

## Summary

Date: August 8, 2025

To: Tess Stovall, Executive Director, Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

From: Jocquell Rodgers, Executive Director, IOTA Community Schools

RE: Kirby Middle School Reauthorization Notice of Appeal Summary

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

Green Dot Public Schools TN, now IOTA Community Schools, first partnered with Kirby Middle School in 2016. The primary goal of the partnership was academic turnaround, to remove the school from the state-identified priority schools list and though Kirby Middle has not achieved priority exit status, it has celebrated some academic successes not previously seen before partnering with the organization. Throughout this process, IOTA has understood the importance of engaging the community to learn more about the students and families, providing the opportunity for them to also learn more about the school turnaround model. IOTA has worked to bring in strong leadership teams and hired teachers who have been deeply committed to the academic success of students at Kirby Middle School.

Since partnering with the Achievement Schools District, ASD, to bring academic improvement to Kirby Middle, Kirby Middle has had multiple years of TVAAS level 3 or 5. Kirby Middle has had state data that indicates strong growth but has struggled with proficiency. We have continued to work to increase the outcomes at Kirby Middle each year. Teachers have focused on providing students with rigorous Tier I instruction for all students. Because 70% of entering sixth graders at Kirby perform three or more grade levels below in math and reading, IOTA has implemented RTI classes to bring tiered interventions for students. Kirby Middle School provides an academic program focused on meeting the needs of all students by offering a robust college preparatory curriculum with a focus on future CTE through STEM courses, with an emphasis on aviation and robotics. Students are engaged in art and music courses, as well as traditional math & ELA courses that are standards-aligned and meet the rigor of state testing. Additionally, Kirby Middle offers extensive programming for students requiring special education and English language development. Kirby Middle has also offered a student center

after school program, providing students access to robotics, culinary arts, tutoring, athletics and culinary arts.

Kirby Middle currently serves a diverse student population that is 77% African American, 21% Spanish speaking, and 2% White and other. Kirby Middle School also serves students with varying learning needs, with 15% of the students identified as SPED.

IOTA Community Schools is best positioned to continue operating Kirby Middle School and IOTA intends to continue to engage community leaders and other neighborhood organizations with extensive outreach efforts to ensure the Kirby Middle community thrives. Parents have overwhelmingly expressed their support and interest in having IOTA Community Schools continue operating Kirby Middle. We have held open houses and community meetings to help families understand the importance of the transition and the value of their voice through this process. 93% of parents surveyed strongly agree with our mission and want IOTA to remain as the operator of the school.

Attachments:

1. Hillcrest High School initial and amended reauthorization application
2. Summary of application timeline
3. Denial letter from Memphis-Shelby County Schools
4. Amended application without any tracked changes