

**Rocketship Dream Community Prep
Approved Waivers as of 3/12/2024**

State Statute/Rule/ Policy	Description of Statute/Rule/Policy	Replacement Policy/Practice	How will waiver of this statute/rule/policy help student achievement?	Date of Approval	Length of approved waiver	Conditions on Waiver
T.C.A. § 49-3-311	Capital Outlay	Rocketship and or its real estate holding entity, Launchpad, signs off on all facility contracts and leases. Because Rocketship manages its own facilities, we would like to have the ability to improve facilities when necessary.	Rocketship considers preparing charter school grounds to be a great challenge and a great opportunity. Because Rocketship must finance its own buildings and does not have the power to raise taxes to fund construction and renovation, it is critical that the Rocketship Tennessee board control the school grounds, rather than the city board of education, and be free from facility regulations unrelated to health and safety standards. This flexibility will allow Rocketship to use the school grounds and facilities more efficiently and effectively, and make construction decisions that best serve Rocketship's mission and goals for its students.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	The waiver does not apply to any health and safety standards.
T.C.A. §§ 49-5-408-409	Contracts and Termination of Contracts	Rocketship oversees performance evaluations through an annual employee review process	A key to Rocketship's success is being able to attract, motivate, and retain staff that is committed to our mission. To do this, Rocketship must use hiring, pay, benefits, promotion, and evaluation systems that are aligned with our mission and goals. Every teacher will be assessed on their performance. Teachers will be informed of their performance goals in advance; those who meet the required level of performance will be given the opportunity to remain on staff.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	
T.C.A. § 49-1-302(e)	Duty Free Lunch	We believe that it is important for teachers to have flexibility in how they use lunch time. While all Rocketship teachers are encouraged to break for lunch, many choose to spend lunch time getting to know their students better or catching up on to-dos from the morning.	Allowing teachers flexibility to use their time in the way they feel is most effective leads to better student outcomes.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	
T.C.A. § 49-3-359(a)	Instructional Materials/Supplies	Rocketship supplies all standard student supplies including but not limited to book bags, notebooks, binders, pencils, etc. Rocketship also fully furnishes classrooms with carpets, sharpies, easels, and other instructional aids. Rocketship plans this out during their procurement season in March/April. Teachers are also allotted \$500-1000 per teacher per year for eligible items including decorations, individualized materials, and incidental expenses. When teachers purchase eligible items, they submit reimbursements through a smartphone app called Concur. On Concur, administrators can instantly review and approve the reimbursement requests; once the administrator approves, the teacher is reimbursed in 2 days. Teachers also get \$50 reimbursements monthly for their cellphones. Rocketship also audits its library/books twice a year, and audits its fleet of Chromebook laptops four times a year.	Rocketship will provide all school and classroom supplies to ensure that, by default, students and teachers have the essentials for academic success. A technology-driven reimbursement system and \$500-1000 annual allotment for classroom expenses will reduce the time and attention teachers and administrators have to spend on purchasing and reimbursing classroom expenses, as well as creating transparency around permissible expenses, expense tracking, and reimbursement wait times. In addition, a portion of the \$500-1000 allotment can be directed by teachers into specific subject areas. An advanced and personalized understanding of curricular goals by teachers will allow them to direct funds more effectively. Rocketship's approach will allow students, teachers, and administrators to not worry about educational supplies and focus on student success. Rocketship's tracking of school and classroom supplies usage and replacement, and auditing and replacing of books and Chromebooks, leads to accurate procurement forecasting and efficient inventory. This forecasting and efficiency inventory usage will reduce year to year inventory carryover and waste.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	
T.C.A. § 49-5-702-716 T.C.A. § 49-5-801-816	Leave	Rocketship would like flexibility in how to address a leave of absence, and to tailor custom- made solutions to unexpected circumstances	Rocketship will use flexibility over leaves of absence to reduce disruption to impacted students	4/9/2021	Charter Term	
SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.07	Library Information Center Personnel	Rocketship provides students with access to classroom libraries. Existing staff at Rocketship support library activities in place of a librarian, and increase library resources based on student need.	Rocketship will provide classroom libraries for students, and access to resources at the nearest public library. Existing staff will assist students in getting the most out of classroom library and public library resources, and increase support based on student interest and need.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	
T.C.A. § 49-3-306(a); SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.02; SBE Policy 5.600	Licensed Personnel Salaries	Rocketship Board approves salaries during an annual budgeting process	Rocketship's compensation system allows us to attract and retain the best teachers.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	
T.C.A. § 49-5-101(a); SBE Rule: 0520-02-03-.10	Licensed School Leaders	Rocketship will recruit and interview highly qualified candidates from around the country. Rocketship leadership will participate in internal training & skills development.	Rocketship will recruit, train, and retain the most qualified school leaders from around the country to fulfill its mission. Training and mentoring school leaders in management skills and Rocketship's approach to education leads to more highly effective teaching, which ultimately drives higher student achievement.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	

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SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.31(4)	Maximum Class Size	Rocketship has up to 31 students learning in each classroom. Students rotate through 3 content blocks every day, including Humanities, STEM, and Learning Lab. This time includes an hour and 20 minutes of small group instruction 4 times a week, and personalized learning in the Learning Lab. During the Learning Lab, students access enrichments, tutoring, project-based learning, and adaptive online learning programs.	Rocketship uses a rotational model that includes time for individualized learning based on the needs of each student. Educational research shows that educational success does not depend on class size, but rather the abilities of the teacher you put in front of the class. Traditional class ratios are not applicable as educators will dynamically group and engage students according to their academic needs and phase of learning day. This targeted learning, when combined with excellence in front-of-room teaching, will improve student achievement.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	Class size cannot exceed 31 students per class.
T.C.A. § 49-6-303(a)(1) SBE Policy 5.103	School Counseling	Rocketship employs a social worker instead of a school counselor	Rocketship will employ a social worker instead of a counselor. A social worker will be better able to provide counseling work related to the home, environmental, societal, and cultural issues our students experience. Rocketship serves a diverse student body with a large immigrant population. Immigrant families and students may experience challenges adapting to American culture, poverty, fear of deportation, PTSD from experiences in their home countries, attachment issues from family separation, and more. A social worker will be better equipped to provide services to students and families potentially dealing with these issues in individual, group, family, and crisis counseling. A social worker will also connect immigrant families and families in poverty to translation services, housing, food supplies, and legal services that will help the students avoid relocation to another school and instead stay enrolled with Rocketship. A school social worker providing these services will also increase ties and affinity between the community and the school, increasing student engagement and achievement. A social worker's array of individualized and specialized services will help students build the academic and character skills they need to succeed at Rocketship and beyond. In contrast, a Professional School Counselor may not have the training to work with the issues our students and families face; inability to deal with these issues will create barriers to academic and life success.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	1) The school social worker cannot be a teacher of record for any class or course; and 2) The school social worker cannot perform any duties of a school counselor unless those duties are specifically aligned to training received as part of his/her educator preparation program.
T.C.A. § 49-5-401	Teacher Assignment	Rocketship approves annual academic calendars and daily school schedules	Rocketship will use an extended schedule for teachers that includes additional instruction and professional development hours. Rocketship will compensate teachers for additional work hours.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	
T.C.A. §§ 49-5-501-513	Tenure	Rocketship is an at-will employer and would like to maintain the flexibility to retain and let go of teachers based on their performance rather than tenure	A key to Rocketship's success is being able to attract, motivate, and retain staff that is committed to our mission. To do this, Rocketship must use hiring, pay, benefits, promotion, and evaluation systems that are aligned with our mission and goals. Every teacher will be assessed on their performance. Teachers will be informed of their performance goals in advance; those who meet the required levels of performance will be given the opportunity to remain on staff. Having the most effective teachers regardless of tenure is best for student outcomes.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	
T.C.A §§ 49-6-2206 and 49-6-2207	Use of Unapproved Textbooks	Rocketship approves curricular materials	Rocketship uses high-quality, standards-based materials that are aligned to our academic model and curriculum. This curriculum has historically been successful in Nashville and elsewhere, and will enable the highest student achievement. Rocketship Nashville schools use the same materials used at other Rocketship schools. This reduces administrative overhead and increases efficiency, freeing up resources to be directed toward student achievement.	4/9/2021	Charter Term	