



Wooddale Middle School Charter Appeal Summary Letter

This letter serves as Notice of Appeal by Green Dot Public Schools Tennessee, now IOTA Community Schools, in the matter of Wooddale Middle School, an Achievement School District transformation charter school application recently denied by the Memphis Shelby County Schools (MSCS) Board of Education.

Accompanying this letter (in the Microsoft Teams Folder) are:

- Copies of our initial and amended applications
- A summary of the application timeline
- Copies of the denial letter from MSCS and a rubric with scoring and feedback
- A clean version of the amended application without any tracked changes

Green Dot Public Schools Tennessee, now IOTA Community Schools, has been operating Wooddale Middle School since 2015, in partnership with the Achievement School District. Since partnering with the Parkway Village community, our organization has worked to build strong relationships with students, families, and community members. They have supported our mission, created opportunities for all students to thrive in great learning environments and enabled us to restore the great academic legacy of the Wooddale Middle community.

Our goal, as an organization specializing in middle and high school transformation, has always been to create opportunities for immediate growth for Wooddale Middle students, academically, socially and behaviorally, especially the burgeoning population of students classified as English Language Learners. IOTA has continued to refine systems, creating a robust Response to Intervention system to address the academic needs of students who enter 6th grade reading between the kindergarten and third-grade level according to nationally normed assessments (ie, iReady). The success of IOTA's model to ensure students' academic growth and proficiency can be seen in the steady increase in the TVAAS data at Wooddale Middle over time, resulting in Wooddale Middle achieving the original goal of the Achievement School District Partnership, exiting Priority Status and the removal of federal CSI designations.

MSCS Feedback & IOTA's Response

The schools included in the application for comparative analysis are not inclusive of all traditional and charter schools in the identified 38118 zip code and or community. Additionally, some schools identified within the application are not in the proposed geographic area. There is a concern of oversaturation in the proposed community as there are currently more seats than students in the proposed geographic area.

When our organization made the comparative analysis of other schools in the community around Wooddale Middle, we thought it would be fair to consider all middle schools operated by MSCS within a competitive radius to the school and schools from which we have received students through the transfer process. In analyzing only schools in the 38118 zip code, Wooddale Middle outperforms Memphis Shelby County Schools Middle Schools but is joined in performance by other charter schools in the Parkway Village area. All traditional Memphis Shelby County Schools middle schools in 38118 are rated "F" by the state.



| | | MSCS Traditional | | MSCS Charter | | ASD Charter |
|--|---|------------------|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| | | American Way MS | Oakhaven MS | Memphis School of Excellence | Power Center Middle - Hickory Hill* | Wooddale MS |
| <i>Grades served:</i> | | 6-8 | 6-8 | 6-12 | 6-8 | 6-8 |
| Demographics (SY 2022-2023) | <i>Black/African American</i> | 65% | 86% | 45% | 61% | 59% |
| | <i>Hispanic</i> | 35% | 14% | 54% | 38% | 39% |
| | <i>White</i> | <5% | <5% | <5% | <5% | <5% |
| | <i>Economically Disadvantaged</i> | 67% | 73% | 52% | 48% | 62% |
| | <i>Students with Disabilities</i> | 11% | 10% | 5% | 6% | 8% |
| | <i>English Learners with Transitional 1-4</i> | 28% | 12% | 25% | 22% | 31% |
| Enrollment | <i>SY 2022-23</i> | 690 | 291 | 526 | 450 | 486 |
| | <i>SY 2022-23</i> | 707 | 320 | 552 | 434 | 530 |
| | <i>SY 2020-21</i> | 713 | 325 | 555 | 456 | 524 |
| School Letter Grade (SY 2022-23) | | F | F | C | C | C |
| TNReady Proficiency (SY 2022-23) | <i>ELA Success Rate</i> | 8.3% | 6.7% | 18.9% | 14.7% | 10.5% |
| | <i>Math Success Rate</i> | 7.2% | 5.7% | 11.1% | 15.8% | 15.0% |
| | <i>Science Success Rate</i> | 14.9% | 8.8% | 19.6% | 13.9% | 13.9% |
| | <i>Social Studies Success Rate</i> | 13.6% | 5.3% | 23.0% | 28.8% | 15.5% |
| TVAAS Composites (SY 2022-23) | <i>Literacy</i> | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| | <i>Numeracy</i> | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| | <i>Literacy & Numeracy</i> | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| | <i>Science</i> | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| | <i>Social Studies</i> | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| | <i>Lowest 25%</i> | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| | <i>Overall</i> | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Chronic Absenteeism Rate (SY 2022-23) | | 21.30% | 26.1% | 23.9% | 20.1% | 42.1% |
| Discipline (SY 2022-23) | <i>OSS Rate</i> | 14.3% | 14.6% | 8.5% | 15.6% | <5% |
| | <i>ISS Rate</i> | <5% | <5% | <5% | <5% | <5% |

Although the application provides additional information regarding electives including fine arts, it neglects to provide sufficient details about how these will be incorporated in the middle school program with no mention of world languages. Similarly, the applicant fails to provide an RTI intervention schedule that details Tier 3 intervention.

IOTA Community Schools does offer world languages at the middle school. Because it is not a state requirement until high school, we have focused our resources to provide students with more opportunities to engage with STEM and art, which appeals to students in middle school.

Students will take four core content classes each day. They will also have electives twice daily for 60 minutes. One of these electives will be PE to satisfy the state mandated requirements and the other electives will be Music, Art, or STEM. Students in 6th grade take Music or STEM, 7th grade take STEM or Music and 8th grade takes Art or STEM.

Students participate in English, Math, Science and Social Studies for 60 minutes each day. The advisory period is used for social-emotional learning, college and career readiness, life skills and academic advising. Tier II Intervention occurs for qualifying students during the advisory block for 30 minutes 3 times weekly. The students in Tier II Intervention will have regular advisory 2 times a week. Tier III Intervention takes place during the elective block. Students qualifying for Tier III Intervention will have daily Intervention and PE as their elective.



While the applicant provides resolutions showing approval from Green Dot National to amend its bylaws and terminate its agreement with Green Dot National, there are concerns about the implementation of such a transition.

Green Dot Public Schools Tennessee has successfully transitioned to a newly named organization, IOTA Community Schools. IOTA filed all legal and necessary documents to make the transition with the Achievement School District, Tennessee Secretary of State and the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission. We have maintained the same nonprofit status and federal designations as with the national organization. Green Dot Public Schools National was a back-office service provider and did not make the academic decisions for the Tennessee organization on a daily basis.

The national organization served GDPST notice in October that they were considering dissolution. We were not at liberty to discuss the details of these proceedings at the time of the Wooddale Middle application submission. The Tennessee region was not the only organization involved, given the schools in California and Texas would also be impacted by this decision, we were legally bound to not speak publicly until the national organization's board of directors approved their dissolution, which did not become official until February 28, 2024. Since the notice, the Tennessee team has worked to build an even stronger organization to continue serving the needs of students and employees of the newly named organization, IOTA Community Schools. We are a completely Tennessee based organization, run by the same individuals who have been serving in some capacity with the Green Dot Public Schools Tennessee organization over the past ten years.

Although the applicant has acknowledged the transition from GDPSN to IOTA Community Schools, it is unclear of the structure, expertise and sustainability of IOTA across the term.

During the transition, IOTA wanted to ensure we were creating the internal structures to successfully provide school operations in Tennessee without the support of the national organization. We enlisted an outside evaluator, Your Part Time Controller. Their assessment enabled us to determine the number of team members we would need to efficiently run finance and operations, as well as data analytics for the Tennessee region. Using their guidance, we have brought on a finance and operations team led by the architect of Tennessee's operations, as well as legacy Green Dot National's operations over the past ten years. We have also built out a team to lead data and IT, each department is led by people experienced in the Tennessee academic landscape, who have previously supported all Tennessee data analytic and IT efforts.

The executive leadership team has served in multiple capacities, from teachers to community engagement to principals from the organization's inception in Tennessee. We have also brought on other team members to better our Response to Intervention programming, Career and Technical Education, exceptional student services, and school operations.