



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 20, 2026

To: Members, Orange County Board of Education

From: Orange County Department of Education Charter Schools Unit

Subject: Staff Report and Recommendation – Rocketship Anaheim Elementary Appeal Petition

Executive Summary

Rocketship Education appealed the Anaheim Elementary School District's ("AESD") denial of its petition to establish Rocketship Anaheim Elementary, a classroom-based charter school serving transitional kindergarten through grade six.

The Orange County Department of Education ("OCDE") reviewed the petition, supporting documentation submitted with the appeal, the administrative record, and information presented during the public hearing and clarification meeting. Based on that review, OCDE staff recommends the following:

- Require the charter school's governing board to revise the resolutions establishing committees that include non-directors to clarify the committees' roles and ensure that governing board authority is exercised only by the full board or a properly authorized committee of directors.
- Approve the appeal petition for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2027, through June 30, 2032.

Background

Rocketship Education, d/b/a Rocketship Public Schools, is a nonprofit public benefit corporation operating twenty-two (22) charter schools across California, Tennessee, Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. In California, all thirteen of its existing charter schools are located in the Bay Area, ten of which are located in Santa Clara County. Rocketship Anaheim Elementary would be its first Southern California school.

On May 1, 2026, Rocketship Education submitted to AESD, a petition under Education Code section 47605, to establish Rocketship Anaheim Elementary within the boundaries of AESD.

On July 22, 2026, AESD unanimously denied the petition based on findings that the petitioners were demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the proposed program, the petition did not provide reasonably comprehensive descriptions of all required charter elements, and the school was demonstrably unlikely to serve the interests of the entire community, including consideration of fiscal and programmatic impacts on the District.

On August 13, 2026, the Board received the appeal and OCDE conducted a clarification meeting on September 29, 2026, to clarify aspects of the petition. On October 7, 2026, the Board conducted a public hearing to consider the level of support for the petition by parents and employees of the school district.

Legal Standards

Education Code section 47605(k)(1)(A)(i) authorizes a county board of education to review a charter petition following denial by a school district governing board in accordance with the requirements of Education Code section 47605(b) and (c).

Under Education Code section 47605(c), a charter petition for the operation of a school shall be granted if the Board is satisfied that granting the charter is consistent with sound educational practice and with the interests of the community in which the charter school proposes to locate. In making its determination, the Board shall consider the academic needs of the pupils the charter school proposes to serve.

The Board may deny the petition only by making written factual findings, specific to the particular petition, setting forth specific facts supporting one or more of the grounds identified in Education Code section 47605(c).

Staff Analysis

Governance and Committee Roles. Rocketship Education is the nonprofit public benefit corporation that serves as the governing board for its thirteen California charter schools and as the sole statutory member of three affiliated regional nonprofit public benefit corporations in Tennessee, Wisconsin and Washington D.C.

Rocketship Education established five committees: Business Committee, Executive Committee, Audit Committee, Achievement Committee and California Committee. During the clarification meeting, Rocketship representatives explained that the California Committee was established to strengthen representation for its Bay Area schools outside

of Santa Clara County. Rocketship Anaheim Elementary would extend California operations to Southern California.

The documents establishing the California Committee and Audit Committee allow non-directors to serve while also assigning the committees the authority to act on behalf of Rocketship's governing board. Corporations Code section 5212(b) prohibits non-directors from serving on committees that exercise the governing board's authority but permits their participation on committees that are advisory only.

On October 14, 2026, Rocketship Education's Senior Director acknowledged the need to update these documents and confirmed the updated language in the resolutions will clarify that the Audit Committee and California Committee are strictly advisory without delegated board authority. Staff recommends coordinating with Rocketship Education to complete those revisions before Rocketship Anaheim Elementary begins operation.

Staff Conclusion

Based on its review of the petition and supporting record, staff did not identify a statutory basis for denial under Education Code section 47605(c) and therefore recommends approval.

Staff Recommendation

OCDE staff recommends that the Board:

1. Approve the Rocketship Anaheim Elementary charter petition on appeal for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2027, and ending June 30, 2032.
2. Direct OCDE staff to coordinate with Rocketship on revising the committee resolutions and executing the Board-approved operational agreement. Options for Board Action

Board Options

The Board has the following options:

Option One: Approve the appeal petition for a five-year term from July 1, 2027, through June 30, 2032.

Option Two: Approve the appeal petition for a five-year term from July 1, 2027, through June 30, 2032, and in accordance with Staff's recommendation.

Option Three: Deny the appeal petition upon making written factual findings required by Education Code section 47605(c).