



Nashville School of Excellence Brief Statement

On July 28, 2026, the Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) Office of Charter Schools voted to deny the Nashville School of Excellence (NSE) application to open a school for students in grades 6-12 in the Nolensville Pike neighborhood of Nashville. We respectfully disagree with the findings and conclusions of Metro Nashville Public Schools' evaluation of our charter application and believes the evaluation does not accurately reflect the strength of our proposal. Furthermore, we believe the denial of NSE's charter school application is inconsistent with the evidence presented in our application and contrary to the best interests of the students and community for the following reasons: 1) Family and community engagement efforts indicate strong demand for the school; 2) The quality and implementation of NSE's STEM model will provide an educational opportunity for families in Nashville that is distinct from models that are currently available; 3) NSE will fill a need in the community for additional high-quality educational options; 4) NSE will belong to a network of schools that have a strong track record of success.

Demand for the School. We selected the Nolensville Pike area as the location for our school after extensive engagement with families and the community to understand their needs and interests. To ensure that we were able to authentically engage with the community on a consistent basis, we hired our founding school leader, Mr. Kazim Kazilkaya, in the summer of 2025. He resides in Nashville and has been working to authentically engage the community we will serve full-time since his hiring. His ongoing community outreach efforts include developing relationships with local organizations such as the Coleman Park Community Center, the Salahadeen Center of Nashville, the Tennessee Kurdish Community Council, Casa de Dios USA, Iglesia Monte Los Olivos, the Peace Bridges Center, the Nashville Food Project, and Habitat Nashville, as well as many other community organizations, including faith-based institutions. We have amassed 37 letters of support (33 at the time of the submission of the application), including many from organizations and leaders in Nashville, where the school will be located. We have also administered a survey to parents who may be interested in enrolling their children in the school. We first began administering this survey in the summer of 2025, and to date, we have received nearly 500 responses. Additionally, we have attended a range of community events, including festivals, cultural celebrations, and public meetings. At these events, Mr. Kazilkaya made himself available (often be setting up a table with informational materials) to discuss our proposed school, answer questions, and learn about the priorities of the community from those community members who attended each event. We plan to continue to engage with community members and stakeholders to learn as much as possible about how to best serve the community and to document demand for the school.

Robust STEM Programming. NSE will distinguish itself from other STEM-focused schools in Nashville through the quality of our programming and the implementation of our model. Our existing schools have won numerous awards and recognitions for our STEM programming, including a STEM Designation from the Tennessee Department of Education and the ITEEA STEM School of Excellence Award. When we open our proposed school in Nashville, we will also seek TDOE STEM Designation for that campus. Applying for and earning STEM Designation status is a rigorous and robust process and requires STEM to be fully embedded across the school, namely in the areas of Infrastructure; Curriculum and Instruction; Professional Development; Achievement; and Community and Postsecondary Partnerships as outlined in detail on the TDOE STEM Designation Rubric. According to the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network (TSIN), there are currently only four STEM-designated schools in Davidson County, and none of the schools are high schools. Students at NSE will have ample opportunities to apply their STEM learning through



hands-on opportunities, including projects and science fairs. In addition, all students, including subpopulations of students such as students who receive specialized services, students who are English learners, and/or students who are at-risk and/or struggling, will be required to take a STEM class every year to learn about and be immersed in STEM concepts such as coding. These STEM classes will be aligned to a STEM-based career and technical education (CTE) track that will result in an Industry Certification and/or CTE Completer Status upon graduation. We also plan to have STEM-focused extracurricular activities, such as a robotics club, Science Olympiad, FIRST Lego League, FIRST Tech Challenge, and underwater robotics - and all students will have the opportunity to join. Further, we will implement Math Counts and American Math Competition as extracurricular activities, which will also serve to further reinforce and extend STEM skills and concepts learned during the school day. There is no cost to families for students to attend these STEM activities and competitions. All of this taken together demonstrates that our STEM programming differs from what is currently offered at MNPS schools.

Need for High-Quality Educational Options. We analyzed the existing school choice options by identifying the schools that serve the same or similar grade levels (6 through 12) to our proposed school within a five-mile radius of our potential facility location (5880 Nolensville Road). We also analyzed enrollment patterns and capacity patterns for these nearby schools. Additionally, we analyzed the academic performance of these schools as reflected in TDOE's report cards for 2025 (outlined in the table below). We found that many schools in the area surrounding the proposed location for NSE achieve lower-than-expected academic performance outcomes when compared to district-wide and state-wide performance rates. The few schools that perform at or above district achievement rates and have a C or higher letter grade (i.e., LEAD Southeast and Valor Flagship Academy) have limited available seats according to MNPS's interactive School and Zone Maps, 6 and Valor schools typically maintain long waitlists. Based on this data as well as information we have collected from our family and community engagement efforts, we expect that many families in the area will be looking for a high-quality alternative educational option for their children. Our network has a solid track record of success, and we are confident that the implementation of our model in Nashville will also result in positive student outcomes. Given our strong academic track record, we posit that our academic program will meet the community's needs for more quality school choice options. Additionally, our school will offer educational options to the community that we anticipate will appeal to families and students in the area.

Track Record of Academic Success. NSE will be a part of the Read Foundation network. Year after year, the schools in our network have maintained a strong track record that demonstrates the success of our educational program across many academic indicators. For example, our schools have graduated nearly 100% of our seniors each year since our first graduating class in 2014. The table below shows our exceptional graduation rates.

Network Graduation Rates

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Rate	100%	100%	100%	98%	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%	97%	99%	100%

TCAP Performance: Our schools continue to demonstrate a record of raising student achievement by outperforming MSCS schools on TCAP. For example:



- MSE Cordova outperformed MSCS in overall achievement for grades 6–8 and grades 9–12
- MSE Cordova outperformed MSCS in math for grades 6–8 and grades 9–12
- MSE Cordova outperformed MSCS in science for grades 6–8 and grades 9–12
- MSE Cordova outperformed MSCS in ELA for grades 6–8
- MSE outperformed MSCS in science for grades 6–8 and grades 9–12

TVAAS Performance: Our schools have also demonstrated the success of our educational program through persistently strong TVAAS scores. A TVAAS score of a 4 or a 5 (the highest score possible) indicates more than expected growth for one year, which is critical to ensuring all students meet expectations and are prepared for post-secondary success, including those who are behind. Both of our secondary schools (MSE and MSE Cordova) earned a 4 or 5 in 2024 and our schools have mostly earned a 4 or a 5 since 2011. Note: In 2025, MSE Cordova experienced a decline in TVAAS performance due to lower-than-expected scores on social studies assessments. As an experienced network, we possessed the expertise and resources to immediately and urgently respond to this data. Specifically, the school and network took significant actions, which ensured the school returned to its trend of strong TVAAS performances. To illustrate, SY 2025-26 TVAAS scores were just released. All of our schools met or exceeded growth expectations, including MSE Cordova, which earned a 3. Our other secondary school earned a 5, and our two elementary schools earned a 4. Further, based on predictive score reports in the Mastery Connect platform, results for our standards aligned benchmark assessments during the 2025-26 school year indicate that the school's expected proficiency rates have increased by 10-15% across grade levels since the beginning of the year.

ACT Performance: Our schools have continued to improve our ACT score average, and this average typically ranks in the top 20% of all Memphis Shelby County high schools.

College Matriculation: Our schools continue to demonstrate a strong track record of success in having our students accepted and matriculate to college. Based on a recent survey of 355 alumni, 62% were either currently enrolled in a 4-year college or had completed their bachelor's degree, while 25% were either currently enrolled in a 2-year college or had completed their associate's degree, 7% were enrolled in trade school, and 2% were enlisted in the military.

Track Record of Operational and Financial Success. The Read Foundation has also established a long, successful track record in managing its financial resources, consistently achieving budget surpluses each year, maintaining healthy cash reserves, obtaining clean audits (including no findings on the most recent audit for FY25), and achieving high scores on its charter authorizer's annual financial performance framework. NSE will have access to a healthy cash reserve (approximately \$9.2M as of the submission of its charter application). While the school will pursue partnerships with local and national philanthropists -- as well as apply for the Charter School Planning (CSP) Grant from the TN Department of Education -- to help fund expenditures in the startup year and early years of operations -- it has developed a conservative budget (including conservative facility operational expenditures) that can operate on public revenues.

Taken together, the above reasons, supporting evidence, and data provide a compelling case for the need for the Nashville School of Excellence. Our experienced team is prepared and committed to opening a high-quality school for students and families in Nashville. We appreciate your time and consideration.