



To our beloved community,

As the nights lengthen and we start to feel signs of coming winter in the crisp morning air, our students are learning that it is time to shine their inner light, finding courage and strength to carry through the darkness of the winter months. **It is also a perfect time for ROCS to lean on the kindled light of our community as we look to bridge a significant funding gap.** We are asking for your help.

One of the reasons our founders started ROCS was to bring the beauty of education inspired by Waldorf pedagogy to communities where it would not otherwise exist. As a public charter, ROCS does not charge tuition. However, the reality is that charter schools receive less government funding than public schools overall, and they are not able to utilize public funds for capital expenditures (e.g., our incredible new building). **Charter schools like ROCS rely heavily on annual giving, fundraisers and grants to achieve our fundraising goals.**

The funding gap between charter schools and public schools is significant. According to the Center for Education Reform, **charter schools are funded at approximately 64% of their district counterparts**, averaging \$7,131 per pupil compared to the average per pupil expenditure of \$11,184 in traditional public schools<sup>1</sup>.

We share this to illustrate the mountain ROCS has successfully been climbing since our inception in 2018. Until now, the school's leadership has kept ROCS in excellent financial condition as we navigated early growing pains, a global pandemic, unforeseen leadership changes and a location shift. This year is different for two main reasons:

1. The expansion of educational options has led to under enrollment across charter schools in North Carolina and nationally.
2. ROCS had the added difficulty of trying to boost enrollment in a temporary space.

Due to the above, the school is currently under enrolled. In order to maintain a solid foundation throughout the rest of the year to launch us into growth for our upcoming capital expenditures, **we are asking for your financial support to finish this year out strong.**

Perhaps you or your family are inspired by the past and by all the things that ROCS has overcome to get to this point. Maybe your inspiration comes from the future, when you look at the drawings of our new home and dream along with us about what ROCS is going to be. Or **maybe you have a distinct memory of the first time you realized just how special this school is.**

As we embark on our first **Root to Rise Capital Campaign**, here is how you can help us strengthen our roots in order to reach our school's full growth potential:

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<sup>1</sup> Figures per 2020: Center for Educational Reform [www.edreform.com](http://www.edreform.com)

- **We know that budgets are tight**, but we are asking you to **think hard about why you chose this unique slice of public education for your child(ren)** where they can learn joyously and live courageously. ***What is that worth to you?***
- **Our goal is to raise \$100,000, which works out to an average of \$500.00 per family.** Realizing everyone's financial situation is different, we are simply asking our ROCS family to give as much as they are able. To put this number in perspective, Chapel Hill's Emerson Waldorf School tuition ranges from \$17,345 to \$21,150 per year for K-8th grade.<sup>2</sup>
- **We hope you will consider sharing this appeal** with extended family, neighbors, and other loved ones familiar with the role of ROCS in your children's lives.
- **We also welcome corporate support from employers**, small business owners, or community organizations you may have a relationship with; please help us spread the word.

### Ways to give

1. **Donate online at [bit.ly/rocsroot2rise](https://bit.ly/rocsroot2rise)**
2. You can also drop a check off at the school made out to Raleigh Oak Charter School with "Root to Rise" in the memo line.
3. Inquire about employee matching and double your impact<sup>3</sup>. Here is a [list of companies](#)<sup>4</sup> with matching gift programs.

### Fun rewards!

1. We will have awards for each child that receives a donation of any size in their name.
2. When we reach a certain percentage of donations as a school, students will be eligible to receive:
  - a. Hat day
  - b. Pajama day
  - c. No homework day
  - d. Extra recess
3. **When we meet our school wide goal of \$100,000**, staff and students will get to vote on their choice of a schoolwide Kona Ice or Pizza Party.

As North Carolina's first *community-initiated* Public Waldorf Charter School, we cannot do this without you. Thank you for giving as much as you're able, just as the teachers, staff and volunteers do for your children every day.

With so much gratitude,  
Dr. Johnson and your ROCS Board

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Tuition and Financial Aid, Emerson Waldorf School: [emersonwaldorf.org/tuition-financial-aid](https://emersonwaldorf.org/tuition-financial-aid)

<sup>3</sup> Raleigh Oak Charter School, Inc. is an exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, EIN 81-3256305

<sup>4</sup> <https://bit.ly/matchinggiftlist>