



THE OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

160 Glenn Rogers Sr. Street (formerly S. Hollywood), Room 138 • Memphis, Tennessee 38112
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Submitted October 15, 2025, for the October 17, 2025 Quarterly Commission Meeting

Dear Members of the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

Memphis-Shelby County Schools (“MSCS”) would like to begin by recognizing the thorough planning and execution of the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission staff and Commission members throughout a robust appellate cycle, while also engaging in the Commission’s regular authorizing duties. We appreciate the commitment of the team to uphold the Tennessee Quality Charter Authorizing Standards and ensure transparent practices throughout the process.

As an authorizer, we use these quality authorizing standards as our North Star to ensure consistency in meeting the appropriate standards for approval and authorization. The appellate cycle and the recommendation from the review team affirm our standard of review in ensuring a fair and rigorous process for all applicants. Therefore, we respectfully request that the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission uphold the Executive Director’s recommendation to affirm the Shelby County Board of Education’s decision to deny the charter application for Still I Rise Academy.

In the TDOE scoring rubric, MSCS determined that Still I Rise Academy provided insufficient evidence of capacity in the academic, operational, and financial sections to demonstrate the application meets the criteria of the rubric for approval. The applicant failed to provide adequate details regarding sufficient evidence to support the expected results as an Opportunity Public Charter School for vulnerable, at-risk populations in Tennessee. Additionally, there were multiple inconsistencies and deficiencies across the application that could potentially impact recruitment, enrollment, operations, finance, governance and academic success.

For these reasons, we again respectfully ask that the Commission uphold the Executive Director’s recommendation to affirm the Shelby County Board of Education’s decision. Memphis-Shelby County Schools appreciates the Commission’s time and consideration regarding Still I Rise Academy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arlandra Parker".

Arlandra Parker
Director, Charter School Development