

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 21, 2026 7:16 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	67.187.77.201
Unique ID:	1499686041
Location:	36.3834, -86.4512

Name	Randy McNally
Email	lt.gov.randy.mcnally@capitol.tn.gov
Phone	(615) 741-6806
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Other
What is your relationship to the application?	Tennessee Lieutenant Governor Speaker of the Senate
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	Attaching File from TN Lt.Governor's office.
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20086451860

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 22, 2026 7:15 pm
Browser:	Mobile Safari 26.6.1 / iOS
IP Address:	172.225.18.107
Unique ID:	1500038194
Location:	32.7797, -96.8022

Name	Carl Steele
Email	chsteeleii@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 715-5709
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, I am writing to express my strong support for The Empowerment Academy, an all-Black boys' charter school committed to providing young men with the academic foundation, practical skills, confidence, and leadership development they need to succeed.
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20091291276

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 22, 2026 8:08 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	67.187.77.201
Unique ID:	1500048994
Location:	36.3834, -86.4512

Name	Jack Johnson
Email	Sen.Jack.Johnson@capitol.tn.gov
Phone	(615) 741-2495
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Other
What is your relationship to the application?	Tennessee State Senator & Senate Majority Leader
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	Attaching Written File from the Office of Senator Jack Johnson
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20091441226

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 22, 2026 8:54 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	162.247.54.64
Unique ID:	1500057102
Location:	36.5037, -87.2729

Name	Brittany Watkins
Email	blessed0711@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 218-4363
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	Letter attached
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20091558874

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 22, 2026 8:57 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	162.247.54.64
Unique ID:	1500057651
Location:	36.5037, -87.2729

Name	Nikcola Wilson
Email	nwilson14@my.apsu.edu
Phone	(270) 484-9222
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	See letter
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20091566700

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 22, 2026 9:23 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	162.247.54.64
Unique ID:	1500061697
Location:	36.5037, -87.2729

Name	Tanesha Johnson
Email	shacon.tj2014@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 663-2497
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Other
What is your relationship to the application?	Educator
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	See attached letter
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20091624703

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 23, 2026 11:08 am
Browser:	Chrome Mobile 154.0.0.0 / Android
IP Address:	172.58.146.186
Unique ID:	1500214911
Location:	36.1671, -86.7861

Name	Latania Shaw
Email	tania_513@yahoo.com
Phone	(615) 218-8532
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	I'm in full support of launching the Empowerment Academy Nashville Charter school. I feel it would be a great asset to our community with the targeted educational curriculum.

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 23, 2026 4:27 pm
Browser:	Mobile Safari 26.0 / iOS
IP Address:	162.247.54.64
Unique ID:	1500344909
Location:	36.5037, -87.2729

Name	Sharetha Williams
Email	sharethawilliams23@gmail.com
Phone	(931) 302-0021
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Other
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	Thank you
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20095452277

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 24, 2026 8:55 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	67.187.77.201
Unique ID:	1500790982
Location:	36.3834, -86.4512

Name	Paul Bailey
Email	sen.paul.bailey@capitol.tn.gov
Phone	(615) 741-3978
Resident District Status	Non-district Resident
What is your resident district?	White County
Relationship to Application/District	Other
What is your relationship to the application?	State Senator & Chairman of Commerce and Labor Transportation
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	File attached From The Office of Senator Paul Bailey
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20100954456

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 25, 2026 6:15 am
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	75.208.40.164
Unique ID:	1500854796
Location:	36.1671, -86.7861

Name	Pedro Basden
Email	pbasden551@yahoo.com
Phone	(502) 807-9987
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Application Staff or Board Member
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	I stand in support of Empowerment Academy. In a time of AI and other technologies, a good education is paramount to meet the needs of tomorrow. Therefore, children who are in underserved communities need all of the help and opportunities e can afford them. There problem is our children are not competing among themselves in in the United States, they are competing globally. So, if our children are going to compete, they need the best education they can possibly get, particularly, children of color. This tells me that schools such as the Empowerment Academy are a necessity offering specialized attention to our children to help them get to where their ture purpose is destined to take them. Empowerment Academy has my support!

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - Empowerment Middle/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 29, 2026 7:03 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	67.187.77.201
Unique ID:	1502068292
Location:	36.3834, -86.4512

Name	Bill Powers
Email	sen.bill.powers@capital.tn.gov
Phone	(615) 741-2374
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Other
What is your relationship to the application?	State Senator
I wish to comment in support of	Empowerment Academy Nashville
Written Comment	Attached is writteen support from Senator Bill Powers
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20118601359

Kelly T. Keisling

State Representative

District Office:

8500 Hwy 111, Suite 150
Byrdstown, TN 38549

Legislative Office:

Cordell Hull Bldg., Suite 566
425 Rep. John Lewis Way N.
Nashville, Tennessee 37243
rep.kelly.keisling@capitol.tn.gov
(615) 741-6852



**House of Representatives
State of Tennessee**

NASHVILLE

September 14, 2026

Member:

Commerce Committee
Judiciary Committee
Banking and Consumer Affairs
Subcommittee
Children and Family Affairs
Subcommittee

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission
Attn: Executive Director and Members of the Commission
500 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: Letter of Support, Empowerment Academy

Dear Members of the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

I am pleased to offer my support for Empowerment Academy and its efforts to provide Tennessee students and families with another quality public education option.

Throughout my years of service in the Tennessee General Assembly, I have believed that one of our most important responsibilities is ensuring that Tennessee children have every opportunity to receive a strong education and prepare themselves for a successful future. Every family and student have different needs, and I believe we should encourage educational opportunities that can help meet those needs while maintaining strong standards of accountability and academic achievement.

An education that combines academic achievement with personal responsibility, leadership, and involvement in the community can make a lasting difference in the lives of young people. With that in mind, I am encouraged by Empowerment Academy's proposed emphasis on strong foundations in reading and mathematics, individualized learning, character and leadership development, mentorship, technology, family engagement, and experiential learning.

I also appreciate Empowerment Academy's willingness to participate fully in Tennessee's charter authorization process, receive feedback, and continue refining its proposal. Any public charter school entrusted with educating Tennessee students should be expected to demonstrate sound governance, fiscal responsibility, academic accountability, and a commitment to producing meaningful results for students.

38th District
Clay Fentress Macon Pickett Scott
Counties

Ultimately, parents want what is best for their children. They want their children to attend schools where they are challenged academically, supported personally, and prepared to become responsible and productive citizens. Providing families with additional high-quality educational opportunities can help Tennessee continue building upon the progress we have made in education.

For these reasons, I respectfully support Empowerment Academy's application and ask that the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission give its proposal full and fair consideration based upon its educational model, organizational readiness, and potential benefit to Tennessee students and families. Thank you for your service to the students and families of our state and for your careful consideration of this application. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact my office anytime.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly T Keisling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Kelly Keisling

JOHN ROSE
6TH DISTRICT, TENNESSEE
JOHNROSE.HOUSE.GOV

COMMITTEE ON
FINANCIAL SERVICES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
AND MONETARY POLICY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON DIGITAL ASSETS,
FINANCIAL TECHNOLOGY AND INCLUSION

VICE-CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES
RISK MANAGEMENT, AND CREDIT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NUTRITION, FOREIGN,
AGRICULTURE, AND HORTICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMODITY MARKETS
DIGITAL ASSETS, AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

WASHINGTON OFFICE
2238 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4231
FAX: (202) 225-6887

COOKEVILLE OFFICE
321 EAST SPRING STREET, SUITE 306
COOKEVILLE, TN 38501
(931) 854-9430
FAX: (615) 206-8980

GALLATIN OFFICE
355 NORTH BELVEDERE DRIVE, SUITE 308
GALLATIN, TN 37066
(615) 206-8204
FAX: (615) 206-8980

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4206

September 29, 2026

Ms. Tess Stovall, Executive Director
Tennessee Public Charter School Commission
500 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243

In re: Empowerment Academy

Dear Executive Director Stovall and Members of the Commission:

I write in strong support of Empowerment Academy's public charter school appeals. I urge the Commission to approve its proposed schools in Davidson, Hamilton, and Shelby Counties so that all three locations can open for the 2027-2028 school year.

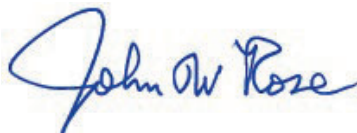
As a member of Congress representing Tennessee's 6th District and a former Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture, I recognize the value of connecting strong academic instruction to practical experience. Empowerment Academy's proposed focus on agriculture offers students an opportunity to apply reading, mathematics, science, and problem-solving skills to work they can see and understand. Combined with mentorship and high expectations, that approach can help students develop both academic confidence and a sense of purpose.

I am particularly encouraged by the school's stated commitment to serving students with disabilities. Families need public school options that recognize each child's strengths, provide appropriate support, and hold every student to meaningful goals. Empowerment Academy must be prepared to meet those responsibilities at each location, alongside the academic, operational, and financial standards required of every public charter school.

The Commission has the duty to examine each application carefully. I ask that it consider Empowerment Academy's full proposal, its responses to feedback, and the opportunity its model would offer families in Davidson, Hamilton, and Shelby Counties. I support approval of all three proposed locations for a simultaneous opening in the 2027-2028 school year.

Thank you for your service to Tennessee's students and families and for your consideration of Empowerment Academy's appeals.

Sincerely,



John Rose
Member of Congress

RANDY MCNALLY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

CORDELL HULL BUILDING, SUITE 700
425 REP. JOHN LEWIS WAY NORTH
NASHVILLE, TN 37243
(615) 741-6806



94 ROYAL TROON CIRCLE
OAK RIDGE, TN 37830
(865) 483-5544

STATE OF TENNESSEE
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

September 21, 2026

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission
500 James Robertson Parkway
8th Floor, Davy Crockett Tower
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

RE: SUPPORT FOR EMPOWERMENT ACADEMY

Dear Members of the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

I am pleased to offer my strong support for Empowerment Academy and its vision to establish a high-quality public charter school serving Tennessee students and families.

Tennessee benefits when parents have meaningful educational choices and schools are encouraged to pursue innovative approaches while remaining accountable for student achievement. Empowerment Academy's proposed model reflects those principles.

The Academy's focus on strong literacy and mathematics instruction, rigorous academics, leadership and character development, and whole-child support provides a strong foundation for student success. Its agricultural and hands-on learning opportunities would further connect classroom instruction to real-world experiences while developing critical thinking, responsibility, collaboration, and leadership.

I am also encouraged by Empowerment Academy's commitment to family and community partnership and to creating an environment where students are challenged academically, supported personally, and prepared to become productive and responsible members of their communities.

I respectfully encourage the Commission to give careful and favorable consideration to Empowerment Academy's application and the evidence it has presented regarding its academic model, leadership, governance, operational readiness, financial planning, and commitment to measurable student achievement.

I commend the founders, educators, families, and community partners who have invested in developing this proposed school. Tennessee is strongest when we give students high expectations, give parents meaningful choices, and hold our schools accountable for results. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to Tennessee's students and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy McNally". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Randy McNally
Lieutenant Governor
State of Tennessee

August 22, 2026

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

Attn: Executive Director and Members of the Commission

500 James Robertson Parkway

Nashville, Tennessee 37243

RE: Letter of Support for Empowerment Academy

Dear Members of the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

I am writing in support of Empowerment Academy and its efforts to provide Tennessee students and families with an additional high-quality public education option.

As a member of the Tennessee General Assembly, I believe strongly that our state's continued success depends upon our willingness to invest in children, strengthen families, support educational innovation, and ensure that students have access to learning environments capable of meeting their individual needs.

Empowerment Academy's proposal reflects those priorities.

The school's vision extends beyond traditional classroom instruction. Its educational model emphasizes strong foundations in literacy and mathematics while incorporating individualized learning, character and leadership development, mentorship, technology, experiential education, family engagement, and meaningful connections between students and their communities.

These priorities are particularly important as Tennessee continues working to improve academic achievement and ensure that every student—regardless of ZIP code or economic circumstance—has an opportunity to succeed.

I am also encouraged by Empowerment Academy's willingness to engage in Tennessee's charter authorization process, respond to feedback, and continue strengthening its proposal. Effective leadership requires both vision and the

willingness to listen, improve, and remain accountable for results. The governing board's continued commitment to this process demonstrates its determination to bring its educational vision to fruition.

Public charter schools have an important responsibility. They must provide families with meaningful educational opportunities while maintaining high standards for academic performance, fiscal responsibility, governance, and accountability. Empowerment Academy should be held to those expectations, and its application should receive full and fair consideration based upon the strength of its educational model, organizational readiness, and potential benefit to the students and communities it proposes to serve.

At its core, this effort is about opportunity.

Families should have access to educational environments where children are known, challenged, supported, and prepared not simply to complete school, but to become capable students, responsible citizens, and future leaders.

For these reasons, I respectfully support Empowerment Academy's application and encourage the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission to give thoughtful consideration to its proposal and the educational opportunities it seeks to provide Tennessee families.

Thank you for your service to the students of our state and for your careful consideration of this matter.

Respectfully,

Senator Mark Pody

Tennessee State Senate

District 17

To: *Tennessee Public Charter School Commission
8th Floor, Davy Crockett Tower, Nashville, Tennessee 37243*

500 James Robertson Parkway,

From: *Carl H. Steele II, MBA, MHR
Military Veteran, chsteeleii@gmail.com*

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

I am writing to express my strong support for The Empowerment Academy, an all-Black boys' charter school committed to providing young men with the academic foundation, practical skills, confidence, and leadership development they need to succeed.

My support for The Empowerment Academy is rooted in my experience working with boys and young men. Through youth ministry and mentoring, including work with students in grades 5–12, I have seen firsthand the importance of providing young men with positive environments where they can learn, ask questions, build confidence, and recognize their potential. This experience has taught me that education must be about more than passing tests. Young men need to understand why what they are learning matters and how those skills connect to their lives and futures. That is one of the reasons I believe The Empowerment Academy is so important. The school's focus on agriculture, mathematics, and reading provides students with foundational skills for success.

Reading is essential because students must be able to understand information, communicate effectively, follow instructions, evaluate what they are told, and express their ideas with confidence. As young men progress through school and enter the workforce, higher education, entrepreneurship, or leadership roles, strong literacy skills become increasingly important.

Mathematics teaches much more than numbers. It develops problem-solving, logic, critical thinking, financial literacy, and sound decision-making. Young men need these skills to manage money, understand contracts, start businesses, pursue careers in STEM fields, and make responsible decisions in everyday life.

Agriculture extends learning beyond the traditional classroom. It teaches responsibility, science, sustainability, food production, business, entrepreneurship, environmental stewardship, and the value of hard work. It also gives students the opportunity to create something tangible and see the results of their efforts.

From my experience working with boys, I believe these practical connections are extremely important. Young men need to see that what they learn in school can help prepare them to become providers, entrepreneurs, professionals, community leaders, fathers, and responsible citizens. There is also tremendous value in having an educational environment specifically designed to empower Black boys. Representation, mentorship, and high expectations can help

students understand that academic excellence and leadership are attainable. An all-Black boys' school can create an environment where students are encouraged to embrace who they are while being challenged to become more disciplined, educated, confident, and prepared for the future. My work with young men has reinforced my belief that early investment matters. By the time a young person reaches adulthood, many of his attitudes toward education, work, responsibility, and his own potential have already begun to form. We therefore have a responsibility to provide boys with positive examples, meaningful challenges, and opportunities to develop essential skills before they enter adulthood.

The Empowerment Academy has the opportunity to do exactly that. This is not simply about creating another school. It is about creating an environment where young men can develop the knowledge, character, practical skills, and confidence necessary to navigate the world around them. When we teach a young man to read, we give him access to information. When we teach him mathematics, we give him tools to solve problems and make informed decisions. When we teach him agriculture, we show him how knowledge, work, science, and entrepreneurship can come together to create something meaningful. When we surround him with mentors, educators, and leaders who believe in his potential, we help him recognize that potential within himself.

Having worked with young men personally, I understand how important it is to provide these opportunities early. The Empowerment Academy represents an investment not only in individual students, but also in families, neighborhoods, and the future of the broader community. I believe our young men deserve an education that challenges them academically, develops them personally, connects learning to real life, and reminds them that they have the ability to become leaders.

When we empower our boys with knowledge, skills, identity, and purpose, we empower entire communities.

Sincerely,

Carl H. Steele II, MBA, MHR

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Nikcola Wilson, and I am a community stakeholder with long-standing ties to North Nashville. I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed **Empowerment Academy** to be located at **St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church, 901 40th Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee.**

For decades, St. Luke AME Church has served as a stabilizing force in our community—providing spiritual guidance, social support, youth programming, and a safe gathering place for families. Its presence has been a consistent anchor through seasons of growth, challenge, and change. The opportunity to house a high-quality public charter school within this trusted institution represents a meaningful step toward expanding educational access for children who need it most.

Why This School Matters to Our Community

- **North Nashville families deserve more strong educational options.** Many parents continue to seek environments that offer individualized instruction, strong literacy foundations, and culturally responsive teaching. The Empowerment Academy’s model directly addresses these needs.
- **St. Luke is a trusted and respected community partner.** Its history of service, outreach, and leadership makes it an ideal location for a school that seeks to uplift children and strengthen families.
- **The school’s mission aligns with community priorities.** The focus on mentorship, character development, academic excellence, and social-emotional growth reflects what our community has consistently asked for—schools that nurture the whole child.
- **This initiative strengthens the neighborhood.** A school rooted in a longstanding community institution promotes stability, safety, and collaboration between educators, families, and local leaders.

A Commitment to the Future of North Nashville

As a community stakeholder, I believe the Empowerment Academy will bring renewed opportunity, hope, and academic promise to our neighborhood. It represents an investment not only in children, but in the future of North Nashville as a whole.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission to approve the charter application for the Empowerment Academy at St. Luke AME Church. This school will provide families with a high-quality option grounded in community partnership, educational excellence, and a vision for long-term success.

Thank you for your service, your leadership, and your thoughtful consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Tanesha Johnson, and I am a prospective education professional committed to advancing high-quality, student-centered learning environments in the state of Tennessee. I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed **Empowerment Academy** to be located at **St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church, 901 40th Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee.**

As someone preparing to enter the field of education, I am deeply aware of the challenges facing students in underserved communities, particularly in North Nashville. Persistent achievement gaps, limited access to individualized instruction, and the need for culturally responsive learning environments continue to impact student outcomes. The Empowerment Academy's mission, instructional model, and community-anchored approach directly address these needs.

Why I Support the Empowerment Academy

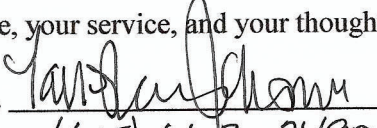
- **A mission aligned with student success.** The Empowerment Academy's focus on literacy, leadership, social-emotional development, and culturally relevant teaching reflects best practices in modern education. These priorities are essential for preparing students to thrive academically and socially.
- **A location rooted in trust and stability.** St. Luke AME Church has long served as a pillar in North Nashville. Its reputation for service, safety, and community engagement makes it an ideal home for a school that seeks to uplift children and families.
- **A model that reflects current educational research.** The Academy's emphasis on mentorship, character development, and individualized support aligns with evidence-based strategies proven to improve student achievement and long-term outcomes.
- **A commitment to equity and opportunity.** Families in North Nashville deserve more high-quality school options. The Empowerment Academy represents a meaningful step toward expanding access and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to succeed.

A Professional Commitment to the Future

As I prepare to enter the education profession, I am encouraged by initiatives that prioritize student growth, community partnership, and academic excellence. The Empowerment Academy embodies these values. I believe its presence at St. Luke AME Church will strengthen the educational landscape of Nashville and provide a transformative opportunity for children who need it most.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission to approve the charter application for the Empowerment Academy at St. Luke AME Church. This school has the potential to change lives, strengthen families, and contribute meaningfully to the future of education in our state.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully submitted,  Prospective Education Professional Nashville, Tennessee

(615) 663-2497

**SENATOR
JACK JOHNSON**

702 CORDELL HULL BUILDING
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243

O: (615) 741-2495
F: (615) 253-0321

Sen.Jack.Johnson@capitol.tn.gov



Senate Chamber State of Tennessee

NASHVILLE

**SENATE
MAJORITY LEADER**

COMMITTEES
FINANCE, WAYS AND MEANS
COMMERCE AND LABOR
CALENDAR

September 21, 2026

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission
Attn: Executive Director Tess Stovall and Members of the Commission
500 James Robertson Parkway Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Executive Director Stovall and Members of the Commission:

Please accept this letter as my support for Empowerment Academy and its applications to serve students through proposed locations in Davidson, Hamilton, and Shelby Counties. I respectfully ask the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission to give each application full and fair consideration based on the strength of the educational model, the readiness of the governing organization, and the needs of the communities the school seeks to serve.

Tennessee's continued educational progress depends on high expectations, strong accountability, and a willingness to consider thoughtful models that address students' differing needs. Empowerment Academy proposes a small-school, relationship-centered environment for boys in the elementary grades, with a focus on early literacy, mathematics, personalized instruction, mentorship, leadership, character development, and meaningful family partnership.

The school's proposed approach is designed to help students build foundational academic skills while also developing confidence, responsibility, and a sense of purpose. Its inclusion of STEAM, technology, experiential learning, and community engagement may provide students with additional ways to connect classroom learning to future goals and productive citizenship.

Any charter school granted the public trust must demonstrate sound governance, fiscal stewardship, operational capacity, and a clear plan for measuring student achievement. I appreciate Empowerment Academy's participation in the state authorization process and its stated commitment to using feedback to strengthen its proposal. The Commission's rigorous review remains essential to ensuring that approved schools are prepared to deliver on their promises.

For these reasons, I support full and fair consideration of Empowerment Academy's three proposed Tennessee locations. Thank you for your careful review and for your commitment to students, families, and educational excellence across our state.

Respectfully,
Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack Johnson".
Senator Jack Johnson

District 27
Williamson County

Submitted to the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

Dear Commissioners,

I am a military veteran, I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed **Empowerment Academy Charter School** to be located at **St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church, 901 40th Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee.**

As a veteran, I value discipline, structure, integrity, and service. As a perspective parent, I value safety, academic excellence, and environments that nurture the whole child. Families in North Nashville deserve a school that embodies these principles—one that prepares children not only for academic success, but for leadership, character, and responsible citizenship. The Empowerment Academy reflects these values.

Why This School Matters for My Family and Community

- **A safe and stable environment.** Safety is a priority for every veteran and every parent. St. Luke AME Church has long been a trusted institution in our community, and I believe it provides the kind of secure environment where children can learn and grow with confidence.
- **A mission aligned with service and leadership.** The Academy's focus on character development, leadership skills, and social-emotional growth mirrors the values instilled in military service. These are qualities that children need to develop early.
- **Individualized academic support.** children have different learning needs, and the Empowerment Academy's commitment to personalized instruction and strong literacy foundations is essential for their success.
- **A culturally responsive model.** As a veteran who has served alongside people from diverse backgrounds, I know the importance of teaching children to understand, respect, and value their identity and the identities of others. This school's approach supports that goal.

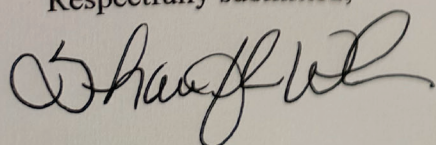
A Veteran's Commitment to the Future

I have served my country, and now I serve my family and community. I want children—and all children in North Nashville—to have access to a school that honors their potential, strengthens their character, and prepares them for a bright future. The Empowerment Academy represents a meaningful investment in that future.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission to approve the charter application for the Empowerment Academy at St. Luke AME Church. This school will provide families with a high-quality, values-driven educational option rooted in community partnership and academic excellence.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



SENATOR PAUL BAILEY

State of Tennessee

NASHVILLE

CORDELL HULL BUILDING
425 REP JOHN LEWIS WAY N
SUITE 736
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
37243
(615) 741-3978

MEMBER OF COMMITTEES
Chairman of Commerce and Labor
Transportation

September 21, 2026

Dear Executive Director Stovall and Members of the Commission:

I write in support of Empowerment Academy and respectfully request that the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission give its applications full and fair consideration. Tennessee families benefit when they have access to high-quality public education options that combine strong academics with personal responsibility, practical learning, and clear accountability for student outcomes.

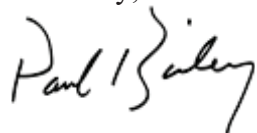
Empowerment Academy proposes an all-boys elementary model built around small learning environments, early literacy, mathematics, individualized instruction, mentorship, leadership, and character development. The model also incorporates STEAM, technology, agriculture, and experiential learning, offering students opportunities to connect core academic skills with real-world problem solving and future pathways.

That emphasis is especially meaningful for communities seeking to help boys become capable readers, confident learners, responsible citizens, and future leaders. Close relationships among students, educators, families, and mentors can create the consistency and encouragement children need while maintaining high expectations for achievement and conduct.

Empowerment Academy should be expected to demonstrate strong governance, fiscal discipline, qualified leadership, measurable academic goals, and meaningful engagement with the families and communities it proposes to serve. I understand that the organization has participated in Tennessee's charter review process and continued refining its proposal in response to feedback.

I therefore, respectfully support the Commission's full and fair review of Empowerment Academy's proposed locations in Davidson, Hamilton, and Shelby Counties. I appreciate the Commission's responsibility to evaluate each application carefully and thank you for your service to Tennessee students and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Bailey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Bailey



BILL POWERS

STATE SENATOR
22ND DISTRICT

Tennessee State Senate

NASHVILLE

LEGISLATIVE ADDRESS:
425 Rep. John Lewis Way, Suite 772
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243
PHONE: (615) 741-2374
sen.bill.powers@capitol.tn.gov

September 24, 2026

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission
Attn: Executive Director Tess Stovall and Member of the Commission
500 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: Letter of Support for Empowerment Academy

Dear Executive Director Stovall and Members of the Commission:

I write in support of Empowerment Academy's public charter school appeal and respectfully ask the Commission to approve all three proposed locations to open simultaneously for the 2027 academic year.

Tennessee families deserve access to strong public schools that respond to their children's needs and prepare them for success. Empowerment Academy proposes a focused approach to literacy and mathematics alongside mentorship, character development, family engagement, and hands-on learning. Its plans to connect classroom instruction with agriculture, technology, and practical experiences that offer students meaningful opportunities to apply what they learn.

I recognize that opening public charter schools requires more than a compelling mission. The Commission must carefully assess the applicant's academic plan, governance, staffing, finances, and ability to serve students well. I encourage the Commission to consider Empowerment Academy's application and responses to feedback in their entirety, with particular attention to the opportunities its proposed schools could provide for families seeking a public-school option that meets their children's needs across all three locations.

I support Empowerment Academy's request to open all three proposed locations simultaneously for the 2027 academic year. I believe each location should have the opportunity to serve students and families from the outset, and I respectfully ask the Commission to approve the application for all three locations. Thank you for your careful consideration of this appeal and for your service to Tennessee's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Powers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "B" and "P".

Senator Bill Powers
Tennessee Senate

Re: Tennessee Public Charter School Commission Nashville, Tennessee

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Brittany Watkins, and I am a parent of two children who are in elementary school. I am writing to express my full support for the proposed **Empowerment Academy** to be located at **St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church, 901 40th Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee**.

As a parent, my highest priority is ensuring that my children have access to a safe, nurturing, academically strong, and culturally responsive learning environment. Families in North Nashville have long needed additional high-quality school options that understand our children, honor our community, and provide the individualized support necessary for them to thrive. The Empowerment Academy represents exactly that kind of opportunity.

Why This School Matters for My Children

- **Individualized attention.** My children learn differently, and they need a school that recognizes their unique strengths and challenges. The Empowerment Academy's commitment to smaller class sizes and personalized instruction is essential for their growth.
- **A safe and trusted location.** St. Luke AME Church has been a pillar of stability in our community for generations. I trust this institution, and I believe it is an ideal environment for children to learn, grow, and feel protected.
- **A holistic approach to education.** The Academy's focus on literacy, leadership, character development, and social-emotional learning aligns with what I want for my children—not just academic success, but confidence, resilience, and strong values.
- **Culturally relevant teaching.** My children deserve a school that reflects their identity, affirms their experiences, and prepares them to succeed in a diverse world. The Empowerment Academy's model supports this vision.

A Parent's Hope for the Future

I want my children to attend a school where they are seen, supported, and challenged. I want them in a place that partners with families, honors community history, and invests in long-term success. The Empowerment Academy offers all of this and more.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission to approve the charter application for the Empowerment Academy at St. Luke AME Church. This school will provide families like mine with a meaningful, high-quality option that meets the needs of our children and strengthens our community.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Graciously Submitted,

Brittany Watkins

