
- If SBE grants appeal, SBE, in consultation with charter school, would select MDUSD or the County Board as authorizer



# Petition Review Criteria

## 15 Required Elements:

- ▶ Description of educational program
- ▶ Measurable pupil outcomes
- ▶ Method for assessing pupil progress
- ▶ Governance structure of the school
- ▶ Employee qualifications
- ▶ Health & safety procedures
- ▶ Means to achieve race/ethnic balance
- ▶ Admission requirements, if applicable
- ▶ Manner in which annual independent financial audits shall be conducted



# Petition Review Criteria

## 15 Required Elements:

- ▶ Student suspension & expulsion procedures
- ▶ Staff coverage by State Teachers' Retirement System, Public Employees' Retirement System or Social Security
- ▶ Public school attendance alternatives
- ▶ District employee leave & return rights
- ▶ Dispute resolution process
- ▶ Procedures for closure of school



# Other Requirements

- ▶ Information re proposed operation and potential effects of school:
- ▶ Facilities to be utilized
- ▶ Provision of administrative services
- ▶ Potential civil liability effects, if any
- ▶ Proposed 1st year budget, and 3 years of financial projections/cash flow
- ▶ Affirmations
  - ▶ Nonsectarian program
  - ▶ No tuition
  - ▶ No discrimination
  - ▶ Admission not according to residence of pupil or parents



# Petition Review Process

- Staff Reviewed Renewal according to their area of expertise (Educational Program, Special Education, English Language Learner Instruction, Pupil Outcomes, Governance, Employee Qualifications, Student Discipline, Admissions, Budget and Finance)
- Staff posted findings and recommendations on October 11, 2020, per AB 1505



# Renewal Requirements under AB 1505

- RFA a “mid-performing charter” – Renewal is within discretion of Board
- Board shall consider the schoolwide performance and performance of all subgroups of pupils served by the charter school in the state and local indicators
- Board shall provide greater weight to performance on measurements of academic performance in determining whether to grant a charter renewal



# Renewal Requirements under AB 1505

- Board shall consider clear and convincing evidence that either:
  - (1) The Charter School has achieved measurable increases in academic achievement, as defined by at least one year's progress for each year in school, or
  - (2) Strong postsecondary outcomes, as defined by college enrollment, persistence, and completion rates equal to similar peers. (Education Code §47607.2(b)) [not applicable to K-5]



# Renewal Requirements under AB 1505

- Board may deny a renewal only upon making written findings, with sufficient facts to support the findings, that: (1) the charter school has failed to meet or make sufficient progress towards meeting standards that provide a benefit to the pupils of the school, (2) that closure of the charter school is in the best interest of pupils, and, (3) if applicable, its decision provided greater weight to performance of measurements of academic performance. (Education Code §47607.2(b))
- A charter granted under this subdivision shall be granted for a term of five (5) years



# Summary of Major Staff Findings

- Educational Program: Only 20 minutes of Designated English Learner instruction per day; Concerns about methodology for Designated ELD instruction and criteria for reclassification
- Special Education: Concerns about service of Moderate to Severe students
- Pupil Performance: Only 33.3% of the Charter School's English Language Learners are progressing towards proficiency in English, scoring "Very Low" on the State's indicators
  - Charter School's longitudinal growth data is only based upon a cohort of 25 students.
  - CDE requires 30 students for measurable performance levels (<https://www.caschooldashboard.org/about/faq>)
  - AB 1505 requires "measurable increases in academic achievement" proven by "clear and convincing" data (Education Code §47607.2(b))
  - Charter School's claims of growth on NWEA not supported by baseline data

# Summary of Major Staff Findings

- Other Concerns:
- Governance: Lack of local parental access to national board of directors
- Employee Qualifications: Lack of comprehensive criteria for evaluation of teachers based on “specific gains”
- Audit Procedure: Audit for Rocketship system as whole, not for individual school
- Budget and Fiscal:
- Projected growth in enrollment and per-pupil funding are unrealistic
  - Not consistent with School Services Dashboard
- Cash Flow does not incorporate anticipated deferrals
- Budget underprojects expenses for employee benefits, utilities, facility, supplies and operating costs

# 15 Elements – Reasonably Comprehensive?

Element	Yes/No
Description of educational program	No
Measurable pupil outcomes	No
Method for assessing pupil progress	Yes
Governance structure of the school	No
Employee qualifications	No
Health & safety procedures	Yes
Means to achieve race/ethnic balance	Yes
Admission requirements, if applicable	Yes
Manner in which annual independent financial audits shall be conducted	No
Student suspension & expulsion procedures	Yes
Staff coverage by State Teachers' Retirement System, Public Employees' Retirement System or Social Security	Yes
Public school attendance alternatives	Yes
District employee leave & return rights	Yes
Dispute resolution process	Yes
Procedures for closure of school	Yes

# Board Options

- Grant Renewal – upon Charter School’s written commitment to comply with the conditions contained in Exhibit A of the Resolution and to sign the Memorandum of Understanding
- Deny Renewal – Adopt Resolution and this power point presentation as findings in support