



RIVER CITY SCIENCE ACADEMY

August 1, 2016

The Honorable Lenny Curry, Mayor
Mayor's Office
City Hall at St. James Building
117 W. Duval St. Suite 400
Jacksonville, FL 32202

The Honorable Lori N. Boyer, President
Jacksonville City Council
City Hall at St. James Building
117 W. Duval St. Suite 400
Jacksonville, FL 32202

RE: River City Science Academy

Dear Mayor Curry and Council President Boyer:

This letter is written in response to one irresponsible and unfounded local media report alleging River City Science Academy ("RCSA") has connections to an organization that has been accused of orchestrating the recent coup attempt in Turkey. While these allegations are untrue and baseless, we feel we must respond with a public statement.

Given the way that RCSA is regulated, the allegations make no sense. RCSA is a public charter school that has served this community for nearly ten years. It must adhere to strict requirements in Florida law that mandate RCSA's operations are open and transparent. It must follow the same public meeting, open records and annual independent financial audit laws as the City and other local governments. This means that all of its meetings are open to the public, and its records are subject to the Public Records Act. Each year, RCSA is audited by an independent financial auditor. These audits are public records and are posted on RCSA's website.

RCSA is governed by an unpaid, volunteer governing board, which is subject to the same conflict of interest laws as the City Council members. The minutes of RCSA's public board meetings are posted on its website. RCSA is not owned, affiliated with or governed by any other organization. This is clear from RCSA's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, its minutes and its meetings.

The School Board of Duval County and School District staff subject RCSA to compliance reviews and oversight. Each RCSA campus is governed by a charter contract that sets forth specific requirements for operation of the schools. Unfortunately, the allegations in the news story are not new but have been fodder for blogs and websites that are not accountable for their accuracy. As soon as RCSA became aware of these allegations, it shared them with School District staff who determined they had no merit.

Our track record of providing a high quality free public education to students in Jacksonville is clear in the performance of our school, the School Board's confidence in granting new charters, parent satisfaction and the success of our graduates. It is unfortunate that this tragic event in Turkey has motivated such an attack on a school in our community. We ask for your support in denouncing such baseless and hateful allegations.

Sincerely,

Dogan Tozoglu, Executive Director

Ahmet Birdal, President

C: Dr. Nikolai P. Vitti, Superintendent
Ms. Pearl Roziers, Asst. Super., School Choice/ Pupil Assignment Operations
Anita Henry-Smith, Supervisor, Charter Schools
RCSA Governing Board Members