

*Here are the questions that were listed in the June 15, 2011, Board Transmittal. We requested that Rocketship Education's written responses be submitted by June 27, 2011. We have extended the submission date to July 11, 2011.*

**1. How many schools per year does Rocketship Education plan to open? When will each school open?**

With respect to this charter grant, Rocketship plans to open 4 schools per year from 2013-14 school year through 2017-18. Each school will open in the fall of the planned year.

**2. What are the specific locations of the schools?**

Locations are within a one-mile radius of the failing schools as identified by SJ/SV2020.

**3. How has Rocketship Education established "meaningful contact" with each of the affected school districts?**

Rocketship Education notified the following 11 school districts prior to the material revision submission:

- Alum Rock Union Elementary
- Campbell Union
- East Side Union
- Evergreen
- Franklin McKinley
- Luther Burbank
- Mt. Pleasant
- Oak Grove
- San Jose Unified
- Santa Clara Unified
- Sunnyvale

In addition, Rocketship Education currently has recurring monthly meetings with the Superintendents of Alum Rock, San Jose Unified, and Franklin McKinley school districts. Rocketship has worked to set-up subsequent meetings with the Superintendents of the remaining school districts in order to begin the process of collaboration and is hoping to host visits of Rocketship campuses in October 2011 along with continued conversations

and plans for collaboration. Prior to June 15, Rocketship had met with and discussed the material revision with Alum Rock, San Jose Unified, Franklin McKinley, Sunnyvale, Campbell Union, East Side, Luther Burbank, and a board member from Santa Clara Unified. Since the June 15 meeting, Rocketship has attempted to follow-up with Mt. Pleasant, Oak Grove, and Evergreen and currently has only received a response from Oak Grove with a meeting set, which occurred on Tuesday, July 6. Rocketship has also worked to set-up follow-up meetings with SJUSD, ARUSD, FMSD, and Sunnyvale, beyond the regular monthly meetings in an effort to collaborate further on the work with the GATES Compact and subsequent charter processes.

**4. What outreach plan will Rocketship Education implement to ensure that it does not concentrate only on one district but enrolls students countywide at each site?**

Rocketship Education shall strive, through best efforts of recruitment and admissions practices to realize outreach of students throughout the county. This will involve attending various outreach events throughout the county and working to actively disseminate information regarding Rocketship campuses and enrollment throughout the county. A list of these proposed locations is located on pages 64 and 263 of the original charter document (<https://rsed.box.net/shared/static/fghzxbhpmr.pdf>). This list will be expanded upon in this revision as Rocketship has notified a wider range of districts and is intending to focus on a much larger section of Santa Clara County. Thus, we will consequently ensure that outreach is much more expansive throughout the county.

**5. What enrollment plan will Rocketship Education implement to achieve the racial/ethnic balance that “is reflective of the general school-age population residing within” Santa Clara County?**

Rocketship Education shall strive, through best efforts of recruitment and admissions practices, to achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of Santa Clara County. Students shall be considered for admission without regard to ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation. RSED will implement a strategy that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following elements or strategies which focus on achieving and maintaining a racial and ethnic balance among students that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of Santa Clara County: advertising materials in multiple languages, translation at parent outreach meetings, and identifying and reaching out to parents at key locations for reaching all demographics and ethnicities in the program.

We open neighborhood schools with about 2/3 of students coming from the surrounding neighborhoods. Rocketship always makes best efforts on outreach to students outside of the neighborhoods we serve. However, many parents desire to send their elementary-aged children to nearby schools. Currently, our schools reflect the demographics of the students in the neighborhoods and school districts in which we are located. The table below illustrates this point with a summary comparison of Rocketship schools and our neighboring districts.

<b>Rocketship school</b>	<b>% of Latino students</b>	<b>% students qualifying for FRL*</b>	<b>Local district in which RSED school is located</b>	<b>Local district: % Latino students</b>	<b>Local district: % students qualifying for FRL*</b>
Rocketship Mateo Sheedy	90%	91%	San Jose Unified	55%	51%
Rocketship Si Se Puede	86%	94%	Alum Rock	79%	82%
Rocketship Los Sueños	88%	94%	Alum Rock	79%	82%
Rocketship 4 (estimated)**	75% (estimated)	Not yet available	Franklin McKinley	64%	80%

\*FRL = students qualifying for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program

\*\* Rocketship 4 (Rocketship Mosaic Elementary) is still enrolling students and data reported is a current estimate. Also, FRL forms cannot be processed until 30 days before start of school so we do not yet know the FRL percentage for this school.

Rocketship’s ability to recruit students in a manner that is representative of a district and community is further evident at Rocketship 4. Rocketship 4 is located in Franklin McKinley School District where 27.6% of the district population is Asian. Currently, 24% of the students enrolled to attend Rocketship 4 are Asian. Consequently, Rocketship 4 has a very similar student representation to Franklin McKinley School District in regards to both Asian and Latino populations.

Since elementary parents generally prefer to send their children to nearby schools, the most significant impact is facility location. Rocketship has worked hard with districts to create facility lease agreements, but has not been successful to date. Creation of facility

lease agreements with districts would allow us to better reflect overall district demographics by locating schools strategically to serve students representing overall district demographics.

**6. What evidence can Rocketship Education provide of its capacity to acquire facilities to support the rapid expansion of schools?**

Launchpad Development Company is a nonprofit that was formed specifically for the purpose of ensuring that Rocketship has the facilities necessary to support its expansion. Launchpad ([www.launchpad-dev.org](http://www.launchpad-dev.org)) is a non-profit charter school real estate development company that performs the full suite of real estate services, ranging from lease negotiations and market analysis to land acquisition and project and construction management. Launchpad has successfully completed facilities development for all the three operational Rocketship schools and is completing construction for Rocketship Discovery Prep and Rocketship Mosaic which will open this fall. Additionally, Launchpad currently has three more sites for the 2012 school year under design/development at present, and has a significant pipeline of available sites.

Launchpad and Rocketship have a two-year planning process with respect to facilities. Two years before opening, Launchpad brings approximately twice the number of developable facilities to the Rocketship board. The Rocketship board ranks the sites by preference. Launchpad does initial environmental and construction due diligence on the preferred sites, moving to new sites if higher-ranked sites fail to pass diligence. This allows Launchpad to provide high-likelihood sites to the Rocketship Board for February greenlighting, 18 months before opening. Once greenlit, Launchpad entitles and locates acquisition and construction financing for the sites, beginning construction between March and May of the year of opening.

Rocketship's small campus footprint enables Launchpad to find and acquire land that is suitable for a Rocketship campus; additionally, Launchpad is actively pursuing a campus model that will enable Rocketship to further reduce its already smaller footprint. We have a large pipeline of parcels between 0.5 and 1 acre, and are confident of the continued availability of sites in Santa Clara County at an affordable pricepoint. After developing five campuses over the last four years, this process has become quite consistent.

Thus far, Launchpad has acquired private property on which to build the Rocketship campuses, as well as engaged in long-term ground leases with non-profit organizations. Launchpad's acquisition strategies will continue to include both of these options, as well

as grow to encompass renovation of existing facilities, long term lease of district facilities when appropriate, and long term lease or purchase of surplus district land.

Launchpad currently has three full-time staff members, and will grow to nine staff members by the 2013 fiscal year in order to carry out its mission and vision. Launchpad has a good working relationship with the Franklin McKinley School District and will continue to build working relationships with the other school districts in order to assist Rocketship in obtaining new campus sites.

**7. What evidence can Rocketship Education provide on its capacity to open 20 schools and maintain the educational program consistent with the three existing schools?**

There are four key drivers of quality at Rocketship’s schools – leaders, teachers, parent engagement, and individualized learning. Rocketship has designed its systems to provide increased quality with scale, a unique approach in the charter school industry.

***Leaders***

We realize that school leaders are critical in our effort to maintain quality and open more Rocketship schools. Additionally, we are highly invested in providing an exciting and rewarding professional career path for our employees. With this in mind, we have created a multi-year leadership development program, the Rocketship Network Leadership Program that supports teachers in developing their craft in the classroom and in preparing for possible school leadership roles in the future. This farm system is capable of developing new Teach for America corps members into effective teachers during their first year, and provides a three year development program to prepare them and other teachers who join Rocketship to become school leaders as soon as their fourth year at Rocketship.

***School Leadership Positions***

Rocketship school leadership teams are made up of, first and foremost, the principal. Principals at Rocketship are responsible for the success of the school and their role is defined by the following primary responsibilities:

- Attaining API results (closing the achievement gap)
- Instilling Rocketship culture in students, teachers, and parents
- Developing other leaders to support Rocketship’s growth and scale

- Coaching teachers so they attain 1.5 years or more of growth with 100% of their students

Every school also has an Academic Dean, who serves as an instructional leader at the school with primary responsibilities in the following areas:

- Coaching teachers so they attain 1.5 years or more of growth with 100% of their students
- Managing staff professional development and collaborative planning

Finally, every school also has an Assistant Principal whose major responsibilities include the following:

- Developing a strong culture of high expectations and college prep
- Managing Learning Lab and all associated staff
- Coaching teachers so they attain 1.5 years of growth or more with 100% of their students

Together, these three roles make up the leadership team of Rocketship schools. Because Deans, Principals, and Assistant Principals are responsible for the success of the school (and thus Rocketship's ability to eliminate the achievement gap) and because we believe that many Assistant Principals and Deans will eventually take over established schools, we see the qualities and skills necessary in these roles as very similar and have designed the Rocketship Network Leadership program to build these critical skills and experiences.

### *The Rocketship Network Leadership Program*

The Rocketship Network Leadership program is based on the belief that leadership potential, coupled with intense ground-level experience in our schools, is the best preparation to become a Rocketship leader. Just as the best preparation for teaching is being a teacher, the best preparation for school leadership is being a school leader. With this in mind, program participants will fill real leadership roles in our network including teacher, Academic Dean, and Assistant Principal positions. Additionally, Rocketship Network Fellows participate in a comprehensive, rigorous training curriculum that includes 1:1 coaching and workshops from third-party experts in management as well as instructional and personal leadership. For example, program participants attend specialized leadership workshops on topics such as effective communication, performance management, and data-driven instruction and make visits to observe high-performing schools throughout the country. Throughout the entire

program, Network Fellows learn through sustained collaboration with other program participants as part of a selective cohort.

These tracks are:

*Emerging Leaders: A 2+ Year Pathway to School Leadership*

Rocketship Emerging Leaders are outstanding teachers interested in becoming school and network leaders. These classroom leaders have a track record of student achievement and demonstrated leadership potential. Emerging Leaders come to Rocketship as teachers to become immersed in the innovative Rocketship model and also participate in additional leadership experiences and workshops as outlined above. They take on specialized projects at their school sites that may include teacher coaching, event planning, or community outreach and meet regularly with other teachers in the Emerging Leaders program (approximately once a month). Emerging Leaders are also mentored by their school-based leadership team (Principal and/or Dean and/or Assistant Principal). Rocketship Emerging Leaders are among the first considered for Rocketship Rising Fellow and Rocketship Principal Fellow positions (see descriptions below) as well as any open Academic Dean Positions and serve as important leadership team members on their campuses. Teachers may participate in Emerging Leaders for 1-2 years before moving into a leadership role or bringing their increased leadership skills back to their classrooms and schools as experienced teacher leaders.

*Rising Fellows: A Two-Year Pathway to Becoming a Principal*

The Rising Fellows Program is intended to prepare program candidates to become Principal Fellows in their second year of program participation, with the objective of opening or taking over an existing school after completion of two years in the Network Leadership program. Rocketship Rising Fellows may serve as Assistant Principals or Academic Deans, depending on their own professional development needs. In these roles, they hone their management and instructional skills and become immersed in the Rocketship model. If placed as Assistant Principals, Rising Fellows are responsible for managing all non-teaching staff (including staff of Learning Lab), coaching a small group of teachers, and building school culture by sharing in the supervision of transitions, arrival, dismissal, and lunch. If placed as Academic Deans, they are responsible for intensively coaching new and experienced teachers as well as planning and executing professional development. In addition to the experiential learning gained from these roles, Rising Fellows also benefit from collaborating with a select group of Rocketship school leaders through training workshops, individual coaching, and hands-on opportunities such as external school visits, 360 feedback surveys, and several weeks

each year serving as the full principal. Training topics address the following functional areas: personal leadership, performance management, organizational development, instructional leadership, and operations. Rising Fellows may also take on additional projects (planning field trips, community events, or other special events) to hone their skills in their unique development areas. Rocketship Rising Fellows may also have the opportunity to found a new region and advance into regional and national leadership roles within the Rocketship network.

#### *Principal Fellows: A One-Year Pathway to Becoming a Principal*

Rocketship Principal Fellows train intensively for a year, in preparation to run or take over an existing Rocketship school upon program completion. In this year, Principal Fellows are based at a single school site, serving as Assistant Principal and becoming immersed in the Rocketship school model. Principal Fellows are responsible for managing all non-teaching staff (including Learning Lab tutors), coaching a group of teachers, and reinforcing school culture by supervising classroom transitions, school arrival and dismissal, and lunch. Additionally, they prepare to open and run a new Rocketship school, or take over an existing Rocketship school in the next year, by building community relationships, hiring staff, and creating a plan for their school. Principal Fellows participate in many Rocketship Network Leadership events and also spend several weeks each year serving as the full principal and conduct external school visits. Training topics address the following functional areas: personal leadership, performance management, organizational development, instructional leadership, and operations. Principal Fellows may also take on additional projects (planning field trips, community events, or special events) to hone their skills in their unique development areas. Principal Fellows pursue an accelerated career track that may include the opportunity to found the first Rocketship school in a new region; they may also move quickly into a Regional Director role or other senior management role.

#### *Comprehensive Leadership Support and Development*

In addition to the specific leadership development activities outlined in the tracks above, there are some supports common to all leaders and leaders-in-training. All Rocketship school leaders receive consistent and substantial coaching and development from their managers (principals for academic deans and assistant principals; Regional Director for principals). In addition to this high-touch daily or weekly support, school leaders also benefit from being a part of the Rocketship network, which allows them to meet regularly and work collaboratively as cross-school functional teams.

### *Capacity and Leadership Pipeline*

With five existing schools in Santa Clara County in 2011-2012, and more opening in the following years, Rocketship has a large talent pool to draw from in order to meet its school leadership needs for the 20 additional schools. For a detailed graphic on our leadership capacity and needs, please see the attachment "Rocketship Santa Clara County Talent Pipeline." In 2011-2012, we will have over 20 teachers in our Emerging Leaders program, the first step toward school leadership, and 10 Academic Deans and Assistant Principals in the second year of the program. From this pool of ten principals and assistant principals, three will become principals of Rocketship Schools in Santa Clara County in fall of 2012. As we continue to open more schools it increases both the pool of first-year teachers who may go into our Network Leadership program and the number of leadership placements for deans and assistant principals, which grows the pool of principal candidates. In other words, as the number of schools increases, our selectivity of candidates will increase, resulting in increasing quality of candidates. Additionally, because the national Leadership Development team is funded through management fees, more schools paying fees drives increased capacity among the national staff to measure and hone our leadership selection and development process.

This farm system ensures that we can grow at approximately 60% annually forever in the human capital area. Our national office team working on this programming includes the Manager of Talent Recruitment, the Manager of Teacher Leadership, the Manager and Associate of Leadership Development, and the Chief Schools Officer. Additionally, at the regional level, the Regional Director is closely involved in the execution of this programming.

### ***Teachers***

Rocketship is unique in its approach to talent recruiting in the education industry. Each year we bring four new Teach for America (TFA) corps members to each school. For existing schools, this influx of new annual talent eliminates the need for additional annual recruiting. Teacher attrition (currently 15%, well below industry averages), teacher promotion to leadership positions, and teachers moving campuses to help start new schools are compensated for by the new teachers coming to campus. This creates a dynamic environment with new energetic teachers each year, and many veteran teachers moving into leadership positions from existing schools.

For new schools, in addition to the four TFA corps members, an additional eight teachers must be recruited to form the initial staff. Typically, four of these eight come from existing Rocketship schools to transfer our culture and norms to a new team. The remaining four positions are the focus of our national recruiting team.

*Diversity.* Rocketship recognizes the crucial need for students to have role models within our teaching staff who match their ethnicity. Rocketship has not been satisfied with overall TFA diversity in the Bay Area and has shared this concern. In response, Teach for America recruitment directors have increased their efforts at local universities such as San Jose State and Santa Clara where previous recruitment efforts had been limited. Moreover, this year, Rocketship began to further focus and invest in this work by creating a contract with Teach for America and paying a higher fee for each incoming corps member. As a result, Teach for America is responsible for providing Rocketship with an incoming corps that is much more diverse and better represents our communities and students. We are confident that Teach for America's work will help fulfill Rocketship's requests for a diverse teaching staff.

*National Recruitment.* Rocketship Education employs a full time Manager of Talent Recruitment. This department within Rocketship Education will continue to expand in subsequent years to meet the growing needs for teachers and talent. By centralizing recruitment of teachers, we can ensure a much more consistent quality of candidate, while continuing to give Principals the role of "buyer," selecting among qualified candidates to match the needs of their school.

Rocketship Education currently has a very rigorous selection model based on a set of characteristics and competencies we've seen most critically impact success at a Rocketship campus. Applicants participate in a series of activities including role plays, scenario discussions, data analysis, and interviews with school leaders, teachers and parents. We use data and experience correlating teacher characteristics and results to refine our selection process every year.

*Professional Development.* Rocketship believes strongly in the power of professional development to drive outstanding results for our students and families, to provide a rewarding and motivating career for teachers and school leaders, and to support our growth in service of our mission of eliminating the achievement gap in our lifetimes. All members of the instructional team—from Learning Lab staff members (Individualized Learning Specialists) to teachers and school leaders—receive professional development

rooted in experiential learning, constant feedback, and collaboration. Our professional development program is characterized by the following practices:

- **Training:** Every Rocketship teacher participates in five weeks of summer training designed to help teachers build a positive school culture, practice instructional techniques, learn about their school communities and conduct home visits and plan and prepare for the first few weeks of school. This training is differentiated for new, new-to-Rocketship and veteran Rocketship teachers and is carried on throughout the year through weekly professional development sessions. Rocketship also partners with external organizations to train teachers on a variety of instructional practices and programs including GLAD strategies, Intel Math, Lee Canter's behavior management cycle and Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion techniques. Additionally, our academic deans serve as the certification coaches for all teachers in the Reach certification program to ensure alignment and promote partnership between the Reach program and Rocketship Education.
- **Job Embedded Coaching:** Rocketship teachers are regularly observed in the classroom by a site-based coach (either an academic dean, assistant principal or principal). These observations are followed by debriefs to maximize learning. Our coaches use a variety of coaching strategies including co-planning, co-teaching, modeling, real time coaching using earbud technology and video-taping. Principals meet with each teacher every 2-3 weeks for additional support.
- **Personalized Professional Development:** Each teacher at Rocketship Education has a Professional Growth Plan (PGP), which is a document that both defines our vision of instructional excellence and serves as the primary tool for setting individualized professional development goals and priorities for each teacher to ensure high levels of student achievement. Every eight weeks, based on student assessment results, the Academic Dean and each teacher work together to set three instructional goals for that teacher for the next eight weeks. The four cycles per year give teachers significant personalized development within a short period of time, driving significant increases in teaching performance. The PGP serves as the foundation of the work between a teacher and a coach. Rocketship partners with FormativeLearning, a learning management system to streamline and further individualize professional development support for Rocketship teachers.
- **Collaborative Work:** Teachers regularly meet within and between campuses to co-plan lessons, develop projects, and provide peer-to-peer support. Rocketship uses Better Lesson to facilitate collaboration and resource-sharing between teachers.

We are extremely satisfied with the current state of professional development at Rocketship Education and are proud that The New Teacher Project chose to use many of our teacher development tools to create the School Leader's Toolbox (<http://schoolleaderstoolbox.org/>). However, we also know that we can accomplish even more with our professional development within our schools. Consequently, Rocketship Education's Manager of Teacher Leadership is charged with refining our vision of instructional excellence and teacher professional development program, providing ongoing support to academic deans, and creating tools to assist teachers with instructional planning.

Rocketship has become known nationally, especially among Teach for America alumni as one of the top teacher preparation networks in the country. This recognition allows us to recruit nationally for the best TFA alums, driving up the quality of inputs. As Rocketship grows, our schools continue to be tremendous drivers of innovation on how to grow our teachers more effectively. We consider this collaboration among schools, aided both by staff and the technology systems we utilize to allow for increasing returns as we grow.

### ***Individualized Learning***

At Rocketship we believe that our students' academic success is due in large part to the individualized instruction they receive at Rocketship schools. Students who are significantly behind their peers benefit more from individual adaptive instruction at exactly their development level than they do from general classroom instruction—even highly differentiated classroom instruction. Instruction is individualized in the classroom with computer programs and small group tutoring and other support services provided in Learning Lab.

*Individualization within the classroom:* The Academic Dean at each site works with network support staff to develop professional development for all teachers with regard to the implementation of Tier I interventions in the classroom (ex: guided reading). The Academic Dean also provides other professional development related to differentiation (ex: using GLAD strategies for ELD). All teachers work with a coach (Principal, Assistant Principal, or Academic Dean) to ensure that all students are on track for making 1.5 years of growth. Since each additional Rocketship school will have its own Principal, Assistant Principal, and Academic Dean, we can ensure that high-quality professional development and coaching will be available to all staff so that they are adequately

supported when it comes to individualizing learning and differentiating within the classroom.

*Individualization with computer programs in Learning Lab:* At Rocketship we use programs that are both assignable and adaptive: this means that we can focus programs on the exact developmental level for each student and our programs are smart enough to make adjustments when students are struggling so that each student is always working on developmentally-appropriate material. In the 2011-12 school year, Rocketship will introduce Rocketship's Individualized Scheduling Engine (RISE), which identifies gaps in student knowledge and assigns students to appropriate lessons; it also collects data about student progress and mastery, and can make adjustments as needed. For example, a third grade math teacher will notify RISE when she is about to begin a unit on fractions: RISE will use previous assessment data to place the student into an appropriate fractions lesson and the software will make adjustments as needed in order to ensure that the lesson is at a "just right" level. RISE is being developed by the Rocketship Education team and access is provided to all schools that are part of the network; our financial model (which can be replicated at all additional sites) also allocates funding to the online content providers who supply lessons for students.

*Individualization with small group tutoring in Learning Lab:* Please see Tier II interventions as described as part of the Response to Intervention model (Question 29). Rocketship provides small group tutoring to students at all schools: our financial model (which can be replicated at all sites) includes six Individualized Learning Specialists (ILSs) who will be on staff at each school in order to provide assistance and tutoring in the lab.

### ***Parent Engagement***

Rocketship Education believes in a holistic educational model that is not only focused on the classroom, but also parents and the community as well. We strongly believe that teachers are the key critical lever to student achievement. However, it is critical that teachers and schools partner with parents in order to realize excellent results that exceed the results that can be realized solely in the classroom. Consequently, it is critical that our Rocketship teachers create an authentic relationship with parents and families that builds trust in the work.

To that end, Rocketship Education has focused on developing systems, tools, and strategies within schools that can be easily replicated by teachers and school leaders to ensure that there are consistently high levels of parent engagement. Over the past five years, we have seen that these types of systems are critical in order to further equip

school leaders and teachers to engage in this work, but also to share previous learnings of how to engage all parents. These systems and processes have been documented and created for both how Rocketship opens schools and engages a community and how existing Rocketship schools engage parents and community. For opening Rocketship schools, these systems include the development of a parent leadership group at least six months prior to a school opening, a handbook on how to engage parents in the community, and regular meetings on how to actively involve parent voices in the creation of the school through various activities like teacher selection, naming the school, recruiting other families, etc. These systems and processes have helped Rocketship schools to ensure that prior to the school opening parent engagement is already occurring and being woven into a core part of the school culture and model.

Similarly, Rocketship Education has developed explicit systems to engage, involve, and empower parents once a school has opened as well. This includes standardized agendas for community meetings, report cards that include a parent participation component, standardized processes to ensure large turnout for community and parent/family meetings, professional development throughout the year on parent engagement and home visits, parent involvement being included on teacher and school leader's professional growth plans and evaluations, and various other measures like standardizing various parent/family meetings like the annual college trip through shared agendas and handbooks, etc. These centralized systems and processes allow schools, school leaders, and teachers to share and replicate best practices and consequently, the parent engagement model continues to grow and thrive as additional schools, thought partners, staff, and parents and families engage in this work.

In order to further build capacity for parent engagement, Rocketship Education is adding a Rocketship Parent Liaison as a staff member in the 11.12 school year and planning to further partner with PACT (People Acting in Community Together) in the training and development of this staff member. This additional staff will allow Rocketship to focus on the further development of parent engagement and empowerment curricula, assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of this work, ensuring wider outreach in student recruitment, and building partnerships with parents throughout San Jose, districts or other charter networks. Having a staff member fully dedicated to this aspect of Rocketship's work will ensure that we are further able to develop, refine, and scale the work of parent engagement for years to come with additional schools. Likewise, as we continue to expand, this department of Rocketship will continue to grow and add additional capacity to the parent engagement work at Rocketship Education. This strategic and powerful partnership will help to ensure that Rocketeer parents are able

to navigate the educational system and are able to advocate appropriately for their Rocketeers in Rocketship and beyond.

**8. How does Rocketship Education plan to recruit, hire, and train teachers and staff for the 20 schools?**

Please see Teacher section in answer 7.

**9. What is Rocketship Education's financial plan for the 20 school expansion?**

Attached is a link to the model that details the financial projections associated with our 20-school expansion: <https://rsed.box.net/shared/nz2znks3ppxmiktop209>.

In support of these projections, attached is a presentation that details the projected financial performance of Rocketship's operational schools for 2010-11: <https://rsed.box.net/shared/nsvubk9ggots2mtj1ecx>.

Additionally, the presentation contains a comparison between the historical performance of Rocketship's operational schools versus the financial projections for the 20-school expansion. This comparison demonstrates that the financial projections contain revenue and expense assumptions that are extremely conservative relative to historical performance.

**10. What is Rocketship Education's plan to administer and oversee these sites?**

We have developed a rigorous, data-driven process at Rocketship for managing the health and performance of our schools and the network as a whole. Rocketship's Board of Directors and Management Team continuously monitor the performance of our schools and overall organization using a network health dashboard that shows the most pertinent health indicators for schools and the organization. This dashboard contains a comprehensive set of metrics, listed in this document:

<https://rsed.box.net/shared/static/0k1x8mknrbgs875h780m.docx>

The metrics that we care about most focus on student achievement, school culture and parent engagement, our ability to attract and develop teachers, financial viability, and whether we are continuing to build capacity to open additional high-quality schools. As we continue to learn and collect more data, we will also continue to refine our definition of health and the metrics that we evaluate.

Our Management team engages in critical discussion of the network health dashboard on a bi-monthly basis so that we can act quickly when necessary and make decisions about allocating resources to support the health and well-being of our schools, students and communities.

The health of our existing schools and network also plays a crucial role in determining our growth. In February of each year, 18 months before we open the doors to new schools, our Board of Directors makes a decision about each new school that we plan to open. We must demonstrate to our Board that our existing schools are healthy and that our organization as a whole is healthy in order for our Board to consider opening additional schools.

In addition to demonstrated network health, our Board requires that each prospective new school fulfills four additional criteria before we are able to open new schools. For each new school that we open under the proposed 20-school expansion, we need to demonstrate that four things are true:

- First, that we have a charter for the prospective school and that we have met or exceeded the performance criteria that we have agreed to with the Board of the Santa Clara County Office of Education
- Second, that we have a strong school leader who will be fully-versed in the Rocketship school model and who will be ready to take on the rigors of school start-up and community engagement by the start of the new school
- Third, that we have secured a facility that provides a healthy and motivating environment for our students, families and teachers, and that fits within the parameters of the school budget and will be financially feasible in the long run
- Fourth, that we have been able to secure sufficient start-up funding for each school to have the resources needed to start strong from Day 1
- Here is an example of the information shared with our Board to guide their decision this past spring to green-light Rocketship's schools 6, 7 and 8, to open in fall 2012: <https://rsed.box.net/shared/static/qye7sgae77yxllnhszc1.pptx>

After green-lighting, our Achievement and Business teams follow a detailed work plan to ensure that all schools open on time, on budget and with a great deal of clarity for the families that we serve: <https://rsed.box.net/shared/static/goza94ergx5jddbvd0oa.xlsx>

We have an entire cross-functional team at Rocketship focused on maintaining the health of all existing schools and on fulfilling the above criteria for all new schools. We

are our own strictest judges of our growth. We make a new set of decisions each year about where and how many schools to open. We will not open schools unless we believe we have the capacity to build high-quality schools and unless we have been able to meet every criteria described above for each school. We are careful and diligent stewards of our schools because we owe this to our students, families and teachers and because if we do not succeed with our existing schools, we will not continue to grow. Our families deserve the very highest quality from Rocketship and we hold ourselves accountable to delivering on this quality through our network health and greenlighting structures.

*County Board members raised questions during and after the Public Hearing on June 15, 2011. We request that Rocketship Education's written responses to these questions be submitted to the SCCOE by July 11, 2011.*

**11. Does Rocketship Education on behalf of Rocketship Countywide Charter School have a School Site Council with parent-selected representatives? If so, what elections processes were used for parents to select their representatives? Who are the parent-selected representatives and what are their terms of office?**

Rocketship Education is not a school, so does not have a School Site Council. However, Rocketship Education does currently have a School Site Council with parent representatives at four of the five current Rocketship schools. At Rocketship Education, a School Site Council with parent representatives is established typically six months prior to the school's opening. The parent representatives of this initial School Site Council are appointed by the founding Principal from the founding group of parents. We have found that appointing parent leaders at this point in time is the most effective means of ensuring that the collective vision of the school is established. The parent representatives are appointed for a two-year term, which concludes in September of the third year of the school.

At this point in time, the parents of a school participate in an electoral process where they select new parent representatives for the School Site Council, who are then elected to a two-year term. Prior to this election date, the Principal and school staff notify the school community via the weekly newsletters, announcements daily at Launch and monthly at community meetings, through 'One Call,' and various other communication devices that the terms of the current parent representatives are coming to a conclusion.

At each Rocketship school, there are parent leaders selected from each class and who participate in the parent leadership program, facilitated by the Rocketship Parent Liaison. Individuals for the School Site Council are nominated from these parent leaders. If parents are interested in participating in the School Site Council, then it is important that they also commit to being a parent leader for their class and campus, which is open to all parents. The nominated individuals are then placed in the electoral process for a new parent representative position on the School Site Council. At the community meeting in October of the third year (and each subsequent two years of the school), the parents that are interested in a parent representative position and have completed the nomination form, are then able to present to the parent community their candidacy and why they are interested in these responsibilities. The parents then vote at the conclusion of the meeting and the new School Site Council is created.

In the 11.12 school year, Rocketship Education is planning to implement a new process for selecting the School Site Council. This process will be a two-tiered process where each classroom will select a parent leader. These parent leaders will participate in parent empowerment sessions and partner with the Rocketship Parent Liaison and PACT in their work to increase parent awareness and involvement in San Jose and Santa Clara County. Once parent leaders are selected from each class, then these parent leaders will nominate and select (through an electoral process) three parent leaders that will sit on the School Site Council for the subsequent two years of the school.

**12. At what URL does Rocketship Education on behalf of Rocketship Countywide Charter School list the names of the Board of Trustees for Rocketship Education on behalf of Rocketship Countywide Charter School? At what URL does Rocketship Education on behalf of Rocketship Countywide Charter School post its school specific Board meeting agendas?**

The Rocketship Education Board of Trustees is listed at

<http://rsed.org/index.php?page=board-advisors>

Rocketship School Board meeting agendas are posted at

<http://rsed.org/index.php?page=board-agendas-financials>

**13. At what URLs does Rocketship Education on behalf of Rocketship Countywide Charter School post its "descriptions of outreach and recruitment activities that have been conducted to reach target population," "procedures for application, the public random drawing, enrollment and admission," "evidence of public random drawing preferences consistent with the charter and SCCOE conditions of operation," "information provided to prospective families," and**

**"documentation that start-up enrollment is consistent with enrollment numbers described in the charter"?**

These are posted at  
<http://rsed.org/index.php?page=enroll>.

**14. How frequently does the Board of Trustees of Rocketship Education on behalf of Rocketship Countywide Charter School meet on or near the campuses of its school sites?**

The Board of Trustees for Rocketship Education meets four times a year on or near the campuses of the school sites.

The Board of Trustees for each of Rocketship's schools meet on the school site approximately 3-4 four times a year. There are also monthly community meetings usually attended by one member of the Board of Trustees.

These meetings are open to the public and compliant with the Brown Act.

**15. Does Rocketship Mateo Sheedy School have a School Site Council with parent-selected representatives? If so, what elections processes were used for parents to select their representatives? Who are the parent-selected representatives and what are their terms of office?**

As our first school, Rocketship Mateo Sheedy is part of the same 501(c)(3) organization as Rocketship Education, so its board is one and the same as Rocketship Education's Board of Trustees. This makes it unique in that it is the only Rocketship School that does not have an official board made up of parent representatives. However, there is a strong parent leader structure within the school, with parents taking on school site council-like roles in decision-making and engaging the parent community.

Beginning in 2011-2012, each of the classrooms in Rocketship Mateo Sheedy will implement the two-tiered process where each classroom will select a parent leader. These parent leaders will participate in parent empowerment sessions and partner with the Rocketship Parent Liaison and PACT in their work to increase parent awareness and involvement in San Jose and Santa Clara County. Once these parent leaders are selected from each class, then these parent leaders will nominate and select (through an electoral process) three parent leaders that will represent the School Site Council for the

subsequent two years of the school. The School Site Council at Rocketship Mateo Sheedy will serve in an advisory capacity to the Rocketship Education Board of Trustees.

**16. Does Rocketship Sí Se Puede School have a School Site Council with parent-selected representatives? If so, what elections processes were used for parents to select their representatives? Who are the parent-selected representatives and what are their terms of office?**

Rocketship Si Se Puede Academy has a School Site Council (technically an actual Board of Trustees) with Rocketship parent representatives. The current set of parent representatives are Monica Betancourt, Maribel Cristino, and Estella Torres; they were appointed based on nominations from the Rocketship Principals. During October of 2011, Rocketship Si Se Puede Academy will hold elections for parents to select new representatives to the School Site Council.

**17. What is the full “Green Lighting” plan?**

Please see the answer to question 10 above.

**18. What is Rocketship’s plan for identifying the locations of the twenty Rocketship schools one year in advance of each school’s opening?**

Please see the answer to question 6 above.

**19. How do the nine statutory conditions that the County Board must consider for the reorganization of school districts apply to the Rocketship expansion? The statutory conditions are listed in Education Code § 35753 (a):**

- “ (1) The reorganized districts will be adequate in terms of number of pupils enrolled.**
- (2) The districts are each organized on the basis of a substantial community identity.**
- (3) The proposal will result in an equitable division of property and facilities of the original district or districts.**
- (4) The reorganization of the districts will preserve each affected district’s ability to educate students in an integrated environment and will not promote racial or ethnic discrimination or segregation.**
- (5) Any increase in costs . . . as a result of the proposed reorganization will be insignificant and otherwise incidental to the reorganization.**
- (6) The proposed reorganization will continue to promote sound education performance and will not significantly disrupt the educational programs in the districts affected by the proposed reorganization.**
- (7) Any increase in school facilities costs as a result of the proposed reorganization will be insignificant and otherwise incidental to the reorganization.**

**(8) The proposed reorganization is primarily designed for purposes other than to significantly increase property values.**

**(9) The proposed reorganization will continue to promote sound fiscal management and not cause a substantial negative effect on the fiscal status of the proposed district or any existing district affected by the proposed reorganization.”**

Clarification would be helpful as countywide charter schools are considered under Education Code Section 47605.6 and not by the County under 35753(a). In addition, it has been previously established that Rocketship Education met the requirements under Education Code Section 47605.6 for a countywide charter.

**20. What documents can you submit to support a review of the foundation’s budget?**

Rocketship Education has consistently demonstrated strong financial performance - throughout its four-year history. Copies of Rocketship’s annual audits can be found on our website at: <http://rsed.org/index.php?page=board-agendas-financials>

The attached presentation includes Rocketship’s financial projections over the next 10 years: <https://rsed.box.net/shared/y8g6fecet4hjh3embhoh>

As shown in the presentation, Rocketship has performed significantly better than budget each of the last three years. This serves as one example of the conservative nature of the organization’s budgeting and the strength of its financial management. Rocketship has historically budgeted extremely conservatively in order to mitigate potential cuts in state funding.

**21. Why must the approval of the twenty Rocketship schools occur at the county level? What are the reasons why students cannot be served as well by a Rocketship school that is approved by a district?**

As displayed by written and oral testimony by Santa Clara County school districts, there are well over 20 failing schools located in districts which have no interest in partnering with Rocketship. Based on our experience with San Jose Unified in a previous administration and with Alum Rock Unified in a previous administration, until the district takes a pro-active stance towards Rocketship, multi-school charter contracts of this type are not possible. Without a multi-year multi-school agreement, it will be impossible for us to guarantee that SJ/SV2020 goals will be met by the end of the decade. We intend to partner directly with the most impacted school districts if possible in order to secure

facilities as part of our agreements, which is why we are not applying for all 89 elementary schools currently performing below 875 API as defined by SJ2020.

Rocketship has applied for a countywide charter for the following additional reasons. First, Rocketship offers a unique, innovative academic program to all students in which, students spend a percentage of each day in a highly individualized learning space with online curricula, small group tutors, and leveled reading. This allows classroom instruction to build on foundational skills to achieve mastery at higher levels of cognition. This unique blend of classroom instruction with individualized instruction in Rocketship's Learning Lab has required massive investments of money and intellectual capital. Thus, it is very unlikely that a similar model will be duplicated by school districts in the coming several years and there are currently no other Rocketship Model hybrid schools in Santa Clara County. Over the past several months, Rocketship has raised another \$3 million to invest in making Learning Lab and the individualized academic model to meet the needs of students more efficiently and effectively. Rocketship expects its student outcomes to be consistently as strong as its first schools as it increases the personalization of the student learning experience to make outstanding performance achievable every day.

Adding schools to Rocketship's countywide charter would also ensure a more rigorous level of academic accountability for each school than if approved individually by districts. Over the past few years of collaboration with the SCCOE and through a Rocketship-SCCOE Contract that outlines student achievement expectations for Rocketship schools, the county has become the best charter authorizer and monitor in Santa Clara County. SCCOE has been able to dictate high levels of academic accountability for each Rocketship countywide charter school location, which will be critical in our work to realize the goals of SJ/SV2020 and eliminate the achievement gap within the county by 2020. Through these results, it is clear that the SCCOE has great expertise in closing the achievement gap with these countywide schools. This expertise and focus on having a system of schools in multiple school districts across the county to address a countywide problem as pervasive as the achievement gap that is highlighted in SJ/SV2020 illustrates the need for additional sites under Rocketship's countywide charter.

Finally, a countywide charter will allow for more efficient operations, financing, and facility acquisitions than if Rocketship acquired charters from various districts. Rocketship has a unique model that allows each school to pursue the option of acquiring land and constructing a new facility. As this process is subject to a number of market

factors, the ability to manage facilities acquisition throughout the county will allow Rocketship to be selective about the locations that it considers rather than be subject to isolated fluctuations or “bubbles” in local real estate markets. This flexibility will allow Rocketship to minimize its facilities expenses and ensure the maximum amounts of resources are directed to student achievement. Similarly, through an addition of sites to its countywide charter, Rocketship will be more able to efficiently manage the operational and financial aspects of each school as the compliance and monitoring requirements will be the same for each school rather than particular to each individual district/authorizer.

**22. What is Rocketship’s admission rate for Special Education students? What is the attrition rate? Which students is Rocketship enrolling and which students leave Rocketship schools? What are the reasons students leave Rocketship schools?**

Currently, 5.8% of Rocketship students qualify for Special Education. In regards to admission rate, 100% of students that apply and are selected during the lottery are accepted to Rocketship schools, regardless of their status as Special Education or otherwise. Moreover, Rocketship’s schools do not require students to indicate whether or not they have IEPs as part of our application process. We wish to prevent any perception that we may use this designation as part of the lottery prioritization criteria. Any information concerning a child's limitations or disabilities is obtained after the child's family has been given an enrollment packet, and has thus decided to attend one of the Rocketship's schools. Only after full review of all of these packets, and at times, actual first day of attendance, would Rocketship know the exact percentage of incoming children with disabilities. This process allows us to best serve the needs of all students and ensures that they are accepted in an equitable manner, regardless of disability status. However, this blind selection process also makes it difficult for Rocketship to track recruitment of students designated as Special Education students prior to the lottery. We believe that it is more important to have a blind selection process that encourages all families to apply, decreases the barriers to applications, and further ensures that 100% of students that apply to Rocketship and are selected in the lottery process are admitted to a Rocketship school, regardless of whether they are classified as Special Education or not.

For our incoming classes, last year 5.3% of our students entered Rocketship with an IEP, and approximately another 1.0% are quickly identified through home visits and new parent meetings, then additionally we further designate another 0.75% to 1.25% on average throughout the school year through observation, academic performance,

frequent testing, etc. For the 11.12 school year, we are on pace to have at least 6% or more of incoming students qualify for special education services. We would be excited to further partner with school districts in order to increase this percentage and ensure that Rocketship schools are accepting a percentage of special education students that are similar to districts. This has been difficult to realize previously as districts are not willing to partner in the student recruitment process, which makes it much more difficult for Rocketship to meet this expectation.

We believe that it is also important to consider successful exits of both Special Education and English Language Learner students when comparing populations between highly successful charters like Rocketship and traditional schools. Because of our individualized program and Response to Intervention approach (described in question 29), Rocketship has far more success with special populations than traditional schools. We believe it should be a goal of districts to have comparable exits due to academic proficiency and comparisons should be made based on both currently classified students and successful exits.

For next school year 2011-2012, only two students with IEPs have decided not to return for next year because their families have relocated out of the area or to an unreasonable commuting distance. Besides these two families and the students who are graduating to middle school, all of our students with IEPs are returning.

In addition, the vast majority of all Rocketeers (with and without IEPs) return to Rocketship each year. 90% of Rocketship's 2009-10 K-3 students returned in 2010-11. The prior year this figure was 93%, and the year before that was 87%. Because a large number of our 4th grade students "graduate early" by leaving after 4th grade to attend a 5-8 middle school like KIPP, 4th graders are not included in these figures.

**23. Regarding the twenty-school expansion of Rocketship schools, what is Rocketship Education's plan per district? What is Rocketship Education's vision? What are the challenges and opportunities Rocketship Education envisions?**

Rocketship's vision is that Santa Clara County will have no elementary students below proficient by the end of this decade. To carry that out, we focus on the schools currently not delivering on that sacred compact with the community. Presently, there are 89 schools in that category. We believe schools scoring between 775 and 875 API have a good chance of being lifted above the 875 bar. We believe that the majority of the Rocketship schools in the most impacted districts – San Jose Unified, Alum Rock, and

Franklin McKinley – can be started in direct partnership with those districts, outside of the scope of this charter agreement. We believe that this countywide charter will create the pressure necessary to create real collaboration. Ultimately, most of these charters will be used in other districts which do not currently acknowledge the achievement gap or do not have plans to collaborate with Rocketship to restart their failing schools.

Rocketship believes the main challenge to allow Santa Clara County to eliminate the achievement gap will be political. For decades, it has been believed that low-income families were different and that failing to educate the children of those families was acceptable. Rocketship and others have proven that all children can learn at the same level of achievement and that we have the capacity to solve this problem this decade in Santa Clara County. This disruption is a threat to the way that our education systems are currently organized and we expect continued push-back as the systems reorganize in order to end the achievement gap. While we do not relish the role of catalyst for this transformation, we think it is a moral imperative.

With respect to execution, Rocketship simply looks every year at the schools falling below the agreed upon performance bar and does a real estate search in a one mile radius from that school. We make no plans or priorities with respect to individual school districts; we solely seek to serve every child currently not receiving an outstanding education, regardless of district.

**24. Charter schools have fewer California Education Code (Education Code) provisions with which to comply. Does Rocketship Education believe the reduction of the Education Code compliance serves as an asset to reach high bar metrics? If so, would Rocketship Education be willing to advocate with the California State Board of Education, legislature and Governor for the same reduction of Education Code provisions for the traditional public school sector?**

Yes, it is long overdue that districts are deregulated, and Rocketship has been a vocal advocate of deregulation with increased accountability for districts for several years.

**25. Which California Education Code sections serve as a hindrance for Rocketship Education in meeting its high bar metrics?**

None.

**26. Rocketship Education pays a 10% bonus to individual teachers who meet their metrics each year. How is this bonus pay structure helpful in recruiting and retaining teachers?**

Rocketship Education chooses to employ a bonus pay structure for two primary reasons.

First, it is a well-documented fact that teachers have historically been undercompensated which has severely limited the profession's ability to attract and retain individuals with the potential to have a profound impact on student achievement. Rocketship Education chooses to pay our teachers a higher base-salary than teachers in neighboring districts as part of our strategic effort to recruit and retain top talent when many have higher-paying competing job opportunities available to them. While we could reward teachers with substantial salary increases each year, we choose instead to compensate our top-performing teachers through a performance-based bonus. This serves to both contain costs as these bonuses must be re-earned each year and do not fold into base-salary, but more importantly, to contribute to a greater sense of ownership for student results and a commitment to perform in a manner that promotes student learning and achievement.

Second, we believe that the way an organization delivers compensation sends an important message about what the organization most values and that a strong compensation program has the ability to enhance teachers' understanding about the organization's priorities. By offering bonuses for strong performance, we further demonstrate our commitment to student achievement and strengthen our performance culture. Our teacher recruitment and retention efforts are well-served by this approach as we are able to attract teachers who are compelled by our mission- and performance-driven culture and to reward and retain teachers who have been successful in our schools.

**27. In its PowerPoint presentation, Rocketship Education stated that it did not receive responses from Evergreen School District, Mount Pleasant School District, and Oak Grove School District when it attempted to meet and confer with them regarding the material revision request. Is this still true today? Why does Rocketship Education believe the districts were unable to meet with Rocketship?**

Rocketship has continued to reach out to Mount Pleasant, Evergreen, and Oak Grove. At this time, Oak Grove has responded and we met Tuesday, July 6. However, we have still not received a reply to multiple phone calls and follow-up emails from Evergreen or Mount Pleasant.

In regards to why these districts have been unable to meet with Rocketship, it is unclear. However, we have found that this is a common occurrence when Rocketship engages a district for the first time. Districts often attempt to avoid contact, and, consequently, prevent a charter from gaining any form of approval or contact with the district.

**28. The Ravenswood School District denied Rocketship Education's request for a charter. Rocketship Education appealed to the San Mateo County Board of Education (SMCBOE) and was denied last month in a 6-1 vote. What reasons did SMCBOE provide for the denial of Rocketship Education's appeal? In the SMCBOE's denial, what references were made to Rocketship Education's special education program? How has Rocketship Education responded to the denial by the SMCBOE of the charter request?**

It should be noted that the Superintendent of San Mateo County, Anne Campbell, submitted a recommendation for approval of the Rocketship Education charter (p.8--[http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/BoardofEducation/Documents/Board\\_Agendas/BoardPaket051811.pdf](http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/BoardofEducation/Documents/Board_Agendas/BoardPaket051811.pdf)). Superintendent Campbell recommended that Rocketship join the SMCOE SELPA (not El Dorado, which was stated in the charter and the current SELPA that Rocketship participates in) and comply with the Emma C. consent decree. During the hearing, Rocketship was transparent in our concerns in amending these items. The current Rocketship charters are members of the El Dorado County SELPA. We expressed a concern that having one school in a different SELPA would lead to less consistency and less control of our SPED services, which was critical in serving Ravenswood, which is under an incredibly stringent RSIP (Ravenswood Self Improvement Plan) program. More information regarding RSIP can be found at--

<http://www.law.stanford.edu/program/clinics/youtheducation/pdf/emmac-rsip.pdf>.

In addition, it is unclear if the Emma C. consent decree applies to Rocketship as a newly established charter school in Ravenswood, particularly one that was approved by the County Board of Education. Rocketship requested that items be entered into the conditions to operate that met Superintendent Campbell's concerns regarding SPED services and at that point in time, Superintendent Campbell still recommended the charter for approval (p. 25/26

[http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/BoardofEducation/Documents/Board\\_Agendas/Minutes051811.pdf](http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/BoardofEducation/Documents/Board_Agendas/Minutes051811.pdf)). However, the charter was then denied on a 6-1 vote.

The justification for the denial is as follows:

'The Rocketship petition presents an unsound educational program for pupils to be enrolled in the charter school in the area of special education; and the Rocketship petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition in the area of Special Education.'

Rocketship is planning to appeal the decision to the State Board of Education this fall.

**29. Please describe Rocketship Education's special education program (from resource to special day class, including emotionally disturbed) and Rocketship Education's corresponding philosophy relative to special education.**

At Rocketship, we do not use the term "special education;" instead we refer to our services as the Integrated Services Department - "ISD." We do this because the title embodies our philosophy, which is to fully integrate and include all students at Rocketship Education within our classrooms, schools, learning, and achievement. All of our students receive a variety of services in a number of settings, with the foremost goal being total participation in the general education curriculum as appropriate.

"Integrated" means more than just service integration; we mean integration of resources as well. Our ISD team is comprised of many individuals, but we also extend the meaning of team to many other persons outside of our department. An ISD approach involves the parents, the general educators, and the administrators. These are essential persons for more than just collaborative tasks, actually all team members participate actively in the education of each individual child. Our goal is to provide the least restrictive educational environment while always keeping the best interest of the child foremost in our thoughts.

Rocketship schools organize the special education program and services to provide an *integrated service delivery* in each school. An integrated service delivery approach requires schools to align educational services for students with special education needs within existing structures (grade levels, groupings, looping, Learning Lab, Response to Intervention, etc.) rather than through special and segregated programs. Specialized staff is organized by the needs of each learner rather than by clustering learners according to label. In this model, staff is not assigned to a "program" and placed in a separate classroom. Instead, special and general education teachers work in collaborative arrangements designed to bring appropriate instructional supports to each child in the general school environment. Support is built on culturally relevant differentiation and instruction through universal access of content-driven curriculum.

Rocketship students are placed in the classrooms they would attend without disabilities and then provided flexible instructional opportunities that include, but are not limited to, large group, small group, and one-to-one instructions for those students with more significant needs in the Learning Lab. In Rocketship schools, a variety of curricular and pedagogical options are employed to maximize student learning in an array of teaching arrangements in environments that can be accessed by all learners, not just those with specific disabilities. In the Rocketship model, all teachers are responsible for all learners. On-going support develops the capacity of all teachers to teach to a diverse range of students' learning needs. A system of general and special education teachers proactively supporting students are better able to put into place effective interventions prior to student failure.

With integrated services, all student learning takes place in heterogeneous environments. This means that students are, for the most part, not grouped by similar characteristics in the same way all the time. There are 'seats' in every classroom for every potential learner ensuring FAPE-Free Appropriate Public Education, for all eligible students.

For students identified for possible special education services, the first point of support occurs in the general education classroom with Tier I interventions, which is then supplemented through Tier II interventions in Learning Lab, and for students already identified as special education, then further supplemented by Tier III interventions with ISD staff.

If a referral to ISD occurs, eligibility determination begins with the Assessment Plan and receipt of the signed assessment plan begins the special education timeline. An assessment plan will be developed and the family contacted. A copy of the Notice of Parent Rights is provided to parent with the assessment plan as well. Written parent consent is required before the assessment may be conducted. Parents have at least 15 days from receipt of the assessment plan to make a decision. Assessment may begin immediately upon receipt of consent.

Within 60 calendar days of receipt of the signed IAP, the assessment must be completed and a team meeting is to be held to determine a student's eligibility, as well as to develop the individualized education plan. Parents are to be provided no less than ten day's prior written notice of meetings regarding the educational program for their child.

Program placement is an IEP team decision and written parent consent must be obtained prior to placement. The recommended program placement and services should begin as soon as possible from the date of the parent's written approval of the IEP. A review of each student's IEP must be reviewed conducted at least once annually, including a summary of progress. Re-evaluation must occur every three years to determine a student's continued eligibility or need. Prior to the three year review, the IEP team shall review existing progress towards goals and determine what additional data is needed. All information will be provided to parents in their primary language whenever indicated.

Depending on the recommendations of the IEP team, we will provide designated special education services – these services will serve ALL students regardless of their disability classification.

Rocketship's general education approach is built on a system for differentiating instruction according to student need and implementing and monitoring interventions for all students who are not meeting standards. This design supports the goals of a collaborative model with the Education Specialist, who will be responsible for extending these services to students with special needs to meet IEP goals. We believe this close collaboration between general and special education professionals to serve any student who is experiencing learning challenges will help Rocketship meet its goal of helping every student to reach 1.5 years of achievement in each grade. The Education Specialist will be responsible for implementing an IEP such that the student is able to make adequate progress towards grade level standards.

We also provide speech and language services, occupational therapy services, and vision services, as needed to meet eligible students' IEP needs. The services are provided by certified or licensed professional staff. Service delivery ranges in time and intensity but is always based on the needs of the students as identified in IEP. All services are written up in the IEP, agreed to, and fully executed by the ISD staff with the assistance of the general education staff and administration with only qualified, trained and knowledgeable personnel all based on the needs of the student population.

We also provide more intensive and specialized services for students inclusively that would normally require this type of setting. Our flexible and supportive Integrated Services Delivery model is able to provide all children both the assistance and independence that they need. Although we enroll many students who came from an SDC setting – due to our model, we do not anticipate the need for a non-severe SDC

“placement setting”. To the maximum extent possible, students with disabilities will be educated with non-disabled students. Every enrolled student who receives RTI instruction has an Individual Learning Plan (“ILP”) that includes areas for growth. Because of Rocketship’s structure, particularly small class sizes, small reading groups, individualized instruction in the Learning Lab and time for daily teacher interventions, we believe that Rocketship can serve students with disabilities within the general education program, in the Least Restrictive environment by providing the supports each student needs. However should the occasion rise where we cannot sufficiently meet the child’s needs through our model, in order to ensure access to appropriate learning in very specialized cases, Rocketship will establish a relationship with another area LEA to ensure an appropriate placement for a student.

Likewise, we believe that due to Rocketship’s structure—particularly small class sizes, small reading groups, individualized instruction in the learning lab, and time for daily teacher interventions—Rocketship can serve students with severe disabilities within the general education program and provide intensive specialized instruction or structure as needed. It is Rocketship’s goal to serve all students in the Least Restrictive Environment, with their age-group peers. To ensure access to appropriate learning, RSED employs individuals with the Specialist, Moderate/Severe Credential. Removal of students from the general education environment would only be considered if the student is not meeting goals and objectives with the provision of supplemental aids and services in that setting. This determination would be reached only through the IEP process with appropriate designated personnel, parent in attendance and written agreement of all members of the IEP team.

As a rule, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities will be educated with general education students including non-academic and extracurricular services. Currently all students at all Rocketship schools are served in general education with pull out or push in services to meet intensive need.

In some exceptional cases, when a student may require a placement in a more restrictive setting, Rocketship will consider a referral to NPS or NPA. Rocketship will not make referrals for placement at non-public schools, private schools, or agencies without consultation with the SELPA. If a parent places students at a non-public school, private school or residential facility, Rocketship will immediately inform the SELPA. We currently do not have any students enrolled in NPS or residential facility at any of the Rocketship schools.

Whenever necessary, as evidenced by student need, assessment, or recommendation of emergency mental health provider, a referral to AB3632 (County Mental Health) Services will be made to address a student's mental health needs and potentially access other supports or services for a student and his/her family. We have many ED students that are being served under a 26.5 along with Rocketship as well as many ED students who are receiving their services through Rocketship and other agencies too.

Rocketship's structure and focus on a high quality ISD program has led to 60% of ISD students at RSED in the 10.11 school year being on-track for gains of at least 1.5 or more. We believe that this demonstrates the high quality of the program and the effectiveness of a full integration model. Moving forward, we are continuing to focus on ensuring that in subsequent years, student achievement for ISD students continues to grow and an even higher percentage achieves gains of 1.5 or more.

**30. Rocketship Education requires teachers to visit the homes of their students. What role do the Rocketship Education home visits and work with parents play in meeting Rocketship Education's metrics?**

Rocketship Education believes in a holistic educational model. We strongly believe that teachers are the key critical lever to student achievement. However, it is critical that teachers and schools partner with parents in order to realize excellent results. Consequently, it is critical that our Rocketship teachers create an authentic relationship with parents and families that builds trust in this work. The home visits are at the foundation of building this trust in that this meeting takes place in the parent's environment and creates a different power dynamic. Moreover, it creates an environment that allows the teacher to learn much more about the Rocketeer and their family, while also placing the teacher in a vulnerable position that creates a deeper relationship of trust.

Moreover, partnering with parents ensures that our Rocketeer parents are able to navigate the educational system within the United States beyond Rocketship and more importantly, they are able to advocate appropriately for their Rocketeers beyond Rocketship and beyond 5th grade. As Rocketship parents become involved in Rocketship Education, they will have the opportunity to participate in various opportunities like teacher interviews, budget discussions, parent leadership groups, College Bound (online parenting classes), and even more resources and supports, which ensures that they are even more capable parents, members of their community, and advocates for their Rocketeers and all children in realizing an excellent education. (Please see Rocketship Parent Empowerment attachment)

**31. Rocketship Education has pioneered the use of human capital differently in California's public schools. Focusing on Rocketship Education's hybrid model,**

**how is the unique use of human capital important to Rocketship Education's overall goals and meeting the specified metrics?**

Rocketship believes that teachers should be honored for their unique intellectual capacity to educate children. We believe the system as invented 150 years ago, makes teachers instead into jack-of-all-trades with little time to focus on excellence.

Rocketship's Learning Lab focuses on building students' basic skills, so that classroom time can be spent on social-emotional learning and higher-order thinking skills through the creation of classroom projects. Learning Lab additionally is operated with hourly workers instead of teachers, saving Rocketship approximately \$500,000 per year in teacher salaries and facilities costs. This money is reinvested in higher salaries for teachers, academic deans at each school, and a three-year leadership development program. The combination of the academic benefits of Learning Lab with the resource shift to fewer teachers who are better paid, better supported, and better able to focus on whole-child issues allows for Rocketship's consistent school quality.

**32. If we approve 20 new charters is it possible we are creating a two-tier public school system, with those students who do not receive a lottery space, or who do not apply to Rocketship, staying in the traditional public school system that has been weakened by the absence of their peers now attending Rocketship. What is your response to this concern? Also, what is the possible effect of the absence of the most informed parents?**

In responding to this question, it is important to realize that the United States already has a two-tier public school system. Wealthy parents have the option to move to a neighborhood zoned to high-performing schools or alternatively send their children to private schools. Low-income parents do not have either of these options, and are therefore given no choice in schools for their children in general. Providing low-income parents with the same choice among great schools is the primary motivation for Rocketship in our work to eliminate the achievement gap in our lifetimes.

To that effect, we do not believe that Rocketship's expansion will create a two-tier system. Instead, we believe that because Rocketship will continue opening schools until all children attending underperforming schools are served, we will eliminate the current two-tier system between upper-income and low-income families. We also believe that this external pressure will cause districts to make significant changes in their policies to allow for higher performance with the most at-risk children. Moreover, Rocketship has actively worked to further collaborate with districts through various means like professional development, leadership development program/internships, partnering with the SCCOE in hosting seminars with Ed. Reform leaders, etc., which if districts

actively engage in these items should help address some of their school needs and achievement as well. Over the next decade, as the transition is occurring, our hearts go out to the families who do not get chosen in the random lottery for Rocketship and are stuck in failing schools, but as Rocketship expands and districts improve their schools, all students will receive the chance for a great education by the end of the decade.

Lastly, in regards to the absence of the 'most informed parents,' it is a significant assumption that all informed parents attend charter schools. At our Rocketship schools we see a wide range of parents from informed level to involvement level. In fact, several parents attend our schools because they are 'recommended' by other district teachers (a form of pushing students out) or we are the closest neighborhood school. At Rocketship, we work diligently to involve and inform every parent, but this requires a great deal of effort and work. Moreover, we are currently working to ensure that our parent engagement piece extends beyond Rocketship to other schools, so that additional parents are further informed regarding the Achievement Gap, SJ/SV2020, and underperforming schools. We strongly believe that informed parents will continue to attend local schools, including district schools, and through our focus on great schools for all kids, SJ/SV2020, and parent engagement within Rocketship and beyond parent empowerment should continue to expand and grow throughout Santa Clara County.

**33. How does Rocketship Education's 15,000 student district strengthen the work the traditional public school sector could do with fewer numbers of below-grade-level students? Please elaborate.**

Rocketship believes that by focusing on the most at-risk students, we will be able to feed district secondary schools thousands of children annually who are above-grade-level and have high expectations. We think this significant change for secondary schools in Santa Clara County will allow them to deliver on their academic goals much more consistently without the current costs of remediation.

Moreover, by partnering with districts to 'restart' campuses, this will allow districts to align more of their time, energy, and resources on schools that are close to eliminating the achievement gap (i.e. between a 775 and 875 API). Currently, districts are focusing an intensive amount of resources on their lowest performing schools and often seeing minimal growth, while not being able to focus many resources on their middle tier schools, which impacts their student achievement growth as well. We believe that by Rocketship focusing on the lowest performing schools, districts will be better able to allocate additional resources to the middle-tier schools, where they have demonstrated greater proficiency in ensuring that these schools realize student achievement (i.e.

schools close to 800 API or with a higher percentage of 'Basic' students) and thus, the achievement gap will be more likely to be eliminated throughout entire district schools.

**34. Rocketship Education states that it is interested in restarting district schools, leasing facilities or land at market rates, and/or purchasing land from districts. Does Rocketship view this as a potential win-win? Please explain?**

The restart of schools and lease of facilities at market rates is beneficial to both districts and Rocketship. Engaging with district to lease and/or purchase land and/or close school campuses is both economically efficient for Rocketship and economically lucrative for the district. Launchpad's private market acquisitions of Rocketship campuses presently range from \$600,000 to more than \$1,500,000 and its lease agreements net approximately \$120,000 annually for neighborhood non-profit. When districts have underutilized facilities or real estate available in a neighborhood in which Rocketship wants to locate, purchasing or leasing the site from the district will net Rocketship savings in its facilities and real estate costs and yield a revenue source for the district. Reuse of an existing school is economically and environmentally more sustainable, and will likely have the least impact upon a community while providing the maximum amount of benefits for the district in terms of divesting of a troubled asset and liability and transferring it into an ongoing revenue. As districts continue to undergo economic stress in California the consolidation of schools and creation of market-rate leases is a key lever for economic viability which districts are currently not using. Rocketship will continue to push for these partnerships.

Currently, the political climate discourages districts and Rocketship from engaging in this type of partnership with sufficient time prior to a school opening because of the perception that difficulty in securing a district facility might table plans to open a school. This county charter agreement removes that impediment to real partnerships, enabling Rocketship and districts to find win-win solutions in these types of arrangements, and making the nature of the transaction transparent for the community at large.

We believe that as the system is reorganized, it is much better to lease or purchase schools from districts rather than build new schools within a few blocks of unoccupied schools. The current politics for school districts is that they will not do this because they believe it will result in more Rocketship schools. This county charter agreement removes that blocker to real partnerships, because it becomes clear that Rocketship will open schools in their districts. The economics of these arrangements work very well for districts, amounting to hundreds of thousands in new revenue per school.

**35. The Rocketship Education professional development model receives plaudits from across the country. What is it about the professional development model that helps Rocketship Education to meet its metrics? What can the traditional public school sector learn from the professional development model? Would Rocketship Education be willing to have an exchange program with teachers and administrators from the public school sector? If so, would Rocketship elaborate?**

See Answer 7 and 8 above for a description of Rocketship's teacher and leadership development programs.

Rocketship is always eager to share practices that will benefit the wider community and would be happy to connect with local districts on any of the topics below to facilitate the sharing of resources and best-practices. Moreover, Rocketship Education has already begun the dialogue with various school districts of how to best share teacher professional development practices and to create an internship program for district school leaders at Rocketship.

**36. Superintendent John Porter of Franklin-McKinley School District has made the suggestion that a next step could be to consider integrating the Rocketship Education proposal into a strategic plan for SJ2020. What are Rocketship Education's thoughts on the next steps Superintendent Porter suggested in his letter dated June 6, 2011, to the County Board of Education?**

We are very interested in pursuing a comprehensive plan with superintendents in Santa Clara County. We do not believe that planning should stand in the way of opening new great Rocketship schools now, since SJ/SV2020 will not be achieved without those schools. We cannot afford to lose another generation of students, as we do every 13 years in our system. Dr. Porter suggests waiting five years. While we agree this process would be outstanding to conduct in parallel, we cannot wait to eliminate the achievement gap if we expect Santa Clara County to be a national leader in education and a great place to live and work.

John Porter mentions, "local school districts would commit to a 5-year timeline and provide a transparent plan to effectively transform systemically low performing schools." Although this sounds quite reasonable and an important goal, this is much harder than it seems. Moreover, waiting an additional five years to address underperforming schools definitely make SJ/SV2020 impossible to realize because until a steady stream of high-performing students are entering our secondary schools, they

will not be able to make up deficits. So, elementary schools must lead and the latest we can have this work completed is by 2017 in order for sufficient graduates to be entering Santa Clara County secondaries to make their task of gap elimination possible.

During the current work with the Gates Compacts, it has become clear that it is incredibly difficult for districts to create these standards and then next steps (i.e. closing schools, restarting, etc.). One of the expectations of the Gates Compacts is to have clear and specific metrics for replicating high performing schools and closing underperforming schools. For this type of planning to be effective, Superintendents and districts would need to commit to these types of student achievement metrics and timelines in regards to addressing underperforming schools, but also be held accountable to these transformations if they do not realize their goals, which is the enigmatic part of the solution. Moreover, districts have often asked for additional time to address underperforming schools and as the San Jose Consortium's data demonstrates (slides in appendix), over the past eight years, minimal progress has been made for many underperforming schools. In fact, the greatest progress has been made in Franklin McKinley, where John Porter has been the most progressive in actively partnering with charter schools, leadership which has led to significant concerns from other Superintendents and districts, as this is not a model that they would like to implement or are willing to implement. John Porter's proposal is a strong proposal in an environment where Superintendents and Districts would be willing to actively engage and collaborate (allow charters to restart schools, lease facilities, etc.). However, based on our current experiences this is not the current climate and we would not see a better solution emerge five years from now without the pressure that this contract will create on improvement.

**37. On June 7, 2011, the Santa Clara County Board of Education received a letter from Katherine Gomez, incoming Superintendent of Evergreen School District, in which she states on page 3 that, "Rocketship Education does not provide a sound educational alternative for the District's students. Rocketship's educational program is premised upon a business model that aspires to open 30 schools in 50 cities by the year 2015. The desire to achieve a critical mass of schools on an industrial scale is reflected in the shortcomings in the Rocketship educational program:**

**Overreliance upon inexperienced teachers who are not fully credentialed; Staff model for primary grades that appears motivated by the desire to reduce personnel costs; Failure to fully understand obligations under special education law. "**

**What is Rocketship Education's response to incoming Superintendent Gomez's comments?**

As described in our answer to Question 7, because of Rocketship's systems, our quality improves with scale. This is difficult for educators from the traditional system to understand, because it is the opposite of the way that a traditional district performs.

**38. Please provide information regarding the potential civil liability effects, if any, upon the charter schools, any school district where the charter school may operate, and upon the County Board.**

There are no potential civil liability effects upon the school district or county board for the schools that Rocketship operates.

Each Rocketship School shall be operated as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. This corporation is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 23701d. The specific purposes for which the corporation is organized are for the operation of a California public charter school for educational services in accordance with the Education Code Section 47600, *et seq.*

Pursuant to Education Code Section 47604(c), an entity that grants a charter to a charter school operated by or as a non-profit public benefit corporation shall not be liable for the debts or obligations of the charter school or for claims arising from the performance of acts, errors or omissions by the Charter School if the authority has complied with all oversight responsibilities required by law. The Rocketship School Articles of Incorporation and bylaws are attached as Appendix X to the charter. Rocketship Education shall work diligently to assist the SCCOE and County Board of Education in meeting any and all oversight obligations under the law to ensure the County shall not be liable for the operation of each Rocketship school.

Further, Rocketship Education and the SCCOE/County Board of Education shall enter into a memorandum of understanding which shall provide for indemnification of the County by each Rocketship school. Insurance amounts will be determined by recommendation of the insurance company for schools of similar size, location, and type of program. The County shall be named an additional insured on the general liability insurance of each Rocketship school.

The corporate bylaws of Rocketship Education and each of its schools shall provide for indemnification of the Rocketship Education and each Rocketship School Board of Directors, officers, agents, and employees, and Rocketship Education and each Rocketship School Board will purchase general liability insurance, Directors and Officers insurance, and fidelity bonding to secure against financial risks.

The Board of Directors of Rocketship and each Rocketship Charter School will institute appropriate risk management practices, including screening of employees, establishing codes of conduct for students, staff, and participating families, and procedures governing financial transactions and dispute resolution.

**39. Please provide financial statements that include a proposed operational budget, including startup costs, and cashflow and financial projections for the first three years of implementation for the proposed additional schools.**

Attached is a financial model that has detailed financial projections (income statement, balance sheet, cash flow statement) for the first ten years of operational history for a “typical” Rocketship school as well as monthly cash flow projections for the planning year and three following years of operation:

<https://rsed.box.net/shared/3filkgrdegbysoz7k2j>

As mentioned in question 9, the major assumptions that form the basis for these projections have been vetted against the historical financial performance of Rocketship’s schools and include numerous conservatism assumptions to ensure the fiscal solvency of each school.

**40. Please provide any available information regarding the facilities to be utilized by the proposed schools.**

Rocketship has approximately 10 site locations in our pipeline at present, and will continue to add to the pipeline 3-4 times annually, while ensuring that sites in the pipeline remain active and available. Disclosure of these sites will negatively impact land negotiations and thus Rocketship and Launchpad need to keep address and exact locations private at this moment in time. However, in general, they will be in East San Jose, near downtown, and other high poverty areas in Santa Clara County. One of the key metrics for site locations that Launchpad and Rocketship use to determine a school location is the designation of distressed or highly distressed census tracts as defined by the federal government for the purposes of New Market Tax Credit investments. All 10

current site locations and the upcoming additional 10 sites that will be in the pipeline will be located in either distressed or highly distressed census tracts.

**41. Please provide any available information regarding the manner in which administrative services are to be provided to the proposed schools. Please also provide any information regarding the administration and oversight, including costs and personnel, to effectively run all proposed Rocketship countywide schools.**

Administrative services will be performed by Rocketship Education's National Staff and Bay Area Team in collaboration with the principals, assistant principals, academic deans and office managers of each school. These services include finance, accounting, payroll, school meal programs, HR, financial and operational compliance and reporting and quality control.

Rocketship's principals, Regional Director, and Regional Vice President are provided with weekly and monthly dashboards which detail the academic, financial and operational performance of each school. These dashboards form the basis of the oversight that Rocketship Education provides the schools and allow senior management to monitor and ensure the academic and financial success of all of our schools.

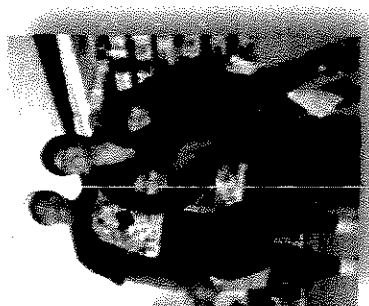
Rocketship Education targets administrative services to represent 3% of school revenues over the next five years due to economies of scale and the systems that we are currently developing. This allows Rocketship to put the majority of its resources into continuing to improve the design, implementation and effectiveness of our academic model.

# Empowering Parents and Building Community

**Home Visits**

- Every Rocketeer, Every Year

**beyond Rocketship...**  
 Selecting a Middle School  
 Empowerment and Advocacy



**Parent Leadership Groups**  
 Parent Empowerment Workshops  
 College Bound Online Parenting

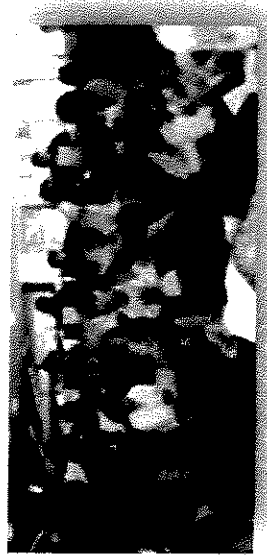


**Monthly Community Meetings:**

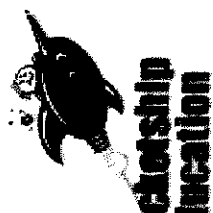
- School Governance**
- Teacher hiring
  - Review Data and Budget
  - School Naming

**Parent/ Family Meetings:**

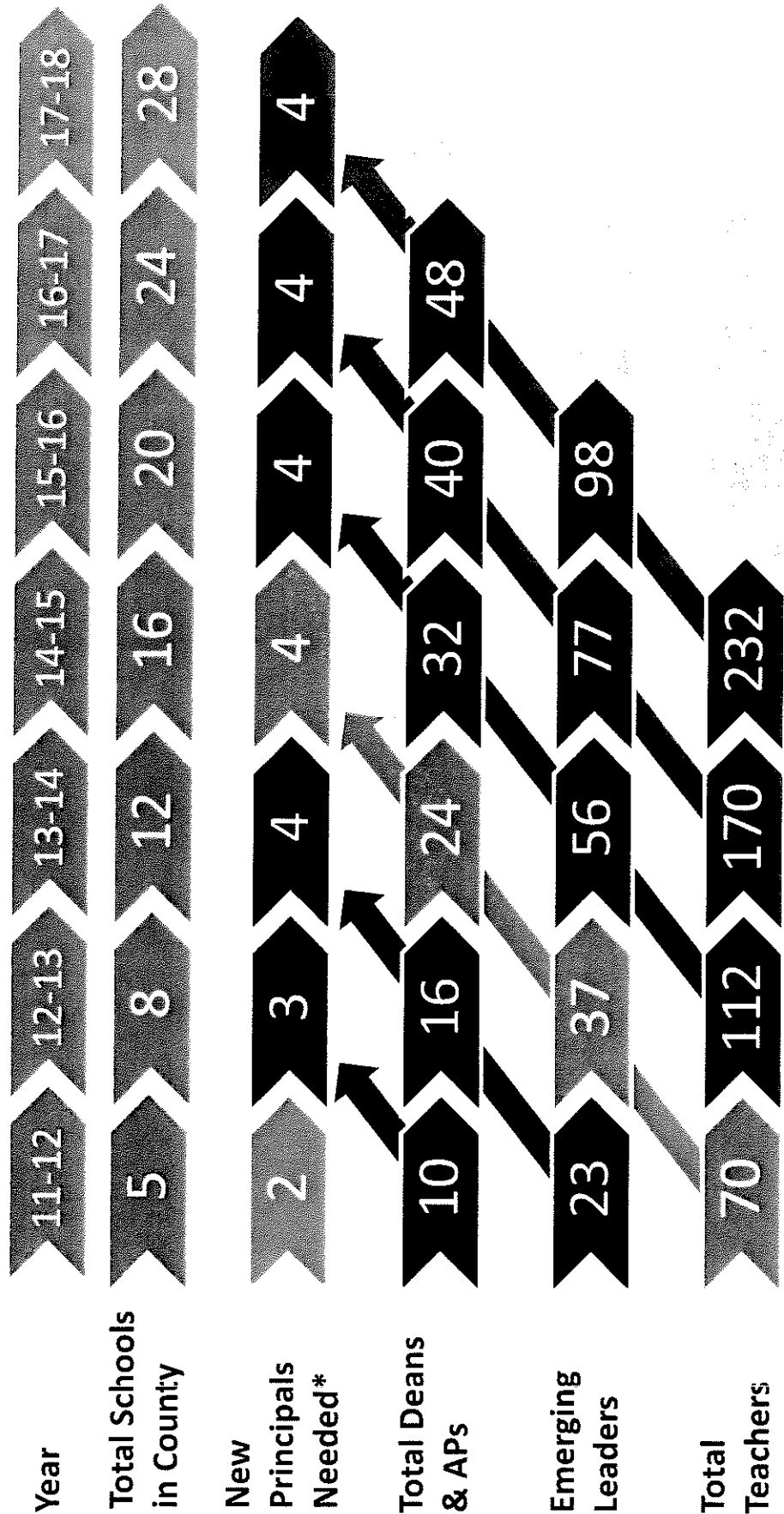
- Celebrate Diversity
- 'Field Trips' for Families



**Volunteer Hours**



# Rocketship in Santa Clara County: Leadership Pipeline



\*Given the ratio of deans and APs to new principals needed, this pipeline will also be able to make up for any leadership attrition that occurs in these years.

