

Rutherford County Schools Statement for Rocketship Appeals Hearing

Rutherford County Schools recognizes the time and effort expended by Rocketship Schools in the application process and greatly appreciates engaging with them in proposing to open a new charter school in our district. As a district that is committed to parent choice and multiple options for how and where to educate children, RCS recognizes the positive impact Rocketship Education has made in many other school districts.

During the application review process, Rutherford County Schools followed the guidelines set forth in the Tennessee State Board of Education Quality Charter Authorizing Standards and the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission Core Authorizing Principles by

- **Rigorously evaluating the initial and amended applications submitted by Rocketship schools.**
- **Setting high but attainable standards for the approval of charter schools in our portfolio.**
- **And granting charters only to applicants that have demonstrated competence and capacity to succeed in *all* aspects of their particular charter school model, consistent with stated approval criteria.**

The Rutherford County Board of Education’s decision to ultimately deny the application for Rocketship TN #4 was based on the recommendation provided by the designated application review committee according to the reasons delineated in their report as follows:

- **Concerns regarding the school’s Academic Plan and Capacity.**
- **Lack of demonstrated community support sufficient to ensure a successful opening.**
- **Past performance of RSE schools not being on par with that of current RCS schools.**

Enrollment challenges experienced by current charter schools in the same geographic location of the proposed school indicate the addition of another charter school would affect not only their initial enrollment but that of those already in operation. RCS has already approved one additional new charter to open in the same area beginning in 2026.

Again, RCS recognizes the strong organization evident for Rocketship Education and admires their efforts to provide quality schools in areas of need for such. However, we do not feel their application, at this time, presents a preparedness to meet the needs of Rutherford County students.

Thank you.