

Executive Summary

Rocketship Education DC

School Type, Model, and Enrollment

Rocketship Education D.C. (RSDC) intends to open elementary charter schools in traditionally underserved communities in D.C. Each school projects a total enrollment of 630 students and will open serving kindergarten through fifth grade. The Rocketship Public School Model combines traditional classroom instruction with blended learning, which enables highly individualized instruction through online adaptive technology and tutors; 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.

Mission Statement

Rocketship Education D.C. will eliminate the achievement gap by graduating our students at or above grade level in Language Arts and Math.

Vision

RSDC seeks to create a future in which thousands of children from D.C. have graduated from four-year colleges and return to their communities in D.C. to eradicate the last traces of the achievement gap. In order to achieve this vision, we seek initial approval of eight schools to open over five years, based on a performance contract that is mutually agreed upon with the D.C. Public Charter School Board.

Education Philosophy

The goal of Rocketship Education D.C. (RSDC) is to provide an environment in which children will develop into confident, self-motivated, competent, productive and lifelong learners. Vested with these skills, these children will become responsible young adults. Students will possess the habits, skills, and confidence necessary to succeed in school and beyond, as contributing citizens of the 21st century. Specifically, RSDC believes that an educated person in the 21st Century should possess the academic and life skills listed below. Each Rocketship Charter School seeks to impart these skills by the time that a student has completed the Rocketship Education program.

Academic Skills

Critical Thinking: the set of skills required to succeed at higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, including the analysis of data, synthesis of information and evaluation of arguments.

Problem Solving: building on a foundation of strong critical thinking, problem solving involves using insight and creativity to solve complex problems such as applying familiar strategies in multiple or unfamiliar contexts.

Meta-Cognition: the ability and disposition to explore the thinking and learning process, explain how and why a particular strategy was chosen, and to explain the rationale behind a particular viewpoint, including supporting one's claims with evidence.

Life Skills

Sense of Self: an understanding of one's own strengths, abilities, emotions, and identity that contribute to positive self-esteem and a sense of purpose.

Relationship and Social Skills: understanding and appreciating the emotions and perspectives of others and developing positive relationships among diverse groups, including peers and adults; developing the ability to cooperate effectively, resist social pressure, resolve conflicts and seek help appropriately.

Commitment to Learning: pursuing goals and taking responsibility for self-development academically, socially, and emotionally; having a sense of curiosity, interest and involvement in learning and advocating for one's own learning at Rocketship and beyond.

Academic Goals

In order to attain our mission, Rocketship schools maintain high-expectations for all students. Each school strives to ensure that all students make at least 1.5 years of growth towards proficiency in reading and language-arts and attain grade level proficiency in math and science. By setting and attaining these ambitious goals, we ensure that all Rocketeers graduate fifth grade with the knowledge, skills, and mindset of high achievement that will place them on a path to college and lifetime of success.

Demonstrated Capacity

Rocketship Education (RSED) was founded in 2006 in San Jose, California, to promote the mission, vision and educational philosophy of a national network of high-performing charter schools. The Rocketship Education Public School Model will bring the effective and proven model of blended learning instruction to students in D.C., in order to collaborate with communities to eliminate the achievement gap in D.C. As a partner with D.C. Public Charter School Board, our founding team is excited to bring innovative, high-quality options to high-need areas throughout the city.

Currently, Rocketship Education has seven elementary schools in San Jose, California. With a network Academic Performance Index (API) of 855, Rocketship is California's top performing school system serving low-income students. The founding group's collective capacities in school leadership, governance, curriculum, business management, and parent and community engagement has fostered dramatic results for at-risk students in California. In order to realize Rocketship's mission to eliminate the achievement gap, the founding group is energized by the opportunity to open and operate high-performing Rocketship schools in D.C. Local community and civic leaders will be recruited to join the Rocketship Education D.C. Board to ensure that the specific needs of the communities our schools serve are being met.

In order to eliminate the achievement gap in D.C., we believe that RSDC must scale quickly, yet with a focus on quality. D.C. has been identified as a target city due to the widespread educational disparities that exist between students from low-income communities and their higher-income peers.

In order to bring Rocketship's Public School Model to D.C., RSDC must establish a regional structure that is financially sustainable as well as operationally efficient and effective. We intend to open a minimum of eight elementary (K-5) charter schools in D.C., which will enable regional collaboration and sharing of resources in order to bring the highest quality education to the students each school serves. In order to build a solid foundation for our regional cluster in D.C., we have developed a strategic plan that involves opening schools systematically to ensure both high quality and significant impact in the community. RSDC plans to open its first school in the fall of 2015 in D.C. Detailed plans of our regional structure and expansion plans can be found in sections A.1 and B.5.