Dear Board Members and Dr. Dewan,

This email is in response to Board member Chang’s questions on item 3B at our Wednesday, 06/11/14 board meeting. Board member Chang asked the following questions under Form/Fund 12:

1. Why did Certificated Management Salaries under Form 12 increase by 38% (from 2013-14 to 2014-15)?
2. Why did Books and Other Reference Materials under Form 12 increase by 3289% (from 2013-14 to 2014-15)?

The primary reason for both increases is that we moved the California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN) program from Fund/Form 01 to Fund/form 12. Specifically, in 2013-14, the CPIN program budget was placed under Form/Fund 01 (County School Service Fund). We corrected the placement of this program to be in Fund 12 (Child Development Fund).

For 2014-15, we completed an accounting re-classification and moved CPIN from Fund/Form 01 to Fund/Form 12. As a result, under Fund 12 for Certificated Supervisors’ and Administrators’ Salaries, there is an increase of $131,705 for the 1.0708 FTE salaries that were re-classed from Fund 01 to Fund 12. We also reclassified the revenue.

I hope this explanation makes sense, but if not, please let me know.

Thanks,
Micaela
This was sent to the full board

Mary Ann Dewan, Ph. D.
Interim County Superintendent of Schools
Santa Clara County Office of Education
1290 Ridder Park Drive, MC 221
San Jose, CA 95131-2304
(408) 453-6511

From: Preston Smith [mailto:preston@rosed.org]
Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2014 6:20 PM
To: Leon Beauchman [External]; Leon Beauchman; Anna Song; Anna Song [External]; Darcie Green [External]; Darcie Green; Michael Chang [External]; Julia; Joseph DiSalvo [External]; Joseph DiSalvo; Grace Mah; Grace Mah
Cc: Mary Ann Dewan; Kristoffer Haines; David Kuizenga; Katy Venskus; Maricela Guerrero; Alicia Ross
Subject: Follow-Up

Santa Clara County Office of Education Board Members,

It came to my attention today that each of you received correspondence from Gordon Lafer, an Associate Professor at The University of Oregon's Labor Education and Research Center. I imagine that many of you already saw this report as well as our response when it was previously circulated amongst most school boards in the Bay Area, but I thought that I would follow-up again just in case.

Mr Lafer was commissioned by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), a consortium of the largest labor unions in the country including the AFL-CIO, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers. On April 24, 2014, he presented this briefing paper at an event at Milwaukee City Hall.

While this paper was purported to be an academic assessment of charter schools and the Rocketship Education model, the numerous inaccuracies, misrepresentations and conclusions with no basis in fact clearly demonstrate that this was nothing more than political propaganda to undermine the work of Rocketship and other high performing charter operators in the City of Milwaukee, and across the nation.

Moreover, as you saw in our presentation a couple of weeks ago, the achievement at Rocketship continues to grow and improve. Our schools are strong and are becoming even greater places to learn--all subjects--each and every year.

In the study, Mr. Lafer purposefully manipulates data in order to create a picture of declining test scores and makes inaccurate statements regarding AYP (not 100% of our schools are in AYP, please see the attached documents for more information). Moreover, the study that he wrote fails to account for our growth over the past six years (over 1200%), the ranges of new students when they come to our schools (opening schools with 500+ students affects our overall API as well as our decision to backfill seats), and most importantly, in his writing of the report he failed to visit a single Rocketship school or genuinely attempt to understand our model and the experiences that our Rocketeers have on a daily basis (i.e. art, gardening, etc.).

In addition, it should be noted that Mr Lafer has never spoken with our school staff or our families. It is made worse by the fact that the researcher who spoke to us did not disclose the sponsoring organization or the intent of the piece and completely misconstrued the information he obtained.
I have attached a response to many of the most glaring errors and misrepresentations in the report from the EPI. In addition, I have included the many highlights and achievements of our schools, that are factual and illustrative to the great work we’re doing.

You may also find the following links interesting as well, which were written in response to the study:

Response from Rocketship Parents

Wisconsin Policy Research Institute Response

Editorial Letter Response to Lafer Study

If you have any questions regarding this study or any other matters, please do not hesitate to contact me directly and I look forward to seeing each of you next week.

Preston

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Preston Smith  
Co-Founder, CEO & President  
Rocketship Education  
(408) 313-0265 | @PrestonDSmith

[R] [F] [T]
On April 24, 2014 the Economic Policy Institute, a consortium of the largest labor unions in the country including the AFL-CIO, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, presented a briefing paper at an event at Milwaukee City Hall.

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While the list of methodological flaws, factual errors and misrepresentations of our schools, our staff and our families is too long to address point-by-point, it is important to set the record straight on several key themes:

**Rocketship believes all children can succeed and deserve access to an excellent public school.**

1. Rocketship purposefully focuses on serving traditionally under-served students and communities.
2. 85% of our current student population is eligible for free or reduced price lunch, and more than 70% of our students are English Language Learners.
3. We are an open-enrollment public charter school, open to all students in the City of Milwaukee. Admission is on a first-come, first-serve basis as required by the State of Wisconsin. If we have more student applications than we can accommodate, students are selected by a random lottery.
4. Rocketship Education has NEVER expelled a student from ANY school.

**Rocketship Education has a clear track record of academic success in high-need urban communities.**

1. In California, where Rocketship has a seven-year track record, Rocketship is in the top five percent of school districts across the state serving a predominantly low-income population.
2. Rocketship's California schools consistently out-perform state and district averages in all grades and subject areas tested. English Language Learners, students with special needs, and children from low-income households see the biggest gains at Rocketship schools.
3. Our most recent NWEA MAP scores show our Milwaukee Southside Community Prep Rocketeers on track to achieve 1.7 years of academic growth in reading and 1.84 years of academic growth in math.

**The Rocketship Education instructional model is built around excellent teachers and staff.**

Exceptional teachers and leaders transform schools and communities. A few remarkable facts about our faculty and staff in Milwaukee:

ROCKETSHIP EDUCATION 350 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 109 Redwood City, CA 94065
1. All Rocketship teachers are fully licensed and meet the federal requirements to be considered highly qualified.
2. The majority of our Milwaukee teaching staff was hired locally, and came to Rocketship with at least 3 years of teaching experience.
3. We anticipate very low staff turnover in Milwaukee. For the next school year we will retain all school leaders and at least 80% of teaching staff.
4. We enjoy a partnership with Teach for America in Milwaukee, but only two members of the Rocketship Southside Community Prep instructional team are current Teach for America corps members.

**Rocketship is committed to educating the whole child and offering all of our Rocketeers new and diverse experiences.**

1. Rocketship believes social and emotional development is critically important. In 2013 we began implementing the Kimochi curriculum in all our schools. This widely respected curriculum teaches our Rocketeers to develop strong inter-personal, conflict resolution and relationship skills.
2. All Rocketship schools dedicate separate instructional time to art and physical education options.
3. Music appreciation is integrated into our humanities curriculum.
4. Southside Community Prep has ample indoor and outdoor playspace (exceeding City of Milwaukee requirements) and our Rocketeers enjoy regular recess time each day.

**The Learning Lab improves student outcomes, supports teacher planning and instruction, and offers students a variety of learning opportunities.**

1. Students have access to adaptive software that identifies their skill level in real time and creates lesson plans tailored specifically to their needs.
2. Software in the Learning Lab also generates real-time data on student performance that allows teachers to adjust lesson planning and classroom instruction more quickly and effectively.
3. All students have access to small group and tutoring instruction in both the Learning Lab and the classroom.
4. Students spend a maximum 80 minutes using technology. Technology time is determined by grade level and student need.
Rocketship Education is committed to developing quality schools using a sustainable business model.

1. Rocketship faculty is typically compensated at a rate approximately 20% higher than the surrounding school district.
2. In Milwaukee, Rocketship leverages private donations to invest in teacher compensation, professional development, and classroom resources.

Rocketship Education has NEVER:

1. Rocketship has NEVER contemplated a model that focused 50% of the instructional day on technology.
2. Rocketship has NEVER opened a school without parent and community demand or before we were ready to deliver an excellent education to all of our Rocketeers.
3. Rocketship has NEVER made instructional decisions to maximize revenue. We are a non-profit public charter network, every dime we receive is invested to meet the needs of our Rocketeers and the legal requirements of our charters.
ROCKETSHIP ACHIEVEMENT & FAST FACTS

rsed.org
## School Demographics

### Mateo Sheedy
- **Location:** San Jose, CA  •  Founded 2007  •  K - 5
- **Number of Students:** 607  •  65%
- **Special Education:** 84%  •  3.8%
- **Empowerment:** PE, art & gardening
- **2012-13 API:** 851

### Sí Se Puede
- **Location:** San Jose, CA  •  Founded 2009  •  K - 5
- **Number of Students:** 623  •  68%
- **Special Education:** 91%  •  3.9%
- **Empowerment:** PE, art, hands-on science & gardening
- **2012-13 API:** 836

### Los Sueños
- **Location:** San Jose, CA  •  Founded 2010  •  K - 5
- **Number of Students:** 609  •  72%
- **Special Education:** 89%  •  4.8%
- **Empowerment:** PE, art & gardening
- **2012-13 API:** 789

### Mosaic
- **Location:** San Jose, CA  •  Founded 2011  •  K - 5
- **Number of Students:** 615  •  65%
- **Special Education:** 82%  •  5.7%
- **Empowerment:** PE, art & gardening
- **2012-13 API:** 836

### Discovery Prep
- **Location:** San Jose, CA  •  Founded 2011  •  K - 5
- **Number of Students:** 631  •  66%
- **Special Education:** 83%  •  5.9%
- **Empowerment:** PE, art & gardening
- **2012-13 API:** 790

### Alma
- **Location:** San Jose, CA  •  Founded 2012  •  K - 4
- **Number of Students:** 555  •  65%
- **Special Education:** 86%  •  5.2%
- **Empowerment:** PE, art & language
- **2012-13 API:** 809

### Brilliant Minds
- **Location:** San Jose, CA  •  Founded 2012  •  TK - 3
- **Number of Students:** 419  •  73%
- **Special Education:** 85%  •  5%
- **Empowerment:** PE, art, yoga/dance, & nutrition
- **2012-13 API:** 893

### Spark
- **Location:** San Jose, CA  •  Founded 2013  •  TK - 5
- **Number of Students:** 544  •  78%
- **Special Education:** 78%  •  6.1%
- **Empowerment:** PE, art & hands-on science
- **2012-13 API:** 893

### Southside Community Prep
- **Location:** Milwaukee, WI  •  Founded 2013  •  K4 - 4
- **Number of Students:** 296  •  60%
- **Special Education:** 95%  •  15.6%
- **Empowerment:** PE, art, hands-on science & gardening
- **2012-13 API:** 893
Rocketship Network Demographics

- 4,899
- 67%
- 5.65%
- 85%

2012-13 API: 822

Rocketeer Staff Breakdown

138 Credentialed Teachers

40 School Leaders
Includes school level principals, assistant principals and business operation managers

14 Certified Special Education Teachers

10% of Rocketship teachers are certified Special Education teachers

32% of Rocketship teachers are current Teach for America corps members

23 Para educators

56 Tutors

20 Enrichment Coordinators

92% of teachers agree “someone at work supports me in my professional growth”

90% of teachers agree “someone at RSED provides me with direct feedback on my performance”

88% of teachers agree “I have had opportunities to grow professionally over the last year”

Staff Satisfaction

Staff Satisfaction is measured by Rocketship’s 2013-14 internal winter staff satisfaction survey.
Rocketship Results & Growth

NWEA

All Rocketship schools set ambitious goals for academic growth. Because our Rocketeers typically come to us at least one full year behind grade level, it is critical that they progress more than a grade level each school year. This is the only way they will leave our schools prepared for middle school and beyond.

Rocketship utilizes the NWEA MAP assessment, which is a nationally normed assessment that is administered 3 times a year to measure student growth. Across the country, 50% of students score at the median (this is the expected level of growth in a single school year for a typical student) or higher. In the 2012-13 school year, 62% of Rocketship students scored at or above the median in math, and 53% of students scored at or above in literacy.

![Graphs showing NWEA MAP Math and Reading results by school and year.](image)
Rocketship's internal benchmark data demonstrates even more substantial growth during the 2013-14 school year. The average Rocketeer’s math scores have increased between 15 and 22 percentage points from October to March. In English Language Arts, our students are scoring an average of at least 3 points higher at all schools, with some schools achieving scores upward of 10 points higher than last March. Finally, for the 2013-14 English Language Arts benchmark, the average scores have increased between 13 and 24 points between October and March at each school. All schools have seen more growth on the ELA benchmark this year than last year, in some schools that growth is substantial.
Rocketship continues to be in the top 5% of school districts serving low income students.

The impact and success of Rocketship schools is dramatic for low income students and English Language Learners. In 2012-13, Rocketeers eligible for Free & Reduced Priced Lunch averaged an 815 API versus a surrounding district average of 783 and a state-wide average of 767. For English language learners, Rocketship scored an 813 API compared to a 778 for surrounding districts, and a state-wide average of 758. Without question, Rocketship Education is achieving extraordinary academic results, particularly for students who are most likely not to have access to an excellent school.
California Adequate Yearly Progress
A shift in standards

All California schools have wrestled with the dramatic changes in the Adequate Yearly Progress requirements of No Child Left Behind. In order to meet AYP in 2012-13, California elementary schools had to have 89.2% of students score proficient or advanced in ELA and 89.5% in math. This is significantly higher than the previous standard. **As a result, 83% of CA Title 1 schools are now classified as under “Program Improvement.”**

### 2012-13 Percentage of California Schools in Program Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rocketship</th>
<th>Nearby Districts*</th>
<th>CA Title 1 schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Nearby Districts include Title 1 elementary schools in Alum Rock Unified, San Jose Unified and Franklin-Mckinley school districts.

While Rocketship is very serious about continuously improving the results of all our schools, it should noted that only 4 of our 8 CA schools (50%) are in Program Improvement status. By comparison, within the 3 school districts in which Rocketship schools are located, 83% of Title 1 elementary schools are in Program Improvement, and only 6 out of 64 schools (6%) met AYP in 2012-13.

6% of nearby district schools met Adequate Yearly Progress in 2012-13

learn more at rsed.org
sent to the board. grace

On Friday, June 13, 2014 9:30 PM, gamhft <gamhft@garlic.com> wrote:

To: The Santa Clara County School Board Trustees
From: Gemma Abels

Your decision on June 18 is important to many people.

Their are many parents in San Jose that have gone through the lottery process (twice), and enrollment process in a school they named, Rocketship Fuerza. This board has been adamant that parent choice is a priority.

You all often talk about student achievement and the achievement gap. Many educators would say that equity is the key to closing that achievement gap. If Rocketship was closing the achievement gap with equity, they would be using their vast philanthropic funds to provide expert teachers, a rich curriculum, and extra curricular activities.

It may be surprising to you, but I wholeheartedly support the idea of parent choice.
As an elected body, you are entrusted with a decision of which choices to provide. The public trusts your decision because you have a staff of experts and knowledge of education. I do believe that people expect you to provide choices that are worthy of the students of Santa Clara County. If you truly believe that Rocketship Fuerza is a worthy choice for the parents and students of Alum Rock, then I would tell you to vote for its authorization. But I would ask you to consider whether or not it is worthy of every parent and student in Santa Clara County. If this school is
worthy of Alum Rock, it should be worthy of Mountain View and Santa Clara and Morgan Hill. If you would not give this choice to all parents of this county, is it worthy for any?

This is certainly an important decision for Rocketship. If this school is not approved, they will open no new schools in 2014 - 2015. Rocketship certainly does not seem to be deterred by not having a authorizer at this point; they are building, enrolling, and naming a school.

On this point, I would mention two things that concerned me about Rocketship's presentation to you. I am attaching a letter from the Charter School Growth Fund. Mr. Smith was confident in telling you that none of the board members have a financial interest in the organization. Later it was explained that every board member fills out the Form 700. As you know, board members state any potential conflicts of interest on this form. Mr. Alex Hernandez did excuse himself from the vote on the loan described in this letter - since he is a partner in the Charter School Growth Fund - because he in fact does have a financial interest in it.

Secondly, Mr. Stern explained the process of funding each school. He explained that most schools were built when real estate prices were lower. The city of San Jose sold the Jackson site to Rocketship for $121,000. Many of the grants and bonds Mr. Stern described for financing charter schools are contingent on being an authorized charter school. The Charter School Growth Fund did not require this as a condition of the loan, but they did have a few conditions that seem to deviate from Mr. Stern's financing description.
ROCKETSHIP EDUCATION
BOARD MEETING

11:00am-12:30pm PST
April 24, 2014

2001 Gateway Place, Suite 230E
San Jose, CA 95110

Dial-in Conference Number: (650) 479-3207
Access Code: 622-834-084
WebEx Link
WebEx Password: sdsu

Teleconference location(s):

1060 Palo Alto Av
Palo Alto, CA 94301

3290 N. 44th St
Milwaukee, WI 53216

22 4th St
San Francisco, CA 94103

3180 Newberry Dr, Ste 200
San Jose, CA 95116

350 Interlocken Bl, Ste 390
Broomfield, CO 80021

1029 McCormack Ln
Napa, CA 94558

185 Spur Ridge Ct
Healdsburg, CA 94558

756 N. Milwaukee St
Milwaukee, WI 53202

All board materials are online and will be available at the meeting.
1. Call to Order (11:00am)

2. Public Comment on Off-Agenda and On-Agenda Items (11:05am)

3. Closed Session\(^1\) (11:10am-12:20pm)\(^2\)
   a. Tamien Litigation (11:10am-12:10pm)
      i. Counsel will update Board on litigation between Santa Clara County Office of Education and San Jose Unified School District (Case No. 113CV241695) and Brett Bymaster (Case No. 113CV241932) related to Tamien Project and Rocketship Education indemnification. Board will discuss appeal of statement of decision issued March 7, 2014 and writ and order dated April 7, 2014.

   b. Countywide Benefit Charter Litigation (12:10pm-12:20pm)
      i. Counsel will update the Committee on a complaint filed on February 4, 2014 by the Franklin McKinley School District, Mount Pleasant Elementary School District, Alum Rock Union Elementary School District, and Evergreen School District (Case No. 114CV260070) against the Santa Clara County Office of Education and Santa Clara County Board of Education related to the latter entity’s approval of twenty countywide benefit charters allocated to Rocketship Education on December 14, 2011. The complaint names Rocketship Education as a real party in interest. Rocketship Education and the Santa Clara County Office of Education/Santa Clara County Board of Education filed a joint demurrer on March 26, 2014. No board action is requested.

4. Report of Actions Taken in Closed Session (if required) (12:20pm)

5. Consent Item(s) (12:25pm-12:30pm)
   a. Financing
      i. Adopt resolution (attached as Exhibit A) authorizing borrowing an amount not-to-exceed $7,000,000 from the Charter School Growth Fund and subsequently lending those funds to Launchpad Development Company for the construction of the Rocketship Jackson facility. Delegate authority to CBO to execute any documents needed to reasonably apply for and

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\(^1\) As permitted by California Government Code Sections 54956.9

\(^2\) Closed session conference number, WebEx information, and exhibits will be made available separately to board members.
enter into this loan, provided that the terms are materially consistent with the substantially final loan documents attached as Exhibit B.

6. Adjourn (12:30pm)
RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF ROCKETSHP EDUCATION
4-24-14 (AGENDA ITEM 5(A))

WHEREAS, Rocketship Education, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation ("Rocketship"), operates eight (8) public elementary charter schools in Santa Clara County, California.

WHEREAS, on February 28, 2013 Rocketship’s Board of Directors (the “Board of Directors”) approved opening a new public elementary charter school located at 70 S. Jackson Avenue in San Jose, California, with operations commencing in August 2014 (the “Jackson School”).

WHEREAS, Rocketship has obtained a charter from the Santa Clara County Office of Education for Jackson School and is in the process of applying for a charter from the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District as an alternative option for the Jackson School.

WHEREAS, Launchpad Development Twelve LLC, a California limited liability company (“Launchpad Twelve”) currently leases approximately 1.35 acres of land, more or less, and a commercial building commonly known and referred to as 70 S. Jackson Avenue, San Jose, California from certain entities pursuant to the terms of a lease (the "Launchpad Twelve Leasehold Property"), and currently owns the fee interest in an adjacent parcel of approximately 10,000 square feet (the "Launchpad Twelve Property") (collectively, the Launchpad Twelve Leasehold Property and the Launchpad Twelve Property are referenced herein as the “Rocketship Jackson Site”). Launchpad Twelve desires to construct on the Rocketship Jackson Site an additional building, recreation facilities, landscaping and parking facilities, which when completed, together with the existing commercial building, will be operated by Rocketship as the Jackson School pursuant to a lease agreement between Launchpad Twelve and Rocketship. The “Project” comprises the development of and the renovation of the existing commercial building and the construction of the additional building, recreation facilities, landscaping and parking facilities on the Rocketship Jackson Site. Launchpad Development Company, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation (“Launchpad”) is the sole member and managing member of Launchpad Twelve.

WHEREAS, on February 13, 2014 the Business Committee of the Board of Directors approved providing financial support to Launchpad for development of the Jackson School.

WHEREAS, Rocketship and CSGF Revolving Facilities Loan Fund LLC, a Delaware limited liability company (“CSGF”) desire to enter into that certain Loan Agreement (the “CSGF Loan Agreement”) pursuant to which CSGF has agreed to make a loan to Rocketship in the amount of Seven Million and No/100 Dollars ($7,000,000) (the “CSGF Loan”), which loan will be evidenced by that certain Promissory Note in the amount of Seven Million and No/100 Dollars ($7,000,000) (the “CSGF Note”). Rocketship will also enter into that certain Collateral Assignment Deed of Trust (the “Collateral Assignment”) pursuant to which Rocketship will collateralize its right, title and interest in the Deed to CSGF and Rocketship will enter into that certain Collateral Assignment Leasehold Deed of Trust (the “Leasehold Collateral Assignment”) pursuant to which Rocketship will collateralize its right, title and interest in the Leasehold Deed to CSGF. Rocketship will also execute and deliver to CSGF that certain Allonge (the “Allonge”) with respect to the Rocketship Note for the benefit of CSGF (collectively, the CSGF Loan Agreement, the CSGF Note, the Collateral Assignment, the Leasehold Collateral Assignment, and the Allonge are referenced herein as the “CSGF Loan Documents”).

WHEREAS, in connection with the Project, Rocketship desires to make a loan to Launchpad Twelve in the amount of Seven Million and No/100 Dollars ($7,000,000) (the “Rocketship Loan”)
which loan will be evidenced by that certain Subordinated Promissory Note (the "Rocketship Note") in the amount of Seven Million and No/100 Dollars ($7,000,000) issued by Launchpad Twelve for the benefit of Rocketship. Launchpad Twelve will also enter into that certain Subordinated Deed of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, Security Agreement and Fixture Filing (the "Deed") with respect to the Launchpad Twelve Property and that certain Subordinated Leasehold Deed of Trust, Assignment of Leases and Rents, Security Agreement and Fixture Filing (the "Leasehold Deed") with respect to the Launchpad Twelve Leasehold Property, each for the benefit of Rocketship (collectively, the Rocketship Note, the Deed and the Leasehold Deed are referenced herein as the "Rocketship Loan Documents").

WHEREAS, Rocketship’s entry into the CSGF Loan and subsequent entry into the Rocketship Loan will allow for timely construction of the Jackson School.

WHEREAS, the CSGF Loan Documents and the Rocketship Loan Documents and any and all other instruments, documents and agreements, as shall be applicable and necessary or desirable in the opinion of any Authorized Officer referred to below, in connection with any of the foregoing agreements, instruments and transactions are collectively referred to herein as the "Transaction Documents".

WHEREAS, the transactions contemplated by the foregoing are reasonably expected to benefit Rocketship.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Directors hereby resolves as follows:

Section 1. The Chairperson, the Chief Business Officer, any Vice President or any other officer of Rocketship (each an "Authorized Officer") and any other officer of Rocketship (each an “Authorized Officer”) are each hereby individually authorized and directed, in the name and on behalf of Rocketship, to negotiate the terms of and to execute in the name and on behalf of Rocketship and deliver each Transaction Document, to the extent each such Transaction Documents are required in connection with the Rocketship Loan and the CSGF Loan, with such terms and provisions thereof as the Authorized Officer or Authorized Officers executing each such Transaction Documents shall deem proper, such execution by such officer to be conclusive evidence that such officer deems all of the terms and provisions thereof to be proper and of the approval thereof by this Board of Directors. The Secretary or any Assistant Secretary of Rocketship or any Authorized Officer are hereby each individually authorized to attest any Transaction Documents where such attestation is required.

Section 2. Each Authorized Officer of Rocketship specified in Section 1 is hereby authorized and directed, in the name and on behalf of Rocketship, to take such actions and to execute and deliver such other certificates, instruments, notices, agreements and other documents as may be required or as such officer may deem necessary, convenient, advisable or proper in order to carry out and perform the obligations of itself under the Transaction Documents and any other documents, instruments, certificates and agreements to which Rocketship is a party and which are to be executed and delivered by Rocketship in connection with the transactions contemplated by the Transaction Documents, all such actions to be performed in such manner, and all such documents, instruments, certificates and agreements to be executed and delivered in such form, as the Authorized Officer performing or executing the same shall approve. The performance or execution thereof by such Authorized Officer to be conclusive evidence of the approval thereof by such officer and by this Board of Directors.

Section 3. All actions and deeds heretofore done or taken by any Authorized Officer, on behalf of Rocketship, in their capacity as such Authorized Officer, and all things done by their authority in entering into, executing, acknowledging or attesting any arrangements, agreements, instruments or documents in carrying out the terms and intentions of the foregoing recitals and resolutions and with respect to the Transaction Documents are, hereby ratified, approved and confirmed in all respects. This
Resolution shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its adoption and the authorizations herein set forth shall remain in full force and effect for the term of the Transaction Documents and all renewal terms thereof.

Section 4. This resolution may be signed in multiple counterparts (including by facsimile), each of which when taken together shall constitute one document.
Draft Version

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on April 24, 2014, as follows:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAINED:

_____________________
Secretary
March 21, 2014

Preston Smith, CEO
Andrew Stern, CBO
Laura Kozel, VP of Facilities
Rocketship Education

Re: Rocketship Jackson Financing

Dear Mr. Smith, Mr. Stern and Ms. Kozel,

The Charter School Growth Fund ("CSGF") is pleased to present for your consideration a draft outline of terms and conditions (the "Term Sheet") for financing the Rocketship Jackson ("RSJ") project located at 70 S. Jackson Avenue in San José, California (the "Project").

This Term Sheet has been developed prior to full underwriting, and the terms outlined below are non-binding and subject to final approval under CSGF’s internal approval process. Additional terms and conditions may apply to any loan commitment, and any commitment would only be considered if CSGF determines that it has adequate funds available to make a loan such as that set forth below.

The terms and conditions of the loan would be as follows:

**Lender**

CSGF REVOLVING FACILITIES LOAN FUND LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, conducting business as Charter School Growth Fund, with offices at 350 Interlocken Boulevard, Suite 390, Broomfield, Colorado 80021 ("CSGF").

**Borrower**

Rocketship Education ("Rocketship" or "RSED"), a California Non-Profit Corporation, with offices at 350 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 109, Redwood City, CA 94065

**Use of Proceeds**

RSED shall use the proceeds of the financing (the "Loan") exclusively for the acquisition and construction of the Project and shall immediately repay any portion of the Loan not used for such purposes.

**Loan Closing**

Closing on the Loan will not occur until the following have been submitted to CSGF for review:

- Signed legal documents from an organization, not currently an investor in the Lender, to provide at least $3.5 million to Charter School Growth Fund in support of the Project
- Loan Documents between Rocketship and Launchpad Development Twelve, LLC ("LP12" or "Developer") related to the Jackson project
- Assignment to Lender of all security interests in the Project (Deed of Trust, Subordinate Security Agreements, etc) between Borrower and Developer
- Repayment of all outstanding loans between Lender and Borrower
- Repayment of all outstanding invoices between Lender and Borrower
Loan Amount $7.0 million

Term 18 months from the date of closing

Interest Rate The Loan would bear interest on the outstanding principal at a fixed rate of 3.75% per annum (based on a 360-day year). Such interest shall accrue and be due and payable at the end of the term of the loan.

Loan Repayment The entire unpaid principal amount of the Loan, together with all accrued unpaid interest shall be due and payable at the end of the term of the loan.

Security As mentioned above, Lender is taking a subordinated position with respect to all of Borrower’s deposit accounts, senior debt obligations, amounts owed to general trade creditors and all other unconditional, unsecured, senior and subordinated debt obligations of Borrower.

Lender is requiring full assignment of Borrower’s security interests in the Project and is requiring the assignment of a Deed of Trust should the Loan not be repaid by November 1, 2014. Additionally, Lender is requiring to be repaid upon repayment of the loan between Borrower and Developer.

Prepayments Borrower may make voluntary prepayments of principal hereunder from time to time without penalty or premium.

Fees and Expenses All costs associated with closing are to be paid by the Borrower, including but not limited to attorney’s fees.

Default In case an Event of Default shall occur and be continuing, the unpaid balance of the Loan may be declared and become due and payable.

Other Loan Terms Acceptable appraisal, environmental study, survey, title insurance, and hazard insurance with respect to the Property will be required.

CSGF will require appropriate evidence that the proposed development of the Property has received all necessary legal and governmental approvals.

Please review the above terms and conditions and feel free to call me with any questions or comments you may have. This Term Sheet is not a commitment letter, and the above terms and conditions are not binding on CSGF. Additional terms and conditions may apply to any loan commitment. Approval of and commitment for any loan by CSGF is evidenced only by a firm commitment letter.
We are looking forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Richard Billings
Chief Financial and Operating Officer
Charter School Growth Fund
This was sent to the board.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

---

From: Liliana Casillas <lcasillas@UnivisionRadio.com>
To: leon_beauclman@sccoe.org <leon_beauclman@sccoe.org>; michael_chang@sccoe.org
< michael_chang@sccoe.org>; josephsd1@aol.com <josephsd1@aol.com>; darcie_green@sccoe.org
< darcie_green@sccoe.org>; julia_hover-smoot@sccoe.org <julia_hover-smoot@sccoe.org>; grace_mah@sccoe.org
< grace_mah@sccoe.org>; anna_song@sccoe.org <anna_song@sccoe.org>

Subject: Rocketship
Sent: Mon, Jun 16, 2014 7:25:14 PM

Hi,

At the last Board Meeting I kept hearing children’s test scores at RSSP.

Pls. see attachment

You’ll realize RSSP it’s all about test the scores and children are seeing

injustices occurring at the school back to back and no one speaking to these children why.

Thanks

Lily Casillas
June 16, 2014

Dear Santa Clara County Board Members,

I recently dis-enrolled my 3rd grade son from Rocketship Si Se Puede. Many other parents have done the same and I want you to know more about what the school is like and how parents and students are treated. Here some examples. I have many more and know parents who would also come forward but are too afraid to speak out.

It's been two years my son started getting bullied in the classroom and during their breaks. I met with the principal of Si Se Puede regarding the bullying that has occurred over the years. The most recent a bully pushed my son almost to the ground and held up another child by his t-shirt just to get the teacher's attention. The principal said he doesn't care what the bullies do inside or outside the classroom all he cares about is their test scores. He said, "Got it that's my main focus. Move your child to another classroom for all I care but I will not make any changes. I will allow him to do as he pleases. If you don't like it then go to my boss Preston Smith." The following week the boy grabbed the phone cord and started to strangle a classmate inside the classroom. It was a scary moment because the teacher was not aware of what was going on busy in a group setting. Had it not been classmates telling the bully to let him go he could've died. I warned the principal you let bullies do as they please with no discipline or consequences taking place, it will only get worse and it did. To this day, the boy continues bullying other children in the school. Teachers are not allowed to say anything to him but ignore the child acting up in class. He continues disrupting by shouting out bad words to students and teachers throwing items at them.

No Bathroom Breaks during class - Children Urinating - Children are not allowed to use the bathroom during long class periods. My child developed a urinary tract infection (I can provide doctor's verification) and it could've been avoided. MANY CHILDREN are urinating on their pants because they're taught not to go during the duration of that class time. I went to the school several times and many times saw children in the office waiting for their parent to show up due to the child urinating unable to hold it in any longer and other times parents were not notified until their child spoke up. This does not just happen in Kindergarten. It happens in the other grades too.

Learning Lab – for 100 minutes at a time. My child would say to me "Mom I felt dizzy" he would get headaches and get tired focusing too long looking at the screen. My child would say, "I wish there was a teacher instead of looking directly at the computer."

Rocketship emphasizes community but towards last ones I attended very few parents showed up. Couple of parents brought to my attention they were discouraged at how the school is being run and that's why they're no longer attending. Last mandatory meeting parents were told voicemail left on their phones if you don't come to our June 9th Exhibition night your child will not get to go Wednesday's Field trip. Parents coming to the school Si Se Puede during class time are left not wanting to come back again. The staff looks at you but does not acknowledge or greet. Yard Duty staff use excessive authority and are constantly yelling, scolding, and taking lunch recess away for no reason. The PE Coach is unprofessional, rude, does not greet parents and talks back to children when they have not done anything. He sends some to the principals' office for no reason. At the last minute the coach would think of an activity to do but the children were getting hurt and when children complained to the instructor he lashed out at them. The principal says he didn't know. I addressed the matter to them. Unfortunately, he didn't do anything about it because the abuse from the yard duties still continues to this day.
Because I dis-enrolled my son from Rocketship, I received direct retaliation saying they're unable to provide my child's academic records and lost a recent 504 plan with everyone's signatures on it asking me to come back and re-sign due to the staff no longer being there. The Assistant Principal mentioned if need be they will create a report card based on the teacher's input. It is unacceptable that they would lose my son's records.

UNFORTUNATELY MANY PARENTS ARE NOT SPEAKING UP IN FEAR OF RETALIATION AND NOT KNOWING THEIR RIGHTS, UNABLE TO SPEAK ENGLISH, BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE PAPERS TO LIVE IN THIS COUNTRY. THEY LIVE IN FEAR AND SADNESS UNABLE TO HELP, SUPPORT, ADVOCATE FOR THEIR CHILDREN. AND ROCKETSHP TAKES ADVANTAGE BECAUSE THEY KNOW THE MAJORITY OF PARENTS WILL NOT SPEAK UP.

My child had endured bullying and I emailed the staff, had meetings with the principal, and other upper Rocketship employees including Preston and was not able to get support from them until I told the Principal if my child gets hurt again by the same bullies, I will contact the police. My son is smart, friendly, honest, and unfortunately kept quiet of everything that happened to him at school until he felt safe at home to talk about it. There would be days he would come crying, scared, stressed, frustrated not wanting to go back to that school because the same bullies wouldn't leave him alone mentally, physically bullying him. Principal and staff would tell him you are not to defend yourself, talk to a staff member. There should be alternative ways to help a child face bullies. Instead they don't provide any support. I feel staff at this school is not doing their job as they are supposed to and amongst them they cover up all the corruptions and violations that are constantly going on at that school. Children are truly suffering with so much pressure. Especially during test times, my child would be stressed to the point he wanted to throw up. He said he was afraid he wouldn't finish the test in time and would have nightmares before.

When I spoke at the board meeting against Rocketship, for the first time I felt relief to finally let out what has happened as I remained silent for too long.

Please do not let this school expand.

Sincerely,


Lily Casillas
On Monday, June 16, 2014 5:00 PM, Roxana Marachi <roxana.marachi@sjsu.edu> wrote:

Dear Santa Clara County Board of Education Trustees,
Please find attached a letter outlining issues and concerns to consider related to the Rocketship Jackson Petition.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 408.421.5910.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you again on Wednesday evening,

Roxana Marachi

Dr. Roxana Marachi
Associate Professor
Department of K-8 Teacher Education
Connie L. Lurie College of Education
San Jose State University
http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/marachi
June 16th, 2014

To: Santa Clara County Board of Education Trustees

From: Roxana Marachi, Ph.D

Re: Issues to Consider Regarding Rocketship Petition

Dear Santa Clara County Board of Education Trustees,

I spoke briefly at the June 4th hearing to recommend denial of the petition for Rocketship Jackson. In January, when the Board was considering a petition for 5 Rocketships in Morgan Hill, I had also sent an email documenting a series of concerns regarding the instructional model at Rocketship schools (that letter is again attached below for your consideration).

My visits to both the Los Sueños and Si Se Puede campuses in January and June of this year have only amplified these concerns.

I understand that the Board is under heavy pressure from many levels to move forward with Rocketship Jackson. My hope and trust is that the following issues will be addressed in your deliberations and in the future as Rocketship continues to pitch for expansion.

I. Individualized Learning Specialists (Un-credentialed staff delivering instruction)

According to the Alum Rock District Staff Report:
“...This Rocketship instructional model employs a mix of qualified instructional staff including Teachers and Individualized Learning Specialists (ILS) in each school. All of these positions are engaged in full-time student instruction, some providing group instruction in the classroom, and others providing personalized instruction, with students rotating to different subject areas during the day.” (Petition at 66.)

The Charter Act provides: “Teachers in charter schools shall hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit, or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold.” (Education Code section 47605(f).)

- The qualifications of Individualized Learning Specialists are low.
- No credential or even high school diploma or GED required. (Petition at 139-140.)
- According to the Petition, the responsibilities of the RSAR Assistant Principal do not include the direct supervision of the ILSs and lacks any direct connection and reference to the Learning Lab. (Petition at 134-136.)
- Paraprofessional (teaching assistant) Requirements for Title I Programs:
- NCLB requires that all paraprofessionals who assist with instruction in Title I supported programs or schools must meet the NCLB paraprofessional requirements. (http://www.cde.ca.gov/nclb/sr/tq/paraprofessionals.asp)

- Paraprofessional Requirements
  - Title I paraprofessionals whose duties include instructional support must have:
    1. High school diploma or the equivalent, and
    2. Two years of college (48 units), or
    3. A. A. degree (or higher), or
    4. Pass a local assessment of knowledge and skills in assisting in instruction.

- [Alum Rock] Staff Analysis:
- Per the specific terms of the Petition, Individualized Learning Specialists appear to be performing work (instruction) which requires a credential per the Charter Act.
• Per the terms of the Petition, the ILS qualification requirements do not meet the NCLB paraprofessional requirements.
• The use of Individualized Learning Specialists as outlined in the Petition may result in RSAR failing to meet the minimum requirement of 54,000 instructional minutes for 4th and 5th graders per Education Code."

A. Board Trustees are encouraged to examine a) the extent to which non-credentialed teachers are delivering instruction (unsupervised by a credentialed teacher) in current and proposed Rocketship schools and b) the legality of this practice.

The following excerpt from the 2013 IES review of the 2011 DreamBox study conducted at the Rocketship schools also indicates that in some cases ILS staff "sometimes may have been out of the computer lab, at which times the students would be supervised by support staff."

Support for implementation DreamBox Learning “does not prescribe a specific role for teachers” (Wang & Woodworth, 2011, p. 3). The computer labs in which students received DreamBox Learning instruction were run by lab coordinators, noncredentialed hourly staff who played a minimal role in instruction. The authors noted that lab coordinators sometimes may have been out of the computer lab, at which times the students would be supervised by support staff.

B. Board Trustees are encouraged to ensure that all students enrolled in Rocketship schools have immediate and continual access to credentialed teachers responsible for high quality instruction.

II. Unsound Educational Model - Extended Screen Time Developmentally Inappropriate for Young Children

At the June 4th meeting, I raised concern about the developmentally inappropriate practice of placing very young children in solo-screen time conditions for extended periods of time (up to 90 minute blocks without a break). According to the American Optometric Association,

"Extensive viewing of the computer screen can lead to eye discomfort, fatigue, blurred vision and headaches. However, some unique aspects of how children use computers may make them more susceptible than adults to the development of these problems.

The potential impact of computer use on children’s vision involves the following factors: Children often have a limited degree of self-awareness. Many children keep performing an enjoyable task with great concentration until near exhaustion (e.g., playing video games for hours with little, if any, breaks). Prolonged activity without a significant break can cause eye focusing (accommodative) problems and eye irritation.

Accommodative problems may occur as a result of the eyes' focusing system "locking in" to a particular target and viewing distance. In some cases, this may cause the eyes to be unable to smoothly and easily focus on a particular object, even long after the original work is completed.

Children are very adaptable. Although there are many positive aspects to their adaptability, children frequently ignore problems that would be addressed by adults. A child who is viewing a computer screen with a large amount of glare often will not think about changing the computer arrangement or the surroundings to achieve more comfortable viewing. This can result in excessive eye-strain. Discomfort can also result from dryness due to infrequent blinking. Also, children often accept blurred vision caused by nearsightedness (myopia), farsightedness (hyperopia), or astigmatism because they think everyone sees the way they do. Uncorrected farsightedness can cause eye strain, even when clear vision can be maintained."

A. Board Members are encouraged to verify bell schedules and actual time spent by young children in the learning labs. The time range reported by Mr. Smith of 20-40 minutes of ‘actual screen – time’ for kindergartners is inconsistent with reports at the schools.

According to the publicly available 2013-2014 Rocketship Mosaic Parent Handbook, (page 29), one cohort of Kindergartners is in the Learning Labs for 70 minutes per day, and another for 115 minutes per day. The 1st grade teacher Jenifer Merz at Si Se Puede confirmed on June 9th that her students have at least 60 minutes of screen time per day. Sharon Kim, Principal of Rocketship Alma also confirmed on June 11th that K-3rd graders at Alma are on the software for at least 60 minutes total per day (30 minutes for literacy, 30 for math). The schedule for Rocketship Jackson indicates up to 90 minutes per day for K-1st grade and 100 minutes for 3rd-5th grades. According to the 2013-2014 Mosaic schedule below from the Parent Handbook below, even a “minimum day” for Kindergartners involves 50-70 minute blocks in the computer labs.

Appendix D: Rocketship Mosaic Daily Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KINDERGARTEN</th>
<th>Regular Day</th>
<th>Moose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:55 - 8:10</td>
<td>Launch</td>
<td>Launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10 - 9:40</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40 - 11:10</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:10 - 11:30</td>
<td>RECESS</td>
<td>RECESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 - 11:50</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50 - 1:00</td>
<td>Learning Lab</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 - 1:50</td>
<td>Enrichment</td>
<td>Enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:50 - 3:45</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Learning Lab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KINDERGARTEN</th>
<th>Minimum Day</th>
<th>Moose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:55 - 8:10</td>
<td>Launch</td>
<td>Launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10 - 9:40</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40 - 11:10</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 - 11:20</td>
<td>RECESS</td>
<td>RECESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20 - 11:40</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50 - 1:00</td>
<td>Learning Lab</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 - 1:50</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Learning Lab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following is the schedule proposed for Rocketship Jackson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Math/Science /Social Studies</th>
<th>Learning Lab/Personalized Learning (Includes Enrichment—P.E., art, gardening, etc.)</th>
<th>Total Daily Minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B. Questions for consideration and clarification:**

1) What are the actual screen time schedules for grades K-5 (disaggregated from the other activities described in the same block of time above?)

2) Are Rocketship parents informed of potential risks to their children’s vision/eye health given lengthy mandated screen times?

3) Given that there have been so many large-scale, frequent changes to Rocketship’s instructional model, how can leaders ensure that a) the current model being proposed would actually be the one to be followed, b) that if changes do occur, they be grounded in educational practices that are developmentally appropriate, and c) that parents and community members would be informed of pending changes and have a voice in decisions that would impact the quality of their children’s learning?

4) If there is a genuine intent to learn and share about what works or doesn’t work with student learning, why has there been only one formal study conducted on the learning labs in the past 7 years? Dr. Lafer notes the following in his May 2014 review of Rocketship proposals for Milwaukee schools:

"In a school where curriculum is based solely on pedagogical effectiveness, one might assume that if instructional materials were judged to have somewhere between "no discernible effects" and "potentially positive effects," educators would start looking for a replacement. But Rocketship has continued to employ DreamBox as a standard part of its math program. Furthermore, both Rocketship and the DreamBox company itself continue to promote the software on the basis of the very claims that federal researchers declared invalid.8 Nowhere on either Rocketship’s nor DreamBox’s website is there any reference to the Department of Education’s findings (DreamBox Learning 2014). This is not the behavior of education innovators eager to identify best practices that can be shared with others; it is the behavior of self-interested parties eager to market their product." – (Lafer, 2014)

5) Given that children are not likely to recognize when they need a break, are recommendations made by Instructional Lab Specialists for children to take frequent breaks and to stop if their eyes are tired or if they feel dizzy or lightheaded?

6) Will students at Rocketship be provided with vision screenings to ensure that the extended lab times are not having detrimental impacts on their vision/learning?

I understand that due to the ubiquity of technology in our times, there may be a tendency to dismiss these concerns. I respectfully ask that you do take these issues into consideration and ensure that if children in
our schools are mandated to spend long periods of instructional time in front of the computer screen, that parents and educators be informed of the risks above and of the following vision skills necessary for school success (from the American Optometry Association):

"Vision is more than just the ability to see clearly, or having 20/20 eyesight. It is also the ability to understand and respond to what is seen. Basic visual skills include the ability to focus the eyes, use both eyes together as a team, and move them effectively. Other visual perceptual skills include:

- **recognition** (the ability to tell the difference between letters like "b" and "d"),
- **comprehension** (to "picture" in our mind what is happening in a story we are reading), and
- **retention** (to be able to remember and recall details of what we read).

Every child needs to have the following vision skills for effective reading and learning:

**Visual acuity** — the ability to see clearly in the distance for viewing the chalkboard, at an intermediate distance for the computer, and up close for reading a book.

**Eye focusing** — the ability to quickly and accurately maintain clear vision as the distance from objects change, such as when looking from the chalkboard to a paper on the desk and back. Eye focusing allows the child to easily maintain clear vision over time like when reading a book or writing a report.

**Eye tracking** — the ability to keep the eyes on target when looking from one object to another, moving the eyes along a printed page, or following a moving object like a thrown ball.

**Eye teaming** — the ability to coordinate and use both eyes together when moving the eyes along a printed page, and to be able to judge distances and see depth for class work and sports.

**Eye-hand coordination** — the ability to use visual information to monitor and direct the hands when drawing a picture or trying to hit a ball.

**Visual perception** — the ability to organize images on a printed page into letters, words and ideas and to understand and remember what is read.

If any of these visual skills are lacking or not functioning properly, a child will have to work harder. This can lead to headaches, fatigue, and other eyestrain problems." [http://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/good-vision-throughout-life/childrens-vision/school-aged-vision-6-to-18-years-of-age?ssn=yt#1](http://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/good-vision-throughout-life/childrens-vision/school-aged-vision-6-to-18-years-of-age?ssn=yt#1)

According to the EdWeek Article cited by the Alum Rock School District Board Staff, "the number of Rocketship students scoring proficient or above in English/Language arts has plunged 30 percentage points over the past five years, to 51 percent". Alum Rock School District Board Staff further note that "nearly all of Rocketship’s schools in San Jose are now in Program Improvement (PI) under the Federal No Child Left Behind Act because of failure to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)".

Teachers, principals, and Rocketship leaders have expressed ongoing concern and awareness of the developmental inappropriateness of the learning labs, especially in the early grades (ironically documented numerous times in Whitmire’s 2014 promotional book, “On the Rocketship”), yet the labs continue to be a core part of Rocketship’s educational model. With no legitimate evidence of long term effectiveness (and many indications to the contrary), the long blocks of daily screen time seem unlikely to be changed as the corporation’s financial model/expansion plans are inextricably hinged to the cost-savings of the labs.

(continued below)

Below is a copy of my letter dated January 7th, 2014 with additional issues to consider. Dr. Lafer’s May 2014 report describes additional context related to the Dreambox study, conflicting research results, and claims made by the software company that are unsubstantiated by research evidence. While my letter was
written prior to the IES revisions, I am forwarding the original version for you to be aware of the correspondence related to the initial IES findings from December. If you would like further background about the methodology, statistics, and reporting of the results of the SRI Study on Dreambox at Rocketship schools, please let me know as I would be more than willing to share analyses and commentary (relevant to all of the above).

January 7th, 2014

Dear Santa Clara County School Board Members,

I am writing to you to provide research perspectives on the Rocketship expansion plans that have been at the core of controversy in our community. My Ph.D. is in Education and Psychology from the University of Michigan and my research over the past 15 years has focused on the impact of relational aspects of learning environments on students' motivation, learning, and behavior. I am a full-time Associate Professor in the Department of Elementary Education at SJSU and am actively involved in local initiatives to support students in our schools (School Linked Services Implementation and Oversight Board, SCCOE Bullying Prevention Task Force, Juvenile Justice Prevention & Programs Workgroup, Technical Assistance for the School Engagement and Suspension Alternatives Project). My faculty website may be accessed here and includes a vitae should you require any additional background.

Despite many concerns raised by community members here, here, here, here, and here, the argument of "school choice" is still upheld by many who are pushing for the Rocketship expansion. That choice is anchored upon an assumption that Rocketship schools are "Closing the Achievement Gap." This is a phrase that has been used specifically by Rocketship in their reports and marketing materials and has been echoed repeatedly by supporters as a basis for support.

Please consider the following background on the roots of the Achievement Gap.

Dr. Anna Suskind, a professor of surgery and pediatrics at the University of Chicago has investigated differences in literacy and language in early developmental years that set the stage for the achievement gap. By age 3, Suskind explains, "children of lower socioeconomic status will have heard about 30 million words fewer than their more affluent counterparts. The way words are directed at these children is also often more directive and less complex, which has a long-term negative impact on vocabulary, literacy, school achievement and long-term achievement…"

Dr. Suskind's research underscores the need for focused attention on language and literacy learning especially in the early school years. Last year, John Merrow of PBS did a special report on Rocketship and noted, "the learning lab saves schools a lot of money, but there's just one problem: They're not really working." He describes, "A problem we saw is that some students in the lab do not appear to be engaged. They sit at their computers for long periods of time seemingly just guessing."

If children are required to stare at computer screens for long periods of their day (90 minute blocks at a time), they face a massive loss of opportunity for speaking, listening, and engaging in active social communication that is the cornerstone of closing the achievement gap. Perhaps that lab time is solely designated for math learning. Alright, then experiences should be designed to allow students an opportunity to explain what they are learning, how they are thinking about the math... to create math
problems on their own and then discuss with peers or their teachers about similarities or differences in how they would solve the problems. Unless this learning time includes some kind of developmentally appropriate interactive communication aspect, the solo screen experience will likely contribute to a widening rather than closing of the achievement gap in literacy. In addition to Rocketship's failure to produce any meaningful differences in language arts scores on standardized tests, their consistent declines in overall test scores over the past five years may be early evidence of such a trend.

*The bottom line is that far more research needs to be done to determine what patterns, if any, will emerge in a variety of student learning outcomes at Rocketship schools.*

*It is both inaccurate and misleading to make public claims about "closing the achievement gap" without the backing of longitudinal research or studies similar to Suskind's that systematically address literacy, language, and opportunity gaps before children enter school.*

I encourage you to consider the following questions:

1. Are the labs/software designed with students' general and literacy development in mind or is the focus primarily on math-fact retention?

2. Do the learning lab programs engage students' higher-order thinking skills (and if so, in what ways specifically)?

3. Do the core designers of the software and/or learning labs have background or expertise in child development or early childhood education?

4a. Will software companies that have contracts with Rocketship have access to student data from the labs?

4b. If not, how would they be able to improve learning associated with their products?

4c. If so, have parents been informed about access of their children's personal information by 3rd party vendors?

4d. If so, would such access be in violation of student privacy protection laws?

5. Has any evaluation been done to determine the quality of software that students would be using for these long blocks of learning time?

We actually have some answers to Question #5. In December 2013, the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences published a review of the Dreambox Software used in Rocketship schools indicating that it has *no discernable effect on mathematics achievement for elementary school students.* When this research was brought to the attention of Rocketship on social media, their public
reply was to dismiss the review and to insist instead that "it's been effective within our blended learning model. It was also named by DA Mag Top 100 best products http://bit.ly/1c02hUub." Examination of that link shows a webinar ad 'Sponsored by Dreambox' on the same page as the Dreambox description (these are not Google ads, rather are embedded with the DA logo and cycled throughout the page). This "DA-Online Magazine" is heavy with ad-based promotions for product sales in schools.

I strongly encourage the oversight committee to inquire about how Rocketship plans to use research that emerges from their labs to improve student learning. Will they continue to dismiss formal research reviews in favor of product-pushing magazines or will there be a revision of methods given data that indicate ineffective practices and/or products?

The Department of Education IES Review also reveals the following context of the learning labs confirming community concerns about high student-to-teacher ratios and lack of credentialed teacher presence in key learning environments.

"DreamBox Learning does not prescribe a specific role for teachers. (Wang & Woodworth, 2011, p.3). The computer labs in which students received DreamBox Learning Instruction were run by lab coordinators, non-credential hourly staff who played a minimum role in instruction. The authors noted that lab coordinators sometimes may have been out of the computer lab at which times students would be supervised by support staff." (p.7)

The following study is also relevant: Active play and screen time in U.S. children aged 4-11 years in relation to socio-demographic and weight status characteristics: A nationally representative cross-sectional analysis. According to the analyses, minority youth aged 6-8 are already at higher risk of both extended-screen-time and low levels of active play.

We know that physical activity is critical to student cognition and learning and that campus size should be planned to allow for students to be active in their school environment. Advocates for the Rocketship expansion are encouraged to keep developmental health research in mind when pushing to pack children by the hundreds into 1-1.5 acre spaces that are 1/10th the size of what the State of California recommends for elementary school campuses.

While Rocketship’s startup approach of rapid growth, fast-fails, and tech innovations may be well suited to the testing of apps, websites, games, and products, we need to remember that young human beings are at the core of this experience. It will not be products that succeed or fail in these schools, it will be our children, who are in their most vulnerable and formative years for cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. Frank Catalano describes similar concerns at the conclusion of this piece predicting the next "tech bubble" in "education."

Rocketship may offer test scores to suggest high performance, however their scores have consistently declined over the past 5 years, have been reported inaccurately, are non-comparable given the
demographic features between schools, students, and selection criteria, and are a limited indicator of quality learning.

Effective integration of technology into schools need not be "reinvented from the ground up", rather would benefit from being built upon a strong foundation of research that has already been conducted in fields of child development, educational psychology, health, neuroscience, literacy, and early childhood education.

*We would all benefit collectively if Rocketship were to turn its funding inward, to improve the current schools it already has, and to conduct research that would determine actual effects of their educational practices on youth over time.*

I encourage you to vote no on the Rocketship expansion proposals.

Research reports on the consequences of market-oriented reforms in several other cities nationally have also provided evidence of the "widening" of achievement gaps in those communities. To overlook these trends in rapid corporate charter expansion elsewhere and to move forward with Rocketship expansions in our own community would be to effectively contradict progress that the Board seems to be genuinely aiming for on behalf of our youth.

For anyone still inclined to draw upon the school choice argument, I encourage consideration of the following research perspectives.

Please feel free to include this correspondence in any public record regarding the Rocketship petitions and feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dr. Roxana Marachi
Associate Professor
Department of K-8 Teacher Education
Connie L. Lurie College of Education
San Jose State University
http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/marachi
Santa Clara County Office of Education Board Members,

As we wrap up the 13.14 school year at Rocketship, I thought that it would be nice to share with you some of the joy and celebrations at each of our campuses.

Each Thursday, I send an internal email to all staff about a range of topics. Below is the email that I sent in mid-May as our Rocketeers and schools prepared for CST testing. As you all know, your work and courage has led to the Santa Clara County Office of Education being our primary authorizer and overseeing the quality of education and schooling that over 4,000 Rocketeers receive daily. Moreover, your work has made the below possible—a thriving Rocketeer community full of relentless, rigorous learning as well as a lot of joy and fun as well.

So, I hope that you all enjoy!

Preston

Rockin' Rocketeers,

It's an exciting time of year! Educator appreciation week—which is everyone at Rocketship and especially our amazing Rocketship school staff's leading the way at our schools each and every day! From teachers, to ILS, to school leaders, to office managers, to BOMs, to support staff, and more—THANK YOU everyone for all you realize for our Rocketeers and families every day!

AND...it's game time. Time for our Rocketeers to show how amazing they are and all that they have accomplished and learned this past year from each of you! This week's reflection is a taste of all the amazing spirit week efforts throughout the Rocketship family in order to gear up our Rocketeers!

Yes, not only are you all amazing educators, but man...we got some moves and rhymes as well.

So, ENJOY, have fun, rest up, see below to get inspired, and as always...

Let's get it done.

Preston

DJ Otte, The Deva, Etch-a-Sketch and the super proud teachers of ROMO show their support for ROMO students during test season 2014 in their annual CST music video: ROMO 2014.
Kit Tollerson was inspired by Pharrell's "Happy" and adapted the lyrics for RBM's CST music video "Ready," which even included our favorite Despicable Me minions.
If the photo below is any indication, the kiddos at RBM enjoy it...here they are at a special CST assembly dancing to "Ready" with Amy.

RSSP shows how It's Going Down in their energizing launch dance:
I'm not sure which took more energy, the dance or preparing wild hair styles for Crazy Hair Day at RSSP:

RSA couldn't help but draw from Ke$ha's catchy tunes for their second annual CST music video "Alma's Here"
And spirt week at RSA was nothing short of groovy (decades day)

RSED's ISE team represented at the Autism walk last Saturday:
RSCP encouraged kiddos to really dress for success during Professional Day:

RLS provided a friendly reminder to their kiddos that, "WE'RE GOING TO ROCK THE CST! in their music video "Rock It!"
And last, but of course not least, The RLS community really came together for a car wash fundraiser for the Alejo family last Saturday.

This is just a taste of the inspiration throughout the network. We have YOU all to thank for inspiring each other, our kids, and our community!!
I find it completely incredulous that for more than 2 years, the Discovery Charter School—which I hope I don’t need to remind you is chartered under your authority and oversight—continues to have this language about special needs students posted on their public web site (emphasis added):

Does your school have Special Education?

Discovery Charter School has a resource program for identified special education students. We do not have Special Day Classes for severely handicapped students, and we do not have classes or programs for students on the Autism Spectrum. Since Discovery is essentially a single school "district", we do not have the depth of resources or the breadth of programs of a typical school district. While a developmental program can help children with special needs, it can be counter-productive for those with extreme needs. Our program is not highly structured, and there is no such thing as a "routine schedule" or day. We honestly feel that some children do better and are better served elsewhere.

So despite the law saying that ALL public schools must serve ALL students regardless of ability, Discovery is openly flaunting the law saying they refuse to serve those students with severe handicaps or anyone on the Autism spectrum. While I am appalled by this sort of exclusive attitude in a public school and your tacit (if not explicit) approval of such blatant discrimination, as a taxpayer I am even more concerned about the legal and fiscal implications. You already have a proven track record of making legal mistakes that end up costing taxpayers dearly (payroll tax avoidance, the Weiss debacle, your Rocketship overreach...) And here is yet another costly time bomb just waiting to detonate. Any parent in the state of CA with a SN child that Discovery explicitly excludes could sue your office and they would win. Do you really want yet another blemish on your already pock-marked track record?

In this case I am specifically asking for a formal response from your office on how you intend to address this situation.

Thank You,
-Dave Cortright
Honorific members of SCCOE,

In this news article published in the Los Altos Town Crier on Feb 26, 2014, Grace Mah said, "We don't have direct oversight of the [BCS] enrollment process. Unfortunately, we only have the bandwidth to work off complaints." Consider this yet another complaint from the community.

Last night (Friday, 6/27/2014) Bullis Charter School posted to its web site a notice for a special meeting that is scheduled for Saturday 6/28/2014 at 8pm. However as you can see from the date and time stamp (highlighted in the attached screen capture), the PDF document announcing the special meeting was created at 8:17 PM on Friday, 6/27/2014.

Now I know you may think this is being pedantic, but the law (54956a) is very clear on this (emphasis added): "A special meeting may be called at any time by... posting a notice on the local agency's Internet Web site... The notice... shall be received at least 24 hours before the time of the meeting as specified in the notice." BCS has already shown they play fast and loose with the Brown Act, and this further exemplifies that. I think you need to make it clear to them that violations—no matter how seemingly small—are nonetheless violations and shall not be tolerated. They cannot consider themselves a public school if they choose not to respect the rules that all public schools must follow.

Of course as overseers of BCS, it is up to you whether you feel they should actually follow the law here. However if it were up to me, I would send immediate notification to BCS barring them from holding this illegal meeting, and further clarifying that if they ignore the order and proceed with the meeting regardless, it will be grounds for revocation of their charter. Then again, perhaps you don't feel you have the fortitude to carry through on such a threat. In that case, you look a lot more like passive observers (or worse, BCS pawns) rather than a true and effective authority. And thus I assert: if you are not willing to exercise your power, then in actuality you do not possess it.

As always, thank you for listening.

Respectfully,
-Dave Cortright

PS I'm looking forward to the next superintendent in line. Maybe he will actually put some serious and effectual charter school oversight in place rather than relying on citizens such as myself who volunteer their own time to do your job. If not him, then maybe the next one you will appoint in another couple of years when this one doesn't work out.
SCCOE,

I am disappointed I have not heard from you regarding this issue. As far as I know the BCS meeting went ahead as illegally scheduled last night despite my warning to you. Disheartening to say the least, but sadly not surprising.

In the meantime I took it upon myself to go back and audit all of the posted BCS meeting notices dating back to July 2010. Of the 121 meetings listed there that were not cancelled, I found 31 of the agendas had creation dates that were after the notification time frame legally allowed by the Brown Act. Over 25% of all the board meetings held by BCS in the last four years violated the Brown Act. Many of the agendas actually had creation dates that were after the scheduled meeting time, indicating that someone at BCS went back and made modifications to the agenda after the meeting occurred. See the attached file for my documentation of all 31 infractions.

Now let's be entirely clear on a few points here: BCS was founded by and is currently run by lawyers. There are at least 3 lawyers currently on the board. There is no possible way they can claim ignorance of the law here. All the more damning is the fact that in many cases, agenda files were created between 72 and 74 hours before the start of a regular meeting (and 24-26 hours before the start of a special meeting), indicating that they are quite aware of the legal deadline, and are waiting until as late as possible before finalizing the agenda. Additionally the current BCS charter petition which you signed off on says "All meetings of the Board of the Bullis Charter School shall be held in compliance with the Brown Act." And BCS' own web site affirms "How does the BCS Board ensure transparency? The BCS Board complies with the Brown Act."

Now I could possibly see a typo here or there corrected and a new document posted with a new date/time stamp that completely erased the original. Hanlon's Razor tells us that perhaps it is technical ignorance that prevented someone from modifying the original file—so the modification date is updated while the creation date remains fixed—to ensure complete transparency. But to have this happen more than one time in four across 131 meetings? That is beyond all statistical likelihood. It is clear to me that BCS is once again playing fast and loose with their compliance, and once again your office—ostensibly the overseers of such compliance—is shown to be asleep at the wheel.

In this news article published in the Los Altos Town Crier on Feb 26, 2014, Grace Mah said, "We don't have direct oversight of the [BCS]... process. Unfortunately, we only have the bandwidth to work off complaints." Consider this YET ANOTHER complaint from the community. Please let me know in an official capacity what actions you have taken to date, and what additional actions you plan to take on this. I'm sure the CCed members of the press would also be interested to hear what you have to say about this.

With as much respect as I can possibly muster at this time,
-Dave Cortright
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·Dave Cortright

PS I’m looking forward to the next superintendent in line. Maybe he will actually put some serious and effectual charter school oversight in place rather than relying on citizens such as myself who volunteer their own time to do your job. If not him, then maybe the next one you will appoint in another couple of years when this one doesn’t work out.
I think this response to Julia is important enough that all SCCOE board members should read and consider it as you craft your own response to the proposed agreement between BCS and LASD. Keep in mind that should BCS request a material revision to their charter to modify the geographic preference, you need not accept their proposed tapering. You could instead vote to completely eliminate the preference altogether. I would hope you seriously consider this course of action, which will demonstrate to the public that you are not their puppets and that you will do what is right not just for the charter but for the community as a whole.

Thanks for your consideration,
·Dave Cortright

----- Forwarded Message ----- 
From: Dave Cortright <davidcortright@yahoo.com>
To: Julia Hover-Smoot <hoversmoot@gmail.com>
Cc: Leon Beauchman <leonbeauchman@att.net>; Grace Mah <grace_mah@sccoe.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2014 12:54 PM
Subject: Re: Bullis Charter School regularly and repeated violates the Brown Act regarding meeting notice

I agree that the law is clear and simple. Though it will be a challenge to "do over" 31 meetings across the past 4 years, no? I'm interested to see your proposal on how that will work.

I did see the proposed deal, and I think it's great. I was quoted as such in the Mercury News article. But there are 2 things I don't like about it. The first is the phase out of the geo pref. If BCS is willing to go to zero in 5 years, they should be willing to go to zero NOW. The geographic makeup of the student body is already ingrained with a year's discriminatory preference. With the sibling preference, that will continue to contribute to this geographic inequality in the student body for at least the next 8 years. To tack another 5 years onto that is too much. And to be clear, it's for an area that is about as far as one can get in-district from the 2 sites they are committing to for the next 5 years. It doesn't make logical sense. Besides, if BCS were to eliminate it immediately, it would show the whole community that they are willing to be an equal opportunity charter school and repair their image as an exclusive de facto private school funded with public money.

But that is minor compared to the second issue: can BCS still be considered a "small school" by growing to 900 students?
I did a Google search across the BCS web site for the phrase "small school" and found these quotes:

1. "as a small, independent public school, [BCS] is able to bring a choice in public education..."
2. "the school's small size gives it the flexibility to develop and use the most effective teaching practices available..."
3. "We are committed to maintaining a small school because research shows that 'smaller learning environments create happier, safer, higher achieving students.' (Oxley 2001)"
4. "[BCS is] A GREAT PLACE TO WORK [with a] Small school community [of] approx. 500 K-8 students"
5. "A small school size allows for our students to be recognized as individuals. As a result, our staff is able to meet the needs of each student and provide for his/her."
6. "Because we are a small school community and have the unique environment of staff members knowing and working with most of the students, in-depth and meaningful discussions were held, enhancing the overall learning experience."

As the agency that approved BCS' charter which apparently touts all the benefits of a small school (including the Oxley research cited by BCS), have you discussed with them how these small school advantages will be retained at a school with 900 students? Or perhaps you have both concluded that the small school advantages are no longer important? I
would like to hear your thoughts on this and would also love to see any materials used in supporting the new direction. Also, is BCS planning a material change to their charter to support this new direction? To me it seems like a big enough deal to warrant that.

To be completely frank, it looks to me like BCS is trying to grow to 2 small schools while side-stepping the due diligence of applying for a second charter. I certainly hope that isn't the case, and trust you and your office will be vigilant to such unethical if not illegal gambits.

On the plus side, this argument from a BCS board member can no longer apply:

"There is some debate about whether or not BCS has a fair share of special needs students [ed. actually there no debate; BCS does not]. It is unlikely that equivalent percentages of special needs students will exist in a small school each year compared to a larger school district. Furthermore, percentages can vary dramatically from year to year with the inclusion or withdrawal of one student. As a result, the concept of 'fair share' is very difficult to determine in this context."

Thanks for listening,

Dave

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From: Julia Hover-Smoot <jhoversmoot@gmail.com>
To: Dave Cortright <davidcortright@yahoo.com>
Cc: Leon Beauchman <leonbeauchman@att.net>; Grace Mah <grace_mah@sccoe.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2014 12:23 PM
Subject: Re: Bullis Charter School regularly and repeated violates the Brown Act regarding meeting notice

Hi David,

I apologize for my tardy reply. Your email went to my spam box and I was just waiting for a tire to be repaired and checked spam --

Honestly, it seems a simple thing to comply with the law. I will check and confirm. If they missed the window AND took action, they will have to do a "do over".

I am sure you have seen the proposed district/charter settlement -- any thoughts?

Sincerely,

Julia

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 29, 2014, at 11:15 PM, Dave Cortright <davidcortright@yahoo.com> wrote:

SCCOE,

I am disappointed I have not heard from you regarding this issue. As far as I know the BCS meeting went ahead as illegally scheduled last night despite my warning to you. Disheartening to say the least, but sadly not surprising.

In the meantime I took it upon myself to go back and audit all of the posted BCS meeting notices dating back to July 2010. Of the 121 meetings listed there that were not cancelled, I found 31 of the agendas had creation dates that were after the notification time frame legally allowed by the Brown Act. Over 25% of all the board meetings held by BCS in the last four years violated the Brown Act. Many of the agendas actually had creation dates that were after the scheduled meeting time, indicating that someone at BCS went back and made modifications to the agenda after the meeting occurred. See the attached file for my documentation of all 31 infractions.
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In this news article published in the Los Altos Town Crier on Feb 26, 2014, Grace Mah said, "We don't have direct oversight of the [BCS]... process. Unfortunately, we only have the bandwidth to work off complaints." Consider this YET ANOTHER complaint from the community. Please let me know in an email what actions you have taken to date, and what additional actions you plan to take on this. I'm sure the CCed members of the press would also be interested to hear what you have to say about this.

With as much respect as I can possibly muster at this time,

-Dave Cortright

From: Dave Cortright <daviedcortright@yahoo.com>
To: Joseph Di Salvo <josephsds1@aol.com>; Michael Chang <michael_chang@sccoe.org>; Anna Song <anna_song@sccoe.org>; Grace Mah <grace_mah@sccoe.org>; Julia Hover-Smoot <julia_hover-smoot@sccoe.org>; Leon Beauchman <leon_beauchman@sccoe.org>; Darcie Green <darcie_green@sccoe.org>; Mary Ann Dewan <MaryAnn_Dewan@sccoe.org>; Carmen Aminzadeh <Carmen_Aminzadeh@sccoe.org>; Lucretia Peebles <Lucretia_Peebles@sccoe.org>
Cc: Sharon Noguchi <snoguchi@mercurynews.com>; Traci Hatling <tracin@latc.com>; Josh Koehn <jkoehn@metronews.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 28, 2014 1:21 AM
Subject: Bullis Charter School violates the Brown Act yet again

Honorific members of SCCOE,

In

<BCS Brown Act violations for insufficient meeting notice.pdf>
Thank you for following up. I completely understand that schools and districts send certain students with very special needs to specialized schools/programs. The difference—and it is a non-trivial one—is that a truly public school admits all comers, and then decides the best course of action for each student. You don't see LASD or Blach Middle School posting to their website: "if your student is non-verbal and prone to violent outbursts, we cannot accommodate. They are best served elsewhere. Good luck to you." No, they admit the student and then work with the family to figure out the best course of action, which very well many involve placement in an external program. And if I'm not mistaken, the school/district then covers the cost of that student's outside placement.

Discovery (and BCS by the way, and probably the majority of your charter schools) is doing none of this. They are shirking their duty as a public school to take all comers, and they are shirking their duty to help find placement, and yes, pay for placement if need be. Wouldn't it be great if ALL public schools had such luxury? Why, none of us would have to pay for any special needs programs! We could just post our discriminatory policies to our web sites, refuse applications from special needs students, and divert all of our money and resources to the neurotypicals. We can just send back the bad blueberries. I've seen that implemented before. It’s called "private education".

Stop making excuses and apologies for discrimination happening under you watch; instead redirect your efforts to eliminating said discrimination.

As always for listening and being open to alternate viewpoints,

-Dave

Hi Dave,

At the risk of further berating, I contacted a special Ed/ resource specialist from a large county district and asked if I was completely off base with this.

From what I can tell (and I told you I would follow up with our county expertise), districts often send children to specific schools within a district that have specific programs for specific needs. Not every school offers every program.

I will get more information.

Sincerely,

Julia

Sent from my iPhone
So let me clarify: you are saying it is acceptable for Discovery to discriminate against a child with Asperger Syndrome (on the Autism spectrum)? Because that is exactly what their web site says.

From: Julia Hover-Smoot <jhover-smoot@gmail.com>
To: Dave Cortright <davecortright@yahoo.com>
Cc: Leon Beauchman <leona-beauchman@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, July 9, 2014 12:34 PM
Subject: Re: Discovery Charter School continues to publicly assert its discrimination against special needs' students

Hi David,

Sorry -- this also went to spam.

Not every district offers every service -- that is why they contract with each other (and with the county) to offer services for children with unique or severe (ie medically fragile) needs.

Will look into it.

Julia

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 14, 2014, at 7:25 AM, Dave Cortright <davecortright@yahoo.com> wrote:

I find it completely incredulous that for more than 2 years, the Discovery Charter School—which I hope I don't need to remind you is chartered under your authority and oversight—continues to have this language about special needs students posted on their public web site (emphasis added):

Does your school have Special Education?

Discovery Charter School has a resource program for identified special education students. We do not have Special Day Classes for severely handicapped students, and we do not have classes or programs for students on the Autism Spectrum. Since Discovery is essentially a single school "district", we do not have the depth of resources or the breadth of programs of a typical school district. While a developmental program can help children with special needs, it can be counter-productive for those with extreme needs. Our program is not highly structured, and there is no such thing as a "routine schedule" or day. We honestly feel that some children do better and are better served elsewhere.

So despite the law saying that ALL public schools must serve ALL students regardless of ability, Discovery is openly flaunting the law saying they refuse to serve those students with severe handicaps or anyone on the Autism spectrum. While I am appalled by this sort of exclusive attitude in a public school and your tacit (if not explicit) approval of such blatant discrimination, as a taxpayer I am even more concerned about the legal and fiscal implications. You already have a proven track record of making legal mistakes that end up costing taxpayers dearly (payroll tax avoidance, the Weiss debacle, your Rocketship overreach...) And here is yet another costly time bomb just waiting to detonate. Any parent in the state of CA with a SN child that Discovery explicitly excludes could sue your office and they would win. Do you really want yet another blemish on your already pock-marked track record?

In this case I am specifically asking for a formal response from your office on how you intend to address this situation.
Thank You,
-Dave Cottright