



LETTER OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR A TENNESSEE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL - 2016

All applicants must file a Letter of Intent at least 60 days prior to the application deadline of April 1, 2016. This letter must be delivered to the local board of education and the Tennessee Department of Education no later than February 1, 2016.

Submit the letter of intent via email to charter.schools@tn.gov.

Contact the local board of education to determine where to submit the letter of intent.

NAME OF PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL:

Rocketship Conversion

CHARTERING AUTHORITY FOR PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL:

Metro Nashville Public School Board

SPONSOR/SPONSORING AGENCY: Rocketship Education

MODEL OR FOCUS OF PROPOSED SCHOOL: Blended learning

Provide the name of the person who will serve as **the primary contact** for the application. **The primary contact** should serve as the contact for follow-up, interviews, and notices regarding the application.

NAME OF CONTACT PERSON: Shaka Mitchell

MAILING ADDRESS: 2526 Dickerson Road, Nashville, TN 37207

PRIMARY TELEPHONE: (615) 715-8104 **ALTERNATE TELEPHONE:** (615) 913-3240

E-MAIL ADDRESS: smitchell@rsed.org

NAME OF PROPOSED SCHOOL LEADER (if any): Unknown

REPLICATION APPLICATION: YES NO

Projected Year of School Opening: 2017

ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

	GRADE LEVELS	TOTAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT
YEAR ONE	K-4	448
YEAR TWO	K-4	504
YEAR THREE	K-4	560
YEAR FOUR	K-4	560
YEAR FIVE	K-4	560
YEAR SIX	K-4	560
YEAR SEVEN	K-4	560
YEAR EIGHT	K-4	560
YEAR NINE	K-4	560
YEAR TEN	K-4	560

CURRENT LEADERSHIP

List all current and identified board members and their intended roles on the table below (adding rows as needed).

FULL NAME	CURRENT JOB AND EMPLOYER	FOCUS/EXPERTISE*
See attached list		

**Community Service/Outreach, Legal Expertise/Attorney, Public Relations, Education, Management/Organizational Experience, Parent/Community Involvement, Finance, Marketing, Fundraising/Grant Writing, Personnel/Human Capital, Other (please elaborate)*

Please provide an abstract for your proposed school (two pages maximum). Please address the following elements:

- Mission and vision for the proposed school,
- Academic focus and plan,
- The need for the proposed school,
- The targeted population of students,
- Community outreach completed or planned, and
- Individual or organizational history of success/accomplishments in education

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Tennessee law limits who may sponsor a charter school and prescribes what type of entity may operate a charter school. T.C.A. § 49-13-104(7), 106(c). Please read the following statements and confirm eligibility to submit an application and verify the status of or plans for the governing body.

The sponsor of this charter school is not "a for-profit entity, a private elementary or secondary school, a post-secondary institution not accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools [now AdvancEd], a religious or church school" and does not "promote the agenda of any religious denomination or religiously affiliated entity."

Charter schools must be operated by entities that have exemption from federal taxation under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Please check one of the following, as applicable:

The sponsor of this charter school is a not-for-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status.

The sponsor of this charter school is a not-for-profit organization and has applied for 501(c)(3) status.

I will provide evidence of non-profit incorporation and 501(c)(3) status at the time of contracting with the chartering authority.

The complete Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act is contained in T. C.A. §§ 49-13-101 through 137, and in § 8-35-242. You can access Tennessee laws [here](#).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Please identify any potential conflicts of interest that you or any board member may have in the space below. This is in alignment with best practices for both non-profit and charter school governance and is also aligned with Tennessee Charter Law §49-13-111 (g), which reads "with regard to conflicts of interest, the governing body of a charter school shall be subject to TCA §§ 12-4-101 and 12-4-102. These portions of Tennessee law govern public contracts and personal interests of officers and boards of directors. If approved, board members will be subject to filing form SS-8805 with the district in which it resides.

We are not aware of any conflicts of interest as defined by the TCA

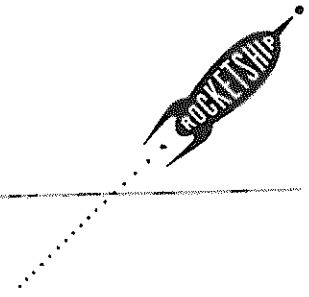
By my signature below, I affirm that all of the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.



(Signature)

January 31, 2016

(Date)



Letter of Intent Abstract – Rocketship Conversion

1. Mission and vision for the proposed school

Rocketship Education Tennessee (RSTN) will eliminate the achievement gap by graduating our students at or above grade level in Literacy and Math. RSTN seeks to create a future in which thousands of children from Tennessee have graduated from four-year colleges and come back to Tennessee to eradicate the last traces of the achievement gap.

2. Academic focus and plan

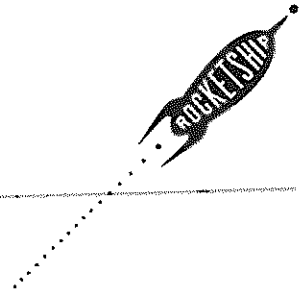
The Rocketship Public School Model combines traditional classroom instruction with blended learning, which enables highly personalized instruction through online adaptive technology and targeted in-person interventions; a parent engagement strategy that allows for advocacy on behalf of all children and their education; and a leadership development program that creates sustainable careers for highly effective educators.

3. The need for proposed school

One of the Metro Nashville Public School Board’s articulated priorities is addressing “performance gaps and management conversions” by authorizing high-quality charter school operators who will transform existing schools that have struggled academically for a number of years. Rocketship is very excited to partner with MNPS in a management conversion of an existing public elementary school. We anticipate working closely with MNPS to determine the school and community that will best be matched with Rocketship.

4. The targeted population of students

RSTN expects to serve a student population that is reflective of the communities we serve as a whole. As a result, we anticipate serving a student population where nearly all students are performing below grade level. Additionally, as part of our mission and our charter, RSTN explicitly seeks to educate the most underserved students in communities in Nashville, and will conduct recruitment and marketing activities accordingly. In the year prior to opening, we will work with MNPS and the Office of Charter Schools to identify highest need areas and conduct extensive community engagement in these areas. As an open enrollment school, we will accept any eligible student. We do not shy away from enrolling low-income or special education students; we consider “at risk” students to be our target student population and at the core of the design of our educational program.



Based on the MNPS articulated priorities and the data surrounding “Priority Schools,” we have already identified several schools and communities as conversion candidates. We will continue to work with the Office of Innovation and the MNPS School Board to identify and serve the students currently zoned for one of our city’s schools in greatest need.

5. Community outreach completed or planned

RSTN partners with several community-based organizations in support of our first two Nashville schools, and in support of our growing network of schools in Tennessee. Our aim is to work with these groups to provide parents and students opportunities to enrich student well-being and simultaneously benefit the communities in which our schools are located. The Tennessee Regional Director, Manager of Growth & Community Engagement, Education Organizer, and school-level faculty members all take an active role in forging relationships with these groups. To date, our schools have partnered with groups such as Girl Scouts, Fifty Forward, iStep Kidz, the YMCA of Middle Tennessee, and numerous neighborhood associations and churches.

Rocketship’s Nashville regional team is also developing relationships with and finding points of collaboration with existing traditional and charter public schools in the communities surrounding our current and proposed school locations. To date, our school has hosted groups of teachers and administrators from traditional and public charter schools from across the city to share best practices and learn from one another.

6. Individual or organizational history of success/accomplishments in education

Rocketship’s first school was founded in 2007 in San Jose, CA. Since then, the network has grown to 13 schools serving approximately 7,000 students in California, Wisconsin, and Tennessee. Rocketship opened its Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary in fall 2014 and followed with Rocketship United Academy in fall 2015.

Ninety-two percent of our Nashville Rocketeers are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 91% are African American and Hispanic. These students came to us with the deepest academic deficiencies of any school we ever opened, with eight of ten students performing below the national norm on fall diagnostics. Yet through a combination of highly differentiated classroom instruction, targeted tutoring and strong partnerships with families, our Rocketeers achieved the second-highest growth in Nashville as measured by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), far exceeding Tennessee’s growth standards. Our Nashville Rocketeers averaged 1.5 years of growth in math and 1.3 years of growth in reading, as measured by the NWEA MAP.



ATTACHMENT 1- CURRENT LEADERSHIP

Name	Current Professional Title and Organization	Board Role	Focus/Expertise
Frederick J. Ferrer	CEO, HealthTrust	President	Education, Management/Organizational Experience, Community Service
Alan Crites	Vendavo, Inc. (former CEO; retired)	Treasurer	Finance, Management/Organizational Experience
Arra Yerganian	CMO, One Medical Group	Secretary	Management/Organizational Experience, Marketing
Alex Hernandez	Partner & VP, Charter School Growth Fund	Member	Education, Fundraising/Grant Writing, Finance
Alex Terman	Interim CFO, Leadership Public Schools	Member	Management/Organizational Experience, Finance, Education
Deborah McGriff	Managing Director, New Schools Venture Fund	Member	Education, Management/Organizational Experience, Personnel/Human Capital
Louis Jordan	Co-Owner, Tympany Ventures	Member	Finance
Raymond Raven	CEO, Orthopaedic Surgery Specialists	Member	Management/Organizational Experience, Parent/Community Involvement
Greg Stanger	Trustee, Yosemite Company	Member	Finance, Fundraising/Grant Writing
Joey Slotter	TFA DC Region Co-Chair, Gala Committee of TFA Regional Board DC Chair	Member	Education, Fundraising/Grant Writing, Parent/Community Involvement, Community Service/Outreach
Ralph Weber	Founding Member, Gass Weber Mullins LLC	Member	Legal Expertise/Attorney