

**Rocketship DC Board of Trustees Meeting (2025-26 Q1) (Tuesday, August 26, 2025)**

*Generated by Cristina Vasquez on Tuesday, September 2, 2025*

**1. Opening Items**

**A. Call to Order**

At 1:05pm, with a quorum of board members present, Mr. Saunders called the meeting to order.

Present: Ashanti Herndon, Camilla Jensen, Joey Sloter, Melissa Martin, Rachel Tommelleo, Rena Johnson, Kamuzu Saunders

Absent: Jennifer McManus, Lauren Marcus, Matt Aaron, Nana Hanson-Hall

**2. Consent Items**

**A. Approve minutes from June 10, 2025 meeting of the Rocketship DC Board of Trustees**

**B. Approve Revised 2025-26 Instructional Calendar for Rocketship Schools in DC**

At 1:06pm, Mr. Saunders asked for a motion to approve the consent items 2(A-B). A motion was made by Ms. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Sloter and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Yes: Ashanti Herndon, Camilla Jensen, Joey Sloter, Melissa Martin, Rachel Tommelleo, Rena Johnson, Kamuzu Saunders

No: --

Abstain: --

**3. Information Items**

**A. Board Updates**

At 1:09pm, Nana Hanson-Hall joined the meeting.

At 1:09pm, Executive Director Zakiya Sackor presented board updates in relation to the start of school, including the first day of school, enrollment, and staff coaching. The board asked a question in regard to staffing for the upcoming year. No action was taken.

**B. Regional Health Dashboard Review**

At 1:13pm, Ms. Sackor discussed the five dashboard indicators that inform regional health (quality schools, scaled impact, community power, culture of belonging and finance). Ms. Sackor highlighted the focus areas for the year which include academic achievement with a focus on literacy, building staff culture and student enrollment. The board asked questions in regard to ways they can support the focus areas. No action was taken.

**4. Action Items: Applications & Resolutions - Review and Approval**

**A. Approve Resolution #2025-02 Appointing and Confirming the Business Committee Chairperson of the Rocketship Education DC Board**

At 1:31pm, Mr. Saunders asked for questions or comments on action item 4(A). No comments were made.

Yes: Ashanti Herndon, Camilla Jensen, Joey Sloter, Melissa Martin, Rachel Tommelleo, Rena Johnson, Kamuzu Saunders, Nana Hanson-Hall

No: --

Abstain: --

**5. Action Items: Operations - Review and Approval**

**A. Approve Artificial Intelligence for Instructional and Assignment Purposes Policy**

**B. Approve Section 504 Policy**

**C. Approve Revised Local School Wellness Policy**

At 1:33pm, Mr. Saunders asked for questions or comments on action items 5(A-C). Board members asked staff questions in regard to staff training with the implementation of the AI policy. Abbie Gifford, Rocketship Senior Legal Counsel, provided information on the Rocketship AI Champion working group who are currently developing an AI roadmap and associated staff training.

At 1:48pm, Mr. Saunders asked for a motion to approve the action items 5(A-C). A motion was made by Ms. Herndon, seconded by Ms. Jensen and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Yes: Ashanti Herndon, Camilla Jensen, Joey Sloter, Melissa Martin, Rachel Tommelleo, Rena Johnson, Kamuzu Saunders, Nana Hanson-Hall

No: --

Abstain: --

**6. Information Items**

**A. 2024-25 Achievement Recap and 2025-26 Response**

At 1:49pm, Vice President of Program, Eric Neumann, presented the achievement update, including end of year achievement data and preliminary testing results. Additionally, Mr. Neumann presented Rocketship's response to the 2024-25 achievement results, including focus areas for 2025-26 and the Program Team support plan for the region. The

board asked questions in regard to the data year over year, and the data in relation to the number of students. No action was taken.

### **B. Recruitment and Enrollment Update and Next Steps**

At 2:15pm, Family Recruitment Consultant, Vanessa Barry, presented the recruitment and enrollment update, including enrollment targets for 2025-26, current enrollment at the start of school and continuing enrollment strategies the team is using including marketing, family recruitment and summer events. The board asked questions in regard to where the team projects enrollment will end up, and the possibility for student movement in the coming weeks. Staff shared the region is on track to hit enrollment targets. The board recognized the staff focus on student and staff culture and the positive impact on enrollment. No action was taken.

**7. Break:** The board made the decision to forego a break.

## **8. Action Items: Finance - Review and Approval**

### **A. 2024-25 End of Year Financial Review and Approval of Revised 2025-26 DC Budget, including all School Level Budgets**

At 2:32pm, Chief Financial Officer, Ben Carson, presented item 8(A), including the FY25 Year End Budget to Actual and Year End Balance Sheet, budgeting process and the revised 2025-26 budget, including the school level budgets. The board asked questions in regard to our enrollment in our budget in comparison to the current and projected enrollment we anticipate. The board recommends a continued conversation in regard to facilities usage.

At 2:55pm, Mr. Saunders asked for a motion to approve the action item 8(A). A motion was made by Ms. Jensen, seconded by Ms. Johnson and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Yes: Ashanti Herndon, Camilla Jensen, Joey Slotter, Melissa Martin, Rachel Tommelleo, Rena Johnson, Kamuzu Saunders, Nana Hanson-Hall

No: --

Abstain: --

## **9. Information Items**

### **A. DC Charter Review & Regional Support Plan**

At 2:55pm, Kerry Flanagan, National Chief of Staff, and Ms. Sackor presented an overview of the DC Charter Review and Regional Support Plan, including the ten year process overview, timeline, required documentation and the Qualitative Site Review. Additionally, they reviewed key support structures being put in place to ensure a successful review. The board asked questions in regard to the outcomes of the review process and the impact on the schools. No action was taken.

### **B. Future Regional Planning**

At 3:17pm, Ms. Flanagan presented future regional planning, including the potential for preschool in future years and how this could impact the goals of the region. Cristina Tepper, Associate Director of Humanities, presented the steps being taken in regard to program research and evaluation and the next steps in the process. The board asked how we will engage families in this process and our philosophy for engaging three and four year olds in school. They asked for updates and initial thoughts on the curriculum pilot as well as what staffing would potentially look like. Staff shared insights from the curriculum pilots and ways the team was factoring parent engagement into the plan. No action was taken.

At 3:47pm, Rena Johnson, former DC Board Chair, was recognized for her service as Board Chair in the preceding years.

## **10. Closed Session**

### **A. Discussion of Personnel Matters pursuant to DC Code § 2-575(b)(10): Personnel Performance Review**

At 3:49pm, Mr. Saunders asked for a motion to move to Closed Session. The motion was made by Ms. Herndon, seconded by Ms. Johnson, and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Yes: Ashanti Herndon, Camilla Jensen, Joey Slotter, Melissa Martin, Rachel Tommelleo, Rena Johnson, Kamuzu Saunders, Nana Hanson-Hall

No: ---

Abstain: ---

## **11. Report Out**

### **Public report on actions taken in closed session**

At 5:00pm, Mr. Saunders took roll. With a quorum of committee members present, Mr. Saunders called the open session meeting back to order.

Present: Ashanti Herndon, Camilla Jensen, Joey Slotter, Melissa Martin, Rachel Tommelleo, Rena Johnson, Kamuzu Saunders, Nana Hanson-Hall

At 5:01pm, Mr. Saunders reported that no actions were taken on item 10(A) during the closed session.

## **11. Adjourn**

### **A. Meeting Adjourned**

At 5:01pm, Mr. Saunders asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. This motion was made by Ms. Herndon, seconded by Ms. Hanson-Hall, and carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Yes: Ashanti Herndon, Camilla Jensen, Joey Slotter, Melissa Martin, Rachel Tommelleo, Rena Johnson, Kamuzu Saunders, Nana Hanson-Hall

No: ---

Abstain: ---