



Statement to the TN Public Charter School Commission

We are grateful for the opportunity to submit an appeal of the MNPS Board of Education’s decision to deny Nashville Classical II. While reviewing our amended application, the MNPS review team found we met all standards for approval, including Academic Plan, Operations Plan, Financial Plan, and Past Performance. As a result, we believe our application meets or exceeds the metrics outlined in the Tennessee Department of Education’s application scoring rubric and we believe a careful review of our application will reveal that our proposal is in the best interest of students, our school district, and our community.

In their original findings, the review team acknowledged Nashville Classical’s exemplary history of academic success, observing that our existing school “ranks 1st in academic success rate” among Nashville’s 87 high-poverty schools, and that in 2019 we “had an overall success rate of 57.4%, as compared to the state at 36.4% and MNPS at 26.4%.” By approving our proposal, the Commission will provide more students the opportunity to attend an excellent school, which is in their best interest. As table one shows, approval of Nashville Classical II is especially important for students in the state’s “Super Subgroup.”¹ **Currently, Nashville Classical’s TNReady Super Subgroup Success Rate is 2.5 times the rate of nearby MNPS schools².**

Table One - TNReady Success Rate at nearby schools (Overall and Super Subgroup)

TNReady Success Rate at Nearby Schools			
School	Cluster	Success Rate	Super Subgroup Success Rate
Gower Elementary	Hillwood	40.0	24.8
Westmeade Elementary	Hillwood	42.0	27.9
Charlotte Park Elementary	Hillwood	22.0	22.7
Harpeth Valley Elementary	Hillwood	59.0	40.0

¹ The Super Subgroup includes all students identified as members of one or more historically underserved student groups: Black, Hispanic, and Native American students (BHN), English learners (EL), Economically disadvantaged students (ED), and Students with Disabilities (SWD).

² We define nearby schools as schools in the White’s Creek Cluster, Hillwood Cluster, and Cockrill Elementary.

Alex Green Elementary	White's Creek	14.0	13.5
Cumberland Elementary	White's Creek	6.0	6.3
Joelton Elementary	White's Creek	40.2	27.8
Bellevue Middle School	Hillwood	30.8	19.7
HG Hill Middle School	Hillwood	25.9	17.4
Haynes Middle School	White's Creek	6.0	NA
Cockrill Elementary	Pearl Cohn	15.3	14.6
NCCS		57.4	50.3
Nearby School Average		27.4	21.5
MNPS Average		26.4	19.2
TN Average		37	35

Furthermore, in their denial, the MNPS Board of Education stated “concerns about enrollment.” However, these concerns do not accurately reflect a variety of facts and data. For example, all eleven nearby schools are projected to grow over the next 10 years, with projections **above 90% utilization at nine of the eleven schools**. Even if MNPS Reimagined is implemented at nearby schools to alleviate MS capacity, elementary schools will be at or near capacity. While the District could decide to build additions at many of these schools, we do not believe this is an effective, efficient or fair use of the school district’s scarce resources.

Meanwhile, Nashville Classical, our flagship campus, has received more than 1,000 applications over the past two years and is the city’s second most popular elementary school. In addition, Nashville Classical enrolls a far more diverse population than the city’s other most in-demand schools. In fact, as table two shows, **Nashville Classical enrolls three times as many Black, Hispanic and Native American Students and three times as many Economically Disadvantaged Students**. Currently, Nashville Classical does not offer transportation and does not conduct targeted recruitment in the White’s Creek or Hillwood clusters nor do we recruit or offer transportation in nearby neighborhoods in the Pearl-Cohn Cluster, such as The Nations. By opening Nashville Classical II at 1015 Davidson Drive, we will offer more students and families the opportunity to attend one of the city’s most desirable public schools in our school district.

Moreover, unlike the building’s previous tenant, LEAD Public Schools, we have proposed a diverse, K-8 school and plan to own and renovate the building. LEAD Public Schools rented the Brookmeade facility and operated other Middle School campuses nearby. By opening NC II at

1015 Davidson Drive, we will not be cannibalizing our current enrollment; instead, we will be offering an opportunity to new students and families.

Table Two - Student Demographics at Davidson County’s Most In-Demand K-4 Schools

Student Demographics at Davidson County’s Most In-Demand K-4 Schools			
School	SY21 - SY22 App Total	Black, Hispanic, & Native American Students	Economically Disadvantaged Students
Lockeland Elementary	822	7.5%	3.1%
Nashville Classical	804	73.6%	34.3%
Glendale Elementary	707	16.4%	0.9%
Eakin Elementary	659	40.8%	17.0%
Dan Mills Elementary	585	32.1%	16.5%
MNPS Average	NA	24.2%	9.38%

Finally, we believe Nashville Classical II is in the best interest of the greater community. On February 5, 2021, Mayor John Cooper announced his intent to fulfill the district’s capital request for new Hillwood High School. According to a Tennessean article, the district intends to spend more than \$100 million dollars on the new Hillwood High School, making it the most expensive capital project in MNPS history. The article quoted Director of Schools Adrienne Battle: She said “As neighborhoods grow, it’s critical that we build new facilities from time to time to meet the demand for a high-quality public education.”³ Likewise, the article explains that the new campus is being built for 1,600 students. However, current enrollment is only 1,100 students. By opening a K-8 school in the Hillwood Cluster and along the I-40 corridor, Nashville Classical II can create an additional pathway and support the city’s substantial investment, which is tied to efforts to grow enrollment at a new facility in a growing neighborhood.

Ultimately, we proposed Nashville Classical II because we believe all students deserve the opportunity to attend a diverse, high quality public school, regardless of their zip code. We look forward to a thorough review of our application and having the chance to explain why our proposal is in the best interest of our community.

³<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/politics/2021/02/05/nashville-mayors-spending-plan-475-m-proposed-capital-projects-including-new-bellevue-high-school/4408216001/>