



Annual Authorizer Report

Tennessee State Board of Education

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Letter from the Executive Director | 3 |
| About the Tennessee State Board of Education | 4 |
| Our Charter Schools | 7 |
| About the Annual Report | 10 |
| Academic Performance | 11 |
| Financial Performance | 11 |
| Organizational Performance | 12 |



Letter from the Executive Director

In 2014, the Tennessee General Assembly granted the State Board of Education (“State Board”) the right to serve as an appellate authorizer of charter schools in the state of Tennessee. In October 2015, the State Board authorized its first charter schools, approving the applications for two schools to open under the operation of KIPP Nashville. Our third charter school, Bluff City High School, operated by Green Dot Public Schools Tennessee, was approved by the State Board in October 2016. In August 2017, the State Board celebrated the opening of Bluff City High School, and over the course of one short year, our charter school portfolio grew to provide greater choice and opportunity to the students of Tennessee when KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary opened in August 2018.

At the State Board, we are dedicated to providing high-quality school options and, as a charter school authorizer, we hold ourselves and our schools to high standards. During the 2017-18 school year, the State Board’s only operating authorized charter school, Bluff City High School, served 150 ninth grade students in Memphis, Tennessee. This report serves as our annual authorizing report as required by the Tennessee Department of Education and presents Bluff City High School’s academic, fiscal, and operational performance for its first year in operation. These findings are based on the State Board’s approved charter school performance framework and are consistent with the best practices for transparent authorizing in [State Board Policy 6.111 – Quality Charter Authorizing Standards](#).

We believe strong academic standards challenge Tennessee students and prepare them for postsecondary success. As captured in the academic section of this report, Bluff City High School’s 2018 TNReady proficiency data is well below our goals for a high-achieving school, though we recognize that, on average, many of our students came into the district several grade levels behind. Notably, we are extremely pleased that the data also shows that, despite starting out behind, our students are growing faster than expected, with a district TVAAS level of five. Our hope is that this strong growth data sets the foundation for future academic success both in terms of overall achievement and academic growth. We are proud of the work our students and staff are doing at Bluff City High School and will continue to work closely with all of our authorized schools to ensure they are supported from the district level to provide a high-quality education to all the students we serve.

I would like to thank our State Board members and staff for their continued dedication to our priority of insisting that all students have access to high-quality schools regardless of ZIP code, prior achievement, or demographics. As an authorizer, it is our mission to fulfill this priority by increasing families’ access to high-quality charter schools, and we look forward furthering this mission through the opening our third authorized school, KIPP Nashville Middle School, in August 2019.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sara Morrison", is positioned above the typed name.

Dr. Sara Morrison, Ed.D.

Executive Director, State Board of Education



About the Tennessee State Board of Education

The State Board of Education is composed of eleven members—one from each of Tennessee’s nine congressional districts, plus a student member and the executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission who serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member. Dr. Sara Heyburn Morrison serves as the Executive Director of the Board. All members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the General Assembly. Board members serve five-year terms; the student member serves a one-year term.

Mr. Nick Darnell – 1st Congressional District

Mr. Mike Edwards – 2nd Congressional District

Mr. Bob Eby – 3rd Congressional District

Mr. Gordon Ferguson – 4th Congressional District, Vice Chairman

Ms. Elissa Kim – 5th Congressional District

Ms. Lillian Hartgrove – 6th Congressional District, Chairman

Ms. Wendy Tucker – 7th Congressional District

Vacant – 8th Congressional District

Mr. Darrell Cobbins – 9th Congressional District

Mr. Mike Krause – Ex Officio, Executive Director, Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Vacant — Student Member

Dr. Sara Heyburn Morrison – Executive Director, Tennessee State Board of Education

Appellate Authorizer of Charter Schools

In 2014, the Tennessee General Assembly adopted the law establishing the State Board as an appellate authorizer of charter schools. Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated (“T.C.A.”) § 49-13-108(a)(4)(E), if the State Board of Education finds that a local school board’s decision to deny an application of a charter school was contrary to the best interests of the pupils, school district or community, the State Board may approve the application for a charter school. If the charter school is located in a Local Education Agency (LEA) that has a priority school on the current or last preceding priority school list, the State Board will be the chartering authority of the school. The school will then be evaluated and held accountable to the State Board of Education’s [Charter School Performance Framework](#) unless the LEA and the charter school agree that the charter school will be overseen and monitored by the LEA, pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-142(b)(3). Since 2014, the State Board has authorized three charter schools: one in Memphis, TN and two in Nashville, TN.

The State Board's first authorized charter school opened in Memphis, TN for the 2017-18 school year. Operated by Green Dot Public Schools Tennessee, Bluff City High School opened with 9th graders in 2017 and will serve grades 9-12 when fully expanded. Additionally, KIPP Nashville opened KIPP Antioch



Elementary School in the 2018-19 school year serving Kindergarten, and will serve grades K-4 when fully expanded. In 2019-20, KIPP Nashville will open a middle school serving grades 5-8 when fully expanded.

Our Charter Authorizing Mission

To meet the requirements of T.C.A. § 49-13-108, the State Board develops an annual Master Plan that outlines its vision for Tennessee students. In order to achieve this vision, the State Board established a number of strategic priorities. As part of those strategic priorities, the State Board is committed to ensuring that all students and families in Tennessee have access to high-quality school options.

Core Principles

With regard to its authorizing functions, the mission of the State Board is to increase families' access to high-quality charter schools. The State Board will carry out this mission by upholding the core principles set forth in [State Board Policy 6.200](#).

1. Core Authorizing Principles. The State Board will, in all of its endeavors, be guided by the following three core authorizing principles: maintaining high standards for charter schools; upholding charter school autonomy, and protecting student and public interests.
2. Maintaining High Standards. To maintain high standards, the State Board will:
 - a. Set high standards for the approval of charter schools in its portfolio.
 - b. Maintain high standards for the charter schools it oversees.
 - c. Hold charter schools accountable for, over time, meeting the performance standards and targets set forth in their charter agreements on a range of measures and metrics.
 - d. Close all charter schools in its portfolio that fail to meet the standards and targets set forth in law and under their charter agreements.
3. Upholding School Autonomy. To uphold school autonomy, the State Board will:
 - a. Honor and preserve the independence of its charter schools' governing boards.
 - b. Preserve core school autonomies related to educational programming, financial, personnel, school culture, and scheduling decisions.
 - c. Assume responsibility, not for the success or failure of individual charter schools in its portfolio, but for holding schools accountable for their performance.
 - d. Focus on school accountability for outcomes rather than inputs and processes.
 - e. Minimize, within state and federal law, administrative and compliance burdens on charter schools in its portfolio.
4. Protecting Student and Public Interests. The well-being and best interests of students will be the fundamental value informing all State Board actions and decisions.
 - a. The State Board will hold its charter schools accountable for fulfilling fundamental public education obligations to all students, including:
 - i. Non-selective, nondiscriminatory access to all eligible students;
 - ii. Fair treatment of all students in admissions and disciplinary actions; and
 - iii. Appropriate services for all enrolled students in accordance with the law.
 - b. The State Board will hold its charter schools accountable for fulfilling fundamental obligations to the public, including that schools provide the following:



- i. Sound governance, management and stewardship of public funds; and
 - ii. Public information and operational transparency in accordance with the law.
- c. When granting a charter and providing oversight to a State Board authorized charter school, the State Board will:
 - i. As part of its mission, focus on chartering high-quality charter schools;
 - ii. Demonstrate clarity, consistency and public transparency in authorizing policies, practices and decisions;
 - iii. Maintain effective and efficient public stewardship of its public resources;
 - iv. Comply with all applicable laws and regulations; and
 - v. Employ ethical conduct in all activities.
- d. The State Board will support parents' and students' abilities to make informed choices about educational options by providing clear, accurate and timely information related to performance of the charter schools in the State Board's portfolio.

Our Charter Schools



| Bluff City High School | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Address | 4100 Ross Road, Memphis, TN 38115 |
| Phone | 901-881-7375 |
| Website | http://tn.greendot.org/bchs/ |
| School Leader | Jonas Cleaves, Jonas.Cleaves@greendot.org |
| School Mission | Our mission is to help transform public education so <i>ALL</i> students graduate prepared for college, leadership, and life. |
| Operating Status | Open and operating |
| Year Opened | 2017 |
| Grades Served in 2018-19 | 9, 10 (growing to 9-12) |
| Contracted Services | n/a |
| Approved Waivers | View here |



| KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary School | |
|--|---|
| Address | 5221 Hickory Hollow Pkwy, Antioch, TN 37013 |
| Phone | 629-208-7600 |
| Website | https://kippnashville.org/schools-programs/kipp-antioch-college-prep-elementary-school/ |
| School Leader | Molly Trenkamp, mtrenkamp@kippnashville.org |
| School Mission | KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary School (KACPE) is a free, open-enrollment public charter school located in South Nashville. KACPE is grounded in the promise that we make to our families, students, and community that through educating with love, equity, and excellence, our students will be leaders who impact change for themselves, our communities, and our world. The culture of our school is made up of all of the individual choices, actions, and words that collectively shape the experience of every person who enters our community. |
| Operating Status | Open and operating |
| Year Opened | 2018 |
| Grades Served in 2018-19 | Kindergarten (growing to K-4) |
| Contracted Services | n/a |
| Approved Waivers | View here |

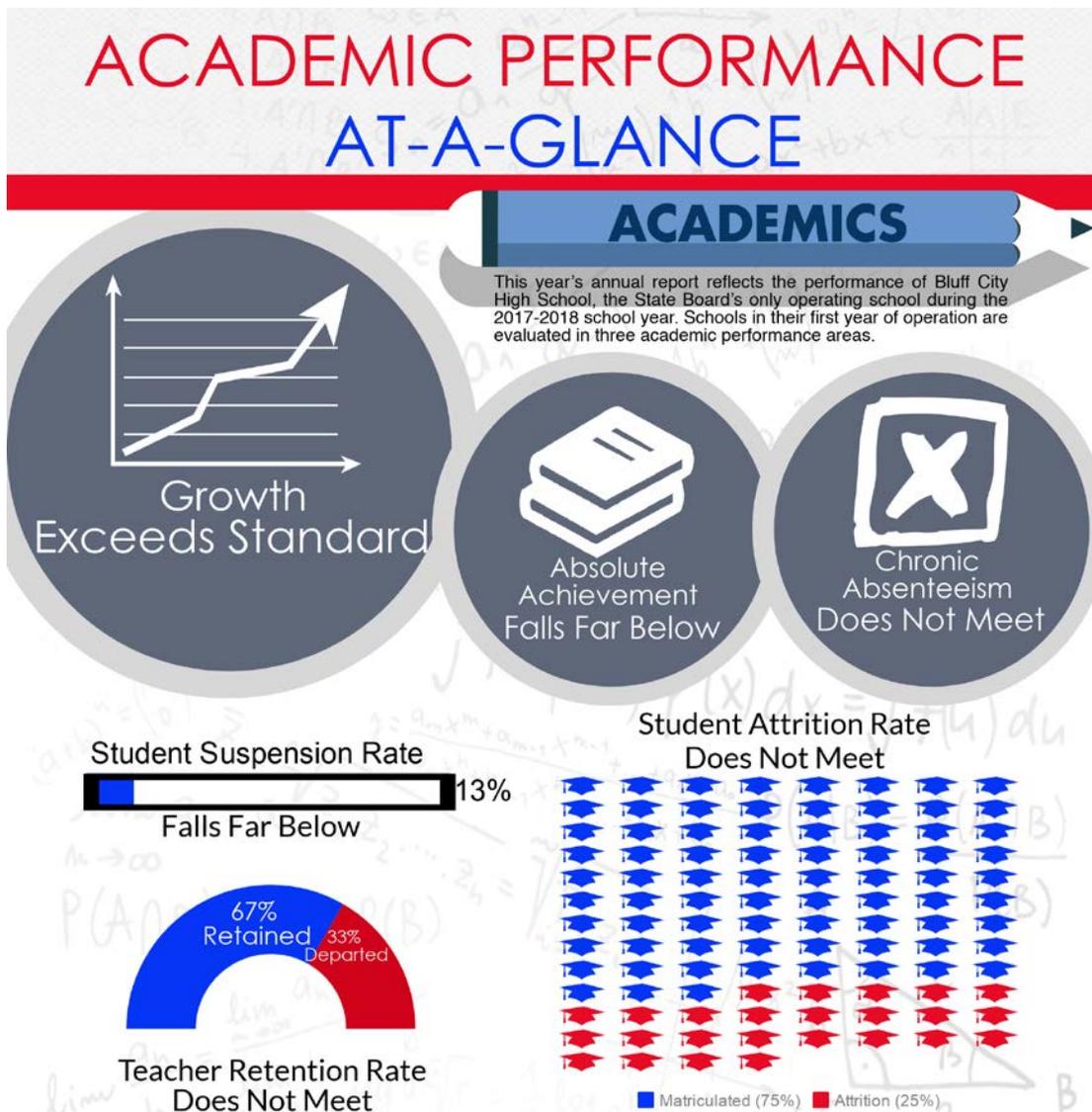
KIPP: Nashville

| KIPP Nashville Middle | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Address | Opening in Southeast Nashville |
| Phone | 615-226-4484 |
| Website | Not yet active |
| School Leader | Not yet named |
| School Mission | To cultivate in its students the character and academic skills needed to succeed in rigorous high schools and colleges, and to become productive citizens in the world beyond. |
| Operating Status | Opening August 2019 |
| Year Opening | 2019 |
| Grades Served in 2018-19 | None (growing to 5-8) |
| Contracted Services | n/a |
| Approved Waivers | View here |

About the Annual Report

This year's annual report reflects the performance of Bluff City High School, the State Board's only operating school during the 2017-18 school year. The [Performance Framework](#) measures the academic, financial, and organizational benchmarks by which schools will be scored to indicate the overall success and health of the charter school. For each measure in this report, the school receives one of the ratings described below.

| RATING | DESCRIPTION |
|--------------------------|---|
| Exceeds Standard | The school is exceeding expectations and showing exemplary performance. This rating only applies to academic performance. |
| Meets Standard | The school is performing well and meeting expectations for performance. |
| Does Not Meet Standard | The school has failed to meet minimum expectations for performance. |
| Falls Far Below Standard | The school falls far below the stated expectations and/or significant concern(s) are noted. The failures are material and significant to the viability to the school. |



I. Academic Performance & School Culture
OVERALL RATING: DOES NOT MEET

This section provides an overview of the school’s performance in the 2017-18 school year based on a variety of academic measures the school is accountable for achieving, as established by applicable federal and state law and the charter agreement.

| INDICATORS AND MEASURES | SCHOOL PERFORMANCE | RATING |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT | | |
| Absolute performance in ELA | Data Suppressed | Falls Far Below |
| Absolute performance in math | Data Suppressed | Falls Far Below |
| Growth | TVAAS Level 5 | Exceeds Standard |
| Chronic Absenteeism | 23.3% | Does Not Meet |
| COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE | | |
| School comparative performance to Shelby County Schools (“SCS”) in ELA | SCS 13.4% | Does Not Meet |
| School comparative performance to SCS in math | SCS 10.1% | Does Not Meet |
| SCHOOL CULTURE | | |
| Suspension rate | 13.2% | Falls Far Below |
| Student attrition rate | 25% | Does Not Meet |
| Teacher retention rate | 67% | Does Not Meet |

II. Financial Performance
OVERALL RATING: PENDING

This section provides an overview of the school’s performance in the 2017-18 school year and recent historical trends based on financial measures the school is accountable for achieving, as established by applicable federal and state law and the charter agreement. These measures provide information about the school’s financial health and sustainability.

| INDICATORS AND MEASURES | RATING |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| NEAR TERM FINANCIAL HEALTH | |
| Current Ratio | TBD |
| Unrestricted Days Cash | TBD |
| Enrollment Variance | TBD |
| Debt Default | TBD |
| FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY | |
| Total Margin | TBD |
| Debt to Asset Ratio | TBD |
| Cash Flow | TBD |
| Debt Service Coverage Ratio | TBD |

III. Organizational Performance
OVERALL RATING: PENDING

Charter schools are required to meet certain regulatory requirements and responsibilities as established by applicable state and federal law and their charter agreements. This section reports the school’s overall performance in the 2017-18 school year based on fulfilling legal requirements and fiduciary/public stewardship responsibilities, and other measures relevant to organizational health and performance.

| INDICATORS AND MEASURES | RATING |
|---|----------------|
| EDUCATION PROGRAM COMPLIANCE | |
| Charter Terms | Meets Standard |
| Compliance with Education Requirements | Meets Standard |
| Students with Disabilities Rights | Meets Standard |
| English Language Learner Rights | Meets Standard |
| FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT | |
| Financial Reporting and Compliance Reporting | TBD |
| Generally Accepted Accounting Principles | TBD |
| GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING | |
| Governance Requirements | Meets Standard |
| Accountability of Management | N/A |
| Reporting Requirements | Meets Standard |
| STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE RIGHTS AND REQUIREMENTS | |
| Rights of Students | Meets Standard |
| Attendance | Meets Standard |
| Credentialing | Meets Standard |
| Employment Rights | Meets Standard |
| Background Checks | Meets Standard |
| SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT | |
| Facilities and Transportation | Meets Standard |
| Health and Safety | Meets Standard |
| Information Handling | Meets Standard |
| ADDITIONAL OBLIGATIONS | |
| All Other Obligations | Meets Standard |