

RESOLUTION CONDITIONALLY APPROVING FOR A TERM OF JULY 1, 2025, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2030, THE CHARTER RENEWAL FOR ROCKETSHIP ALMA ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL WITH THE ADDITION OF REQUIREMENTS PURSUANT TO EDUCATION CODE SECTION 47605.6(b), AND, ALTERNATIVELY, MAKING WRITTEN FACTUAL FINDINGS SUPPORTING DENIAL AND DENYING THE ROCKETSHIP ALMA ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL CHARTER RENEWAL IF THE REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS ARE NOT MET, AND SEPARATELY DENYING THE REQUEST FOR MATERIAL REVISIONS AND ADOPTING WRITTEN FACTUAL FINDINGS OF DENIAL

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTION NO. _____**

RESOLVED by the Santa Clara County Board of Education, County of Santa Clara, State of California, that:

WHEREAS, Rocketship Alma Academy Charter School is a Santa Clara County Board of Education (“County Board”) authorized countywide benefit charter school governed and operated by Rocketship Education (RSED) doing business as Rocketship Public Schools (RPS), a California non-profit public benefit corporation, operating within the boundaries of Santa Clara County and located in the San Jose Unified School District. The Rocketship Alma Academy Charter School serves students in TK-5 and its current charter term runs through and including June 30, 2025. Rocketship Alma Academy Charter School and Rocketship Education dba Rocketship Public Schools are referred to herein individually, collectively, and interchangeably as “Charter School” and/or “RSA,” and, for purposes of convenience, Rocketship Education dba Rocketship Public Schools may be referred to herein as “RPS,” and all references to one herein apply with full force and effect to both the school and the corporate entity; and

WHEREAS, on September 3, 2024, petitioners for the Charter School submitted to the Santa Clara County Office of Education a petition requesting renewal of its charter (“Charter”). For purposes of convenience, the County Board, the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools, and the Santa Clara County Office of Education may be collectively or separately referred to herein as “SCCOE”; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Education Code Section 47607(b), countywide charter school renewals and material revisions are governed by the standards and criteria in Education Code Section 47605.6, 47607, and 47607.2. The SCCBOE has substantial discretion in considering a countywide charter school, including the authority to “impose any additional requirements beyond those required by [Education Code Section 47605.6] that it considers necessary for the sound operation of a countywide charter school.” (Ed. Code § 47605.6.) Pursuant to Education Code Section 47607(c), a charter school’s performance on state and local indicators is an “additional criterion for determining whether to grant a charter renewal.” For this purpose, charter schools are divided into high, middle, and low performance categories, plus Dashboard alternative status schools, based on criteria set forth in Education Code Sections 47607(c) and 47607.2(a) & (b). The pertinent renewal standards and the available length of the renewal term are dependent on this categorization. (Ed. Code §§ 47607 and 47607.2.); and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Education Code Sections 47605.6 and 47607, the County Board held a public hearing on the provisions of the renewal Charter, including the proposed materially revised terms,

on October 2, 2024, at which time the County Board considered the level of support for the Charter by teachers, parents or guardians, and the school district(s) where the charter school will operate; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Education (“CDE”), on its list of Charter School Performance Categories issued in March 2024 and the updated list issued in October 2024, has designated the Charter School as a “middle” performance level charter school for purposes of this renewal request. As such, the Charter School’s request for renewal was considered and is being acted on in accordance with the standards and requirements in Education Code Section 47607.2(b), applicable to middle performance level charter schools; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Education Code Section 47607(d), SCCOE requested, received from CDE, and reviewed aggregate data reflecting pupil enrollment patterns at the Charter School and reviewed other data from CDE; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Education Code Section 47607.2(b) for a middle performance tier charter, the chartering authority shall consider the following factors: (1) The schoolwide and subgroup performance on the state and local indicators on the California School Dashboard, giving greater weight to measurements of academic performance and (2) clear and convincing evidence, demonstrated by verified data, showing either the school achieved measurable increases in academic achievement defined by at least one year growth for each year in school or strong post-secondary outcomes. Because the Charter School offers only grades TK-5, strong post-secondary outcomes are not applicable to it; and

WHEREAS, the chartering authority may deny a “middle” performing school on these performance grounds by making written factual findings that the school: 1) failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward meeting standards that provide a benefit to the pupils of the school; 2) closure of the school is in the best interest of pupils; *and* 3) if applicable, the decision provided greater weight to performance on measurements of academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, the Charter School submitted NWEA assessment growth verified data for Charter School students showing positive cohort growth trends across the charter term and one year’s growth for each year of the charter term; and

WHEREAS, the Charter includes proposed material revisions to delete the holding of a valid teaching credential as a minimum qualification for employment as a Principal or Assistant Principal at RSA. The SCCBOE may act on the material revision request separately from its action on the request for renewal; and

WHEREAS, the SCCOE and Charter School entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in 2017 (“2017 MOU”) outlining agreements among the parties and governing their respective fiscal, operational, and administrative responsibilities and their legal relationship. By its terms, this 2017 MOU remains in full force and effect during the period of any renewal granted by the SCCBOE unless and until such time as the Parties enter into a replacement MOU or specifically agree in writing that this MOU is terminated; and

WHEREAS, the SCCOE provided the Charter School an updated memorandum of understanding (“2024 MOU”) that is consistent with changes to law since entering into the 2017 MOU and reflects SCCOE’s current best practices; and

WHEREAS, Staff has reviewed and analyzed the renewal Charter pursuant to the standards and requirements of Education Code Sections 47605.6, 47607, and 47607.2. Staff has also reviewed the requested material revisions pursuant to the standards and requirements of Education Code Sections 47605.6 and 47607. Staff's analysis, recommendations, and recommended findings regarding the request for renewal and the requested material revisions based on its review and analysis are set forth in the written Staff Analysis, Recommendations, and Proposed Findings of Fact Regarding Review of Rocketship Alma Academy Charter School Renewal Petition and Request for Material Revisions, dated November 20, 2024, and published November 5, 2024, (hereinafter "Staff Report, Analysis & Findings," attached hereto as Exhibit "A" and incorporated herein by this reference); and

WHEREAS, for all of the reasons set forth in the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings, Staff has recommended that the County Board of Education conditionally approve the request for renewal of the Charter for a term of five years (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2030) on the condition and with the requirement imposed pursuant to Education Code Section 47605.6(b) necessary for the sound operation of RSA as a countywide charter school that the Charter School and SCCOE enter into a memorandum of understanding and/or addendum to a memorandum of understanding on or before February 18, 2025, or such later deadline as may be agreed to by the County Superintendent or designee, that addresses to SCCOE's satisfaction each of Staff's concerns, including but not limited to those identified and reviewed in the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings, whether or not specifically recommended as conditions and requirements for renewal, and as necessary to update and/or replace the terms of the 2017 MOU to be consistent with current law and/or SCCOE best practices and expectations, as well as any additional conditions or requirements identified by the SCCBOE, with the terms of such MOU/addendum to be to SCCOE's satisfaction, as consistent and necessary to RSA's sound operation as a countywide charter school. Staff has further recommended that the County Board adopt alternative written findings of denial because Staff believes that remediation of all of the issues and concerns noted in the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings is necessary for the sound operation of RSA as a countywide charter school and in order for renewal of the Charter to be consistent with sound educational; and

WHEREAS, Staff has further recommended that the County Board deny the requested material revisions to the Renewal Petition seeking to remove the teaching credential requirement for the Principal and Assistant Principal positions; and

WHEREAS, the County Board has taken into consideration the information and documents submitted, including the renewal Charter, the proposed material revisions, statements and information presented at the public hearing, performance data, and the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings; and

WHEREAS, the County Board reviewed and deliberated on the renewal Charter and material revisions pursuant to the standards and procedures set forth in California Education Code Sections 47605.6, 47607, and 47607.2; and

WHEREAS, the County Board specifically notes that this Resolution No. _____ does not necessarily include findings relative to every defect in the renewal Charter submitted, and that the findings set forth herein are sufficient to support denial of the renewal Charter if the conditions for approval are not met, and it is the findings set forth and adopted herein, including all of those incorporated herein by reference from the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings, on which the denial of renewal findings are based; and

WHEREAS, the County Board specifically notes that this Resolution No. _____ does not necessarily include findings relative to every defect in the requested material revisions, and that the findings set forth herein

are sufficient to support denial of the material revisions, and it is the findings set forth and adopted herein, including all of those incorporated herein by reference from the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings, on which the denial of the material revisions are based.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the County Board finds the above listed recitals to be true and correct and incorporates them herein by this reference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the County Board of Education hereby adopts and incorporates herein by this reference as though set forth in full herein the written factual findings and specific facts supporting those findings relative to both the renewal of the Charter and the requested material revisions as contained in the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the County Board, having fully considered and evaluated the renewal Charter, including the performance information, giving greater weight to measurements of academic performance, and the evidence demonstrated by verified data pursuant to Education Code Section 47607.2, and the application to the Charter of the standards and criteria of Education Code Section 47605.6, hereby finds that compliance with each of the requirements and conditions set forth below is necessary for the sound operation of RSA as a countywide charter school and approval of the renewal of the Charter is consistent with sound educational practice only if the Charter School complies fully with each of these requirements and conditions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the County Board of Education hereby conditionally approves the Charter for the renewal of RSA for a period of five years, commencing on July 1, 2025, and continuing through and including June 30, 2030. The renewal Charter that the Governing Board is hereby conditionally approving is attached hereto as Exhibit "B." This approval is conditional on and subject to the requirement imposed pursuant to Education Code Section 47605.6(b) as necessary for the sound operation of RSA as a countywide charter school of the Charter School complying with all of the following conditions:

1. On or before February 18, 2025, or such later deadline as agreed to in writing by the County Superintendent or designee, the Charter School and the SCCOE shall enter into and execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and/or an addendum to an MOU in the form and including the terms satisfactory to the SCCOE, in its sole discretion, that will govern the SCCOE's oversight of the Charter School, and clarify and provide greater specificity regarding the Charter School's operations pursuant to the renewal Charter, and that will address to SCCOE's satisfaction all of Staff's concerns, including but not limited to those identified and reviewed in the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings, whether or not specifically recommended as conditions and requirements for renewal, and as necessary to update and/or replace the terms of the 2017 MOU to be consistent with current law and/or SCCOE best practices and expectations, and any additional conditions or requirements as noted by the County Board. The MOU/addendum shall be coextensive with and remain in full force and effect throughout the term of the Charter School's Charter and during the pendency of any appeal of a denial of a renewal request or a revocation of the Charter. Further, the term of the MOU/addendum shall continue in full force and effect beyond the current renewal Charter term during any period when the County Board is the Charter School's chartering authority including during the pendency of any challenge to a denial of a renewal request or a revocation of the Charter, unless and until such time as (a) the Parties agree that a replacement MOU/addendum shall supersede and replace the MOU/addendum and that replacement MOU/addendum becomes effective; (b) the parties agree in writing that the MOU/addendum is

terminated; or (c) RSA ceases operating and relinquishes/loses its Charter for any reason and complies with all applicable closure procedures and any ongoing requirements of the Charter, the MOU/addendum, and/or the 2017 MOU and 2024 MOU, should either or both of those agreements be in effect. The MOU/addendum shall be incorporated into the Charter and made a part thereof as if set forth in full in the Charter itself for all purposes, including for purposes of Education Code Section 47607 controlling charter revocation for material violations. In the event of a conflict between the law and the terms of the MOU/addendum, the law shall prevail, and any such conflicting terms shall be revised by mutual agreement of the parties. To the extent that there are any inconsistencies or conflicts between the MOU/addendum, the 2024 MOU and/or the 2017 MOU (to the extent those agreements are in effect), and the approved renewal Charter, the order of precedence shall be as follows: (1) addendum; (2) MOU, (3) 2024 MOU; (4) 2017 MOU (4) renewal Charter, and the terms shall control and prevail in this precedence order, and the terms of the addendum, MOU, 2024 MOU, and 2017 MOU shall be interpreted and deemed to be updates and clarifications to the Charter.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the Santa Clara County Board of Education finds that if the requirements and conditions described above are not timely complied with to the satisfaction of the County Superintendent or designee, approval of the renewal Charter is not consistent with the sound operation of RSA as a countywide charter and/or sound educational practice, based upon numerous grounds and factual findings including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Any other basis that the County Board of Education finds justifies denial of the petition [Education Code Section 47605.6(b)(7)].
2. The Charter School failed to update its Charter to include a reasonably comprehensive description of all new requirements of charter schools enacted into law since the Charter was last renewed and/or the renewal Charter does not contain a reasonably comprehensive description of all of the required charter elements [Ed. Code §§ 47605.6(b)(5) and 47607(b)].
3. The Charter School is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program as set forth in the petition [Ed. Code § 47605.6(b)(2)].

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the County Board hereby determines that the foregoing findings are supported by specific facts, including the following facts and findings:

1. **Any other basis that the County Board of Education finds justifies denial of the Charter:**

Education Code Section 47605.6 governing countywide charters grants substantial authority and discretion to the County Board to determine whether to approve a countywide charter, including both the authority to impose **any** additional requirements on such a charter school beyond those specifically required by Education Code Section 47605.6 that the County Board considers necessary for the sound operation of the countywide charter school and the authority to deny the charter request on **any other basis** beyond those specifically set forth in Section 47605.6 that the County Board finds justifies the denial of the charter. Staff have noted a number of issues and concerns with the RSA renewal Charter, as specified in the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings. The County Board considers requiring RSA to remediate each of those concerns and to revise and update its operations, practices, and commitments to be consistent with current law and/or

SCCOE best practices and expectations, as well as complying with any additional concerns or requirements noted by the County Board, and using the MOU/addendum to the MOU as the means to obtain agreement and compliance from RSA with those requirements, necessary for the sound operation of RSA as a countywide charter school. Moreover, the County Board finds that any failure by RSA to comply with those requirements to the SCCOE's sole satisfaction justifies denial of the renewal Charter.

2. **The Charter School failed to update its Charter to include a reasonably comprehensive description of all new requirements of charter schools enacted into law since the Charter was last renewed and/or the renewal Charter does not contain a reasonably comprehensive description of all of the required charter elements.**

As detailed in the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings, multiple required charter elements in the renewal Charter were not properly updated to include a reasonably comprehensive description, including to comply with all new requirements of law. These elements include, but are not limited to, the required description of the governance structure; health and safety policies and procedures; admissions policies and procedures; student suspension and expulsion procedures; and employee rights of return, as set forth in the adopted and incorporated Staff Report, Analysis & Findings.

3. **The Charter School is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program as set forth in the petition.**

The concerns and deficiencies regarding implementation of the program set forth in the renewal Charter as described in the adopted and incorporated Staff Report, Analysis & Findings are incorporated herein by this reference, specifically the need to update and remediate provisions of the Charter as described in the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings in order for the sound operation of RSA as a countywide charter school, for the program described in the Charter to be complete and legally compliant such that implementation is consistent with law and RSA's obligations pursuant to the 2017 MOU and sound educational practice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the Charter School shall comply with the requirements and conditions by the dates and times specified above. The County Board hereby delegates to the County Superintendent or designee authority to extend in writing the deadline for compliance with a condition(s) should the County Superintendent or designee determine that an extension of the timelines is consistent with sound educational practice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that should the Charter School not comply with all of the conditions and requirements to the SCCOE's sole satisfaction, on or before the dates and times specified above, or such later deadline as agreed to in writing by the County Superintendent or designee, the conditional approval of the renewal Charter is terminated and withdrawn and the renewal Charter is denied based on the written factual findings set forth above and adopted hereby, unless the County Board, in its sole discretion, deletes the requirement or extends the deadline for compliance therewith.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the terms of this Resolution, and incorporated Staff Report, Analysis & Findings, setting forth the factual findings supporting denial of the renewal are severable. Should it be determined that one or more of the findings is invalid, the remaining findings, and the conditional approval or denial for failure to comply with the conditions, shall remain in full force and

effect. In this regard, the County Board specifically finds that each factual finding is, in and of itself, a sufficient basis for denial of the Charter renewal.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that approval of the renewal Charter is explicitly and necessarily based on the Charter School's compliance with the conditions imposed by the County Board pursuant to this Resolution, and should it be determined that a conditional approval of the renewal Charter is not permissible pursuant to the Charter Schools Act of 1992, the approval is withdrawn and the renewal Charter is denied based on the factual findings specific to the renewal Charter set forth and adopted by the County Board herein.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the County Board, having fully considered and evaluated the requested material revisions hereby denies the requested material revisions to the Charter seeking to remove the teaching credential requirement for the Principal and Assistant Principal positions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the Santa Clara County Board of Education finds approval of the material revisions is not consistent with the sound operation of RSA as a countywide charter school or sound educational practice, based upon numerous grounds and factual findings including, but not limited to, the following:

1. The Charter School presents an unsound educational program for the pupils to be enrolled in the Charter School [Ed. Code § 47605.6(b)(1)].
2. The Charter does not contain a reasonably comprehensive description of all of the required charter elements [Ed. Code §§ 47605.6(b)(5)].
3. The Charter School is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program as set forth in the petition [Ed. Code § 47605.6(b)(2)].
4. Any other basis that the County Board of Education finds justifies the denial of the petition [Ed. Code § 47605.6(b)(7)].

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the County Board hereby determines that the foregoing findings are supported by specific facts, including the following facts and findings:

1. **The Charter School presents an unsound educational program for the pupils to be enrolled in the charter school.**

The concerns and deficiencies regarding the effect of the proposed material revisions on the educational program set forth in the adopted and incorporated Staff Report, Analysis & Findings establish that eliminating the requirement that the Principal and Assistant Principals be required to hold, at minimum, a valid teaching credential, thereby substantially reducing the qualifications for these educational leadership positions, would negatively impact the educational program at the Charter School given the educational and academic leadership, modeling, coaching, planning, and related duties of these positions, and the need for the persons who are carrying out those duties to have the qualifications and training of a credential, at minimum.

2. **The Charter does not contain a reasonably comprehensive description of all of the required charter elements.**

As detailed in the Staff Report, Analysis & Findings, the Employee Qualifications element of the Charter would not include a reasonably comprehensive description if the material revisions were approved and the requirement that the minimum employment qualifications for the Principal and Assistant Principal positions no longer included a valid teaching credential. The role, responsibilities, and job duties of these positions are inconsistent with eliminating the teaching credential requirements, which would negatively impact the educational program and implementation of the plan set forth in the Charter, as detailed in the adopted and incorporated Staff Report, Analysis & Findings.

3. The Charter School is demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program as set forth in the petition.

The concerns and deficiencies regarding implementation of the program set forth in the Charter if the teaching credential requirement for the Principal and Assistant Principal positions were eliminated, as described in the adopted and incorporated Staff Report, Analysis & Findings, are incorporated herein by this reference. As evidenced by the educational and academic leadership, modeling, coaching, planning, and related duties of these positions, at minimum these educational leadership positions must require valid teaching credentials, if not administrative credentials. The proposed substantial reduction in the qualifications for these educational leadership positions – which is inconsistent with the duties and responsibilities of the positions – undermines the ability to implement the educational program as the persons holding the positions responsible for leadership and management of such implementation would not be required to be properly qualified.

4. Any other basis that the county board of education finds justifies the denial of the petition.

The concerns and deficiencies regarding the effect of the proposed material revisions on the educational program set forth in the adopted and incorporated Staff Report, Analysis & Findings establish that eliminating the requirement that the Principal and Assistant Principals be required to hold, at minimum, a valid teaching credential, thereby substantially reducing the qualifications for these educational leadership positions, would negatively impact the educational program at the Charter School given the educational and academic leadership, modeling, coaching, planning, and related duties of these positions, and the need for the persons who are carrying out those duties to have the qualifications and training of a credential, at minimum. This would be inconsistent with the SCCBOE's best practice for charter school administrators to have at least a valid California teaching credential.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that based on the denial of the material revisions, RSA must replace the pages of the Charter (including the job descriptions in the appendices) to reinsert that the minimum employment qualifications for the Principal and Assistant Principal positions include a valid teaching credential, and it is that updated version of the Charter that must be attached hereto as Exhibit B.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the terms of this Resolution, and incorporated Staff Report, Analysis & Findings, setting forth the factual findings supporting denial of the material revisions are severable. Should it be determined that one or more of the findings is invalid, the remaining findings, and the denial of the material revisions shall remain in full force and effect. In this regard, the County Board

specifically finds that each factual finding is, in and of itself, a sufficient basis for denial of the material revisions.

Passed and adopted by the Santa Clara County Board of Education at a meeting held on this 20th day of November 2024 by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

Maimona Berta, President
Santa Clara County Board of Education

Charles Hinman, Ed.D.
Interim County Superintendent of Schools
Santa Clara County Office of Education

EXHIBIT A

INSERT STAFF REPORT, ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

EXHIBIT B

INSERT RSA CHARTER