

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 8, 2026 1:49 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1495695726
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Amit Kumar
Email	amit22jun.us@gmail.com
Phone	(916) 586-9685
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I am writing to ask you to vote yes to approve The Gate School. What stands out to me most about The Gate School is its commitment to discussion-based learning. I want my child to be in a school where students are not just listening quietly or completing assignments, but where they are learning how to think, speak, listen, question, and explain their ideas. Those skills matter far beyond middle school. Students need to be able to communicate clearly, engage respectfully with others, and build confidence using their voice. The Gate School's focus on rigorous classroom discussion feels especially important in a time when students need more opportunities to think deeply and connect with one another. I believe this kind of learning would help students become stronger academically and more prepared for high school, college, and life. Please vote yes to approve The Gate School for Nashville families. Thank you, Amit Kumar Nashville, TN
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 8, 2026 1:54 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1495698195
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Barbara Lee
Email	babykiah.lee@gmail.com
Phone	(931) 257-0179
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I have spent my career looking for instructional models that actually develop the capacity to think, not just the capacity to perform on an assessment. The Harkness method is one of the most research-supported approaches I know of for doing that at scale. The Gate School is built on it. Student-led discussion. Every voice in the room expected to contribute. Reasoning made visible, challenged, and revised. These are not soft skills; they are the intellectual capacities that predict long-term academic and professional success, and they are built through years of deliberate practice. The fact that The Gate School applies this to every student, not just an honors cohort, is what makes it genuinely significant. I urge the board to approve this application. Barbara Lee Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 8, 2026 1:56 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1495699141
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Thomas Rose
Email	thomas@dreamstreetstn.com
Phone	(615) 942-5559
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

On behalf of Dream Streets, we write in support of The Gate School.

As a resident and representative of North Nashville I believe schools like Gateway create a unique and personalized experience for the students in our community, which enhances the quality of their educational growth and maturity.

The academic achievement gap in Nashville's middle schools is not a student problem. It is a design problem. Schools that structure rigorous instruction as a reward for students who already test well, while delivering lower expectations to the majority, produce the exact disparities we then spend years and resources trying to remediate.

The Gate School is explicitly designed to interrupt that pattern. Harkness discussion, Algebra, and Computer Science are the standard for every student, not a select cohort. This is equity operationalized, not described. We urge the board to approve this application.

Respectfully,
Thomas Rose
Nashville, TN

Thomas Rose
Community Connections Director

Cell 615-513-6884
Office 615-942-5559 Ext.6
www.dreamstreetstn.com

@Dreamstreetstn #bepartofthedream

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 8, 2026 1:59 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1495700632
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Allie Shields
Email	alliebshields@gmail.com
Phone	(901) 493-3293
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

The Gate School is an exciting educational opportunity in Nashville because of its discussion-based model, offering another high quality school option in a city that is growing significantly and where schools are already experiencing large class sizes (my own children have been in classes of 23 children in public elementary schools and it has negatively affected the ability to push learning forward as a result of focusing on simple classroom management). Additionally, having Burrus Cox as a leader is something Metro should be very supportive of. He knows this city, has worked as a teacher for years, and has a passion for educating the future of this city.

I have talked with enough Nashville families to know that one of the most common frustrations is simple: my child is not being challenged.

Sometimes that child is in an honors program and still not challenged. More often, they were never in the program at all, because they didn't test in, or because their school didn't have one, or because nobody told their family to ask.

The Gate School answers that frustration with a structural commitment: every student is challenged, every day, because high expectations are the school's only standard. Not an option. Not a track. The standard.

Please vote yes.

Allie Shields
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 8, 2026 2:02 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1495701595
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Meredith McGann
Email	meredith.m.mcgann@gmail.com
Phone	(763) 772-3176
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

In Nashville, a family's ability to access rigorous, engaging middle school options is largely dependent on the student's ability to test into an optional school or the family's ability to live in a desired school zone. Every student in every zip code should have accessible options that meet their & their family's needs and that prepare them for whatever their future entails. I know that MNPS does great work to make this a reality, but gaps remain, particularly for the middle school grade band.

The Gate School will bring the Harkness Model to public school students in Nashville, instilling in them the confidence to use their voice, the importance of their contributions to a collective community, and a deep appreciation for critical thinking processes. The Harkness Model is utilized in many of our nation's most elite and well-regarded prep schools, and having seen firsthand the preparedness the method fosters for students moving on to higher education, I fully support The Gate School's plan to bring this unique learning model to families in Nashville and would welcome sending my own children there when they enter middle school.

I believe that every student throughout Nashville should have access to a rigorous, high-quality education that fully prepares them for their best future, and I welcome The Gate School as a high-quality option for families and urge your authorization of the school's application.

Thank you,
Meredith McGann
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 10, 2026 9:04 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496316855
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Jason Coleman
Email	jicoleman84@gmail.com
Phone	(901) 831-2074
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

The single most important thing that happens inside a school is the relationship between a student and a great teacher. Everything else is secondary.

My children attended the Gate School's week-long summer camp and came home every day with stories about learning and engagement. My family strongly desires a strong, educational option for middle school in our area, and we believe the Gate School would provide that option.

One of the reasons I am excited about this school is the leadership of Burrus Cox. From what I know of him, Burrus is not just starting a school because he has an idea. He is a truly strong teacher and educator who understands what it takes to help students grow.

That matters to me as a parent. So many school models sound good on paper, but the quality of teaching is what makes the real difference for students. The Gate School is built around that belief.

Its leaders will stay connected to the classroom, teachers will be supported and developed, and great teaching will remain at the center of the school.

I want my child in a school where adults believe deeply in students and know how to challenge them well. The Gate School represents that kind of opportunity for Nashville families.

Please vote yes to approve The Gate School.

Thank you,
Jason Coleman
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 10, 2026 9:07 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496318146
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Madelynne Beck
Email	fama12515@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 934-2360
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

The single most important thing that happens inside a school is the relationship between a student and a great teacher. Everything else is secondary.

My son attended the Gate School for STEM camp this summer 2026. The educator who ran it named Burrus Cox was amazing! My son was for the first time in years excited to go to school and begging to go. Every day he had something new to tell us that he had learned. He has been bullied for years at school, this was the best time he has ever had in school. If he gets the chance he is begging to attend his sixth grade year!

One of the reasons I am excited about this school is the leadership of Burrus Cox. From what I know of him, Burrus is not just starting a school because he has an idea. He is a truly strong teacher and educator who understands what it takes to help students grow.

That matters to me as a parent. So many school models sound good on paper, but the quality of teaching is what makes the real difference for students. The Gate School is built around that belief. Its leaders will stay connected to the classroom, teachers will be supported and developed, and great teaching will remain at the center of the school.

I want my child in a school where adults believe deeply in students and know how to challenge them well. The Gate School represents that kind of opportunity for Nashville families.

Please vote yes to approve The Gate School.

Thank you,
Madelynne Beck
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 10, 2026 9:09 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496318897
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Josie Decker
Email	decker.josie@gmail.com
Phone	(254) 495-0611
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I have one simple question for every school my child might attend: do you believe in every student, or just some of them? This school is a much needed addition to middle school options for resilience training, educational exploration and rigor and informed discourse in the West Nashville region. The Gate School has a clear answer. Every student, regardless of prior test scores or track placement, takes Algebra and Computer Science in middle school. Every student participates in rigorous, discussion-based learning. High expectations are not a program reserved for an honors cohort. They are the school's standard, applied to everyone. My daughter attended their week long summer camp and camp back each day so excited about all the science and physics experiments they conducted each day. The school also pays teachers 20 to 30 percent above the average, because it understands that teacher quality is the most important factor in what happens to a child academically. Leaders teach every day. This is a school that invests in what actually produces outcomes. Berty, my daughter, deserves that. Please vote yes on The Gate School. Thank you, Josie Decker Nashville, TN
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 10, 2026 9:11 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496319552
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Alise Gregory
Email	alisegregory@gmail.com
Phone	(601) 540-7852
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

I am an educator, and I am writing to ask you to vote yes for The Gate School.

This school embodies everything that Nashville needs! We really need a middle school that cares about each individual student and helps their voice grow through a discussion based model. We also need a model that incentivize his teachers to stay in the gate school does that by paying them more than Metro and giving them school leadership options!

What stands out to me is that The Gate School is built around a simple but powerful idea: the people leading instruction should remain close to instruction. In many schools, leadership can become separated from the daily reality of the classroom. The Gate School's model pushes against that by having school leaders continue to teach.

That matters. Leaders who teach every day are more likely to understand what students need, what teachers are carrying, and what strong instruction actually requires. It also sends an important message to the whole school community: teaching is not lower-status work. Teaching is the work.

As an educator, I find that vision compelling. Students deserve schools where instructional decisions are grounded in real classroom experience, and teachers deserve leaders who understand the complexity of the work firsthand.

Please vote yes to approve The Gate School for Nashville students and families.

Alise Gregory
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 10, 2026 9:12 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496320164
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Josh Gregory
Email	joshgregory2@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 714-2793
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I grew up in Nashville and I'm raising my family here. I have talked with enough Nashville families to know that one of the most common frustrations is simple: my child is not being challenged or doesn't have enough direction. The discussion based model is what makes me really believe in the gate school. Not because of the discussion alone, but because of those leading the discussion. Burrus Cox is one of the most gifted leaders and educators that I know and I am a firm believer in his ability to galvanize The Gate School to close educational gaps that our city has. The Gate School answers frustrations around kids not being challenged with a structural commitment: every student is challenged, every day, because high expectations are the school's only standard. Not an option. Not a track. The standard. There is excellence in every child is something I have heard Burrus preach from day one, and I know he will make a difference and impact. Please vote yes. Thank you, Josh Gregory Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 11, 2026 11:17 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496709639
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Natalie Nikitas
Email	nnikitas@valorcollegiate.org
Phone	(502) 644-2859
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

I am an educator, and I am writing to ask you to vote yes for The Gate School.

I have had the pleasure of knowing and working alongside Burrus Cox for the past 10 years and cannot speak highly enough about his integrity to ensure all students in Nashville receive the best education possible. I know if given the opportunity, the Gate School will be a haven for parents, students, and community members alike.

What stands out to me is that The Gate School is built around a simple but powerful idea: the people leading instruction should remain close to instruction. In many schools, leadership can become separated from the daily reality of the classroom. The Gate School's model pushes against that by having school leaders continue to teach.

That matters. Leaders who teach every day are more likely to understand what students need, what teachers are carrying, and what strong instruction actually requires. It also sends an important message to the whole school community: teaching is not lower-status work. Teaching is the work.

As an educator, I find that vision compelling. Students deserve schools where instructional decisions are grounded in real classroom experience, and teachers deserve leaders who understand the complexity of the work firsthand.

Please vote yes to approve The Gate School for Nashville students and families.

Natalie Nikitas
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 11, 2026 11:23 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496711947
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Emily Sandoval
Email	e.katesandoval@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 203-4636
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Other
What is your relationship to the application?	Student
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I believe The Gate School would be an amazing school for middle schoolers because it's built on a foundation that supports students needs while also pushing them to be better. Mr. Burrus is by far the best teacher anyone could ever have. His passion for teaching has helped me understand more than just math but also myself and who I am as a person. I truly believe this school will change the lives of young students and will shape our community in the most positive way! Sometimes that child is in an honors program and still not challenged. More often, they were never in the program at all, because they didn't test in, or because their school didn't have one, or because nobody told their family to ask. The Gate School answers that frustration with a structural commitment: every student is challenged, every day, because high expectations are the school's only standard. Please vote yes. Emily Sandoval Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 11, 2026 11:27 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496713297
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Shinyan Ahmed
Email	shinyan12345@icloud.com
Phone	(615) 738-1857
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Other
What is your relationship to the application?	Student
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

My name is Shinyan Ahmed, and I want to share what kind of school environment I hope to be a part of.

As a student from a regular charter school, I've always had a positive learning environment and many wonderful teachers, but none have impacted me the way Mr. Burrus has. When I entered 8th grade, I rarely completed my work, lacked motivation, and had so much going on in my life that I almost gave up on myself. Then I met Mr. Burrus.

From the very beginning, he encouraged me to believe in myself and consistently challenged me to do better. By the middle of 8th grade, there wasn't a single day that I came to his class without completing my work and pushing myself to improve. He helped me rebuild my confidence, develop a stronger work ethic, and realize that I was capable of much more than I believed. His support made a lasting impact on my life.

Because of the kind of teacher and person Mr. Burrus is, I truly believe he will have the same positive influence on many other students. I would be honored to attend the Gate School because I know it would provide opportunities to build meaningful relationships with dedicated teachers and motivated peers who encourage one another to grow into the best versions of themselves. I believe that kind of supportive community can change students' lives, just as Mr. Burrus helped change mine.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and consider my perspective.

I want a school where the teacher isn't just talking at me. Where I'm expected to form an opinion, defend it, listen to someone who disagrees with me, and change my mind if they make a better argument. That is how real thinking works. That is what I want to practice.

The Gate School is built on that model. Discussions, not lectures. Student voices at the center, not the margin. I want to be ready for high school, for college, for the real world, and that kind of school would actually prepare me. Please vote yes.

Shinyan Ahmed
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 11, 2026 11:29 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496714136
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Torriane Goodner
Email	torrianegoodner22@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 878-8325
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Other
What is your relationship to the application?	Student
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

My name is Torriane Goodner, and I want a school that expects hard things from me.

I think The Gate School would be a great opportunity because it gives students a place where they can be challenged and encouraged to do their best. Being around other students who enjoy learning can help motivate them to work harder, gain confidence, and discover new interests. I believe the experiences and skills students gain at The Gate School can help them succeed not only in school but also in whatever they choose to do in the future.

I know that teachers matter. A great teacher can help you understand something you thought was too hard. A great teacher notices when you are struggling, but also does not let you give up. That is the kind of school I want.

The Gate School seems like a place where teaching is the most important thing. I like that the leaders of the school will also teach, because that means they will understand what students need every day. I want to learn from adults who believe I can do hard things and who will help me get ready for high school and my future.

That is what I want. A school that doesn't make it easy, because making it easy doesn't make me ready. Please vote yes for The Gate School.

Thank you,
Torriane Goodner
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 11, 2026 11:30 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496714678
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Kendall Cox
Email	kendalldcoxx@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 815-7893
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I believe in the Gate School and its success simply because of who Burrus (co-founder) is and his passion for great teaching. He has proven that great teaching is what makes a great school - and most importantly, he deeply cares. I would feel confident in sending my child to be with Burrus each day, knowing that they would be learning and growing both as a student and a person. There is a gap in Nashville schools for families seeking a smaller and more personalized learning experience that prioritizes academic excellence and whole-child development. The Gate School would close this gap! Additionally, The Gate School stands out because it pays teachers more than Metro, which incentivizes them to get more involved and have a leadership position. This, therefore, prioritizes teacher retention. Too often, great teachers stop teaching - but with The Gate School's model, great teachers can stay in the classroom. Lastly, I admire a structural commitment that the Gate School promises: every student is challenged, every day, because high expectations are the school's only standard. Not an option. Not a track. The standard. Please vote yes. Kendall Cox Nashville, TN
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 12, 2026 11:11 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496947213
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Annie Pons
Email	akpons@gmail.com
Phone	(310) 525-4122
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

Education in Nashville has lost its way. Families are increasingly left with a false choice; public schools that are too often driven by standardized testing, or private schools that, while offering strong academics, are financially exorbitant and exclusive. We need more high-quality options-not just more of the same.

As a parent, I want my children in a school that develops critical thinking, leadership, intellectual curiosity, and the confidence to navigate a complex world. Those qualities cannot be measured by a test score alone, nor should an exceptional education be limited to families who can afford the rising cost of private tuition.

Both of my children attended public school, and one is now in private school because we no longer believed our public option met the academic standard our family needed. We aren't in private school because we want to be or believe it is the best education, we are there because we felt like it was the only option. If The Gate School were available today, I would enroll both of my children without hesitation.

Nashville families deserve more than a binary choice between struggling public schools and prohibitively expensive private institutions. We deserve innovative, high-quality public options that challenge students, attract outstanding educators, and prepare children for the future.

Please approve The Gate School's application. Give Nashville families more choice!

Thank you,

Annie Pons

Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 12, 2026 11:13 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496947539
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Elizabeth Sherrard
Email	elizabeth.sherrard@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 880-2613
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: In Nashville right now, access to rigorous, engaging middle school education depends heavily on which school you test into, which program you qualify for, and often which neighborhood you live in. We have adored our public school elementary experience but feel like there are less options for middle school and have chosen private for our first child because of this. Having an option like the Gate School could keep families from wanting/having to choose private and allowing for more school choice instead of relying on vouchers. The Gate School is a great option for families feeling this rub. It does not have an honors track alongside a standard one. It makes the rigorous track the only track, for every student who walks in the door. The student from a well-resourced neighborhood and the student from a neighborhood without a strong middle school option receive the same challenge, the same expectations, and the same investment. That is what genuine educational equity looks like. We need it in every neighborhood and Nashville should say yes to it. Thank you, Elizabeth Sherrard Nashville, TN Elizabeth Sherrard
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 12, 2026 11:14 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496947883
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Nan Cox
Email	nanbcox@comcast.net
Phone	(615) 584-9965
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

The single most important thing that happens inside a school is the relationship between a student and a great teacher. Everything else is secondary.

As the grandmother of eight precious grandchildren, I care deeply about the kind of education and community that will help shape not only their minds, but also their character and future. Having had the privilege of raising and educating my own four children, I know how profoundly the right school can influence a child's life. My hope is that this charter school will be a place where every student is truly seen, known, loved, and challenged to pursue excellence. Investing in schools like this is an investment in the next generation, and I wholeheartedly support creating that opportunity for the children and families of Nashville.

One of the reasons I am excited about this school is the leadership of Burrus Cox. Burrus is not just starting a school because he has an idea. He is a truly strong teacher and educator who understands what it takes to help students grow.

That matters to me as a grandparent. So many school models sound good on paper, but the quality of teaching is what makes the real difference for students. The Gate School is built around that belief. Its leaders will stay connected to the classroom, teachers will be supported and developed, and great teaching will remain at the center of the school.

I want my grandchildren in a school where adults believe deeply in students and know how to challenge them well. The Gate School represents that kind of opportunity for Nashville families.

Please vote yes to approve The Gate School.

Thank you,
Nan Cox
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 12, 2026 11:17 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496948286
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Nelson Graham
Email	grahamsn1990@gmail.com
Phone	(901) 233-8989
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I've talked with enough Nashville families to know that one of their most common frustrations is a simple one: my child is not being challenged. Sometimes our children can be placed in an honors program and still not be fully challenged. More often, they never get a chance to be in challenging program at all because they didn't test in, didn't have access to one, or because no one told their family to ask. As a former educator in the KIPP Nashville network, I've seen firsthand how much it matters for families to have a real range of high-quality educational choices. The Gate School answers this frustration with a structural commitment: every student is challenged, every day, because high expectations are the school's standard - not a track for specialized students. The Gate School would be a tremendous addition to the options available to students across MNPS, and it would raise the bar for what a high-quality choice looks like in our beloved city. Please vote yes. Nelson Graham Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 12, 2026 11:19 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496948701
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Kevin Dyson
Email	ktdyson87@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 445-0390
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

I am an educator, and I am writing to ask you to vote yes for The Gate School.

The Gate School embraces innovation by integrating artificial intelligence as a personalized learning partner that helps students receive real-time feedback, targeted support, and individualized pathways to mastery. Combined with the Harkness Method, students engage in collaborative, student-led discussions that develop critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills rather than relying on passive instruction. This blend of cutting-edge technology and inquiry-based learning equips students with the knowledge, adaptability, and leadership skills needed to thrive in college, careers, and an AI-driven future.

What stands out to me is that The Gate School is built around a simple but powerful idea: the people leading instruction should remain close to instruction. In many schools, leadership can become separated from the daily reality of the classroom. The Gate School's model pushes against that by having school leaders continue to teach.

That matters. Leaders who teach every day are more likely to understand what students need, what teachers are carrying, and what strong instruction actually requires. It also sends an important message to the whole school community: teaching is not lower-status work. Teaching is the work.

As an educator, I find that vision compelling. Students deserve schools where instructional decisions are grounded in real classroom experience, and teachers deserve leaders who understand the complexity of the work firsthand.

Please vote yes to approve The Gate School for Nashville students and families.

Dr. Kevin T. Dyson
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 12, 2026 11:21 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1496948957
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Katherine Mead
Email	katiemead02@gmail.com
Phone	(571) 263-0294
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I strongly support the Gate school being offered as an educational option for students and families here in Davidson County. I believe that the great teachers prioritized by this school model are what build lifelong learners. I look for curiosity and adaptability in young hires, and I have no doubt that the Gate School is fostering this from day one. I've followed the journey of this school's founding, and I am impressed by their strong team and unique model. Providing students, regardless of their socioeconomic status access to such a quality education is the mission of the MNPS Board of Education. Bringing in more talented educators and innovative approaches only supports this mission. Please vote yes. This institution will have positive ripple effects throughout our county and local economy. Katherine Mead Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 14, 2026 11:45 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1497373131
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Kelly Foster
Email	kelly.mcinerney.foster@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 240-3745
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I have talked with enough Nashville families to know that one of the most common frustrations is simple: my child is not being challenged. As a parent of four former students in Bellevue, we reached a point in MNPS where we needed to find a challenging environment for our children's education. After witnessing problems at the middle school level, we were forced to send our children to private school which was a financially difficult option for our family. When the current public school curriculum is not viable for students, families need an option that is not cost prohibitive. Sometimes that child is in an honors program and still not challenged. More often, they were never in the program at all, because they didn't test in, or because their school didn't have one, or because nobody told their family to ask. The Gate School answers that frustration with a structural commitment: every student is challenged, every day, because high expectations are the school's only standard. Not an option. Not a track. The standard. Please vote yes. Kelly Foster Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 14, 2026 11:47 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1497374064
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	John Barton
Email	johnwbarton3@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 815-2840
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

My name is John Barton, and I live in 37205. I was the founding board member of Intrepid College Prep which has grown from a middle school to 5-12 middle and high school in Antioch. I knew Burrus Cox by reputation as an outstanding math teacher in the charter world in Nashville. When I heard about the Gate School I reached out to Burrus to learn about his vision.

I could not have been more impressed with his passion for teaching kids and his unique model that he has developed for the Gate School. As a result I made a financial commitment to the Gate School.

I am writing to ask for your support.

Reforming and improving our schools is all about having as many quality schools as possible. The Gate School would be another superb option for our children.

Founder Burrus Cox trained at Phillips Exeter Academy, where the Harkness discussion method was developed, and teachers at The Gate School earn 20-30% above market rate.

Please vote yes on The Gate School. Nashville's students deserve access to this kind of rigorous education.

Thank you for your time and your service to Nashville's students.

Sincerely,
John Barton
37205

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 14, 2026 11:49 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1497374975
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Alan Sharp
Email	aclementssharp63@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 230-8456
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: My name is Alan Sharp, and I live in 37211. Friends, I am writing to ask for your support. The Gate school will offer children the opportunity for a better than average public education through its strident curriculum and a staff dedicated to the belief that better educational results are not only possible, but very likely when students, teachers and parents/caregivers strive together for the same thing. Excellence! The Gate school offers the best opportunity for all who seek a solid, public education. Founder Burrus Cox trained at Phillips Exeter Academy, where the Harkness discussion method was developed, and teachers at The Gate School earn 20-30% above market rate. Please vote yes on The Gate School. Nashville's students deserve access to this kind of rigorous education. Thank you for your time and your service to Nashville's students. Sincerely, Alan Sharp 37211
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 14, 2026 11:51 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1497376111
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Shelly Gaughan
Email	shellygaughan@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 526-8403
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I have spent my career looking for instructional models that actually develop the capacity to think, not just the capacity to perform on an assessment. The Harkness method is one of the most research-supported approaches I know of for doing that at scale. Another option, personalized attention, thoughtfulness in skills students will need as the world changes The Gate School is built on it. Student-led discussion. Every voice in the room expected to contribute. Reasoning made visible, challenged, and revised. These are not soft skills; they are the intellectual capacities that predict long-term academic and professional success, and they are built through years of deliberate practice. The fact that The Gate School applies this to every student, not just an honors cohort, is what makes it genuinely significant. I urge the board to approve this application. Shelly Gaughan Nashville, TN Shelly Gaughan shellygaughan@gmail.com 615.330.5186

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 14, 2026 11:53 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1497376707
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Chase Bell
Email	cbell@inspiroz.com
Phone	(615) 815-6419
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Tennessee Public Charter School Commission: I write in support of The Gate School's charter application. The research consensus on what drives student outcomes is clear: teacher quality is the dominant in-school variable. The human being in the room with students every day is what matters most. The Gate School's Teaching Firm model is structurally built around that research. Better compensation. Meaningful career development within teaching. Leaders who remain in classrooms. These structures attract and retain the educators who make the difference, and they benefit every student in the building. We urge the board to vote yes. Respectfully, Chase Bell Education Technology Advisor Inspiroz cbell@inspiroz.com (801) 709-4744 cell

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 15, 2026 3:58 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1497863818
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Peter Connerth
Email	pconnerth@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 482-6935
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, In Nashville right now, access to rigorous, engaging middle school education depends heavily on which school you test into, which program you qualify for, and often which neighborhood you live in. The Gate School does not work that way. It does not have an honors track alongside a standard one. It makes the rigorous track the only track, for every student who walks in the door. The student from a well-resourced neighborhood and the student from a neighborhood without a strong middle school option receive the same challenge, the same expectations, and the same investment. That is what genuine educational equity looks like. Nashville should say yes to it. Thank you, Peter Connerth Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 15, 2026 4:03 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1497865437
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	John Carney
Email	johnnelsoncarney@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 497-8951
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, The achievement gap that persists across Nashville's middle schools is not a mystery. Our state and city need more school options for our children. The public school system is failing families. When innovative, dedicated education leaders step forward to offer alternatives, it is shameful when local school systems turn them away. The Gate School is designed to disrupt the decade long decline of public schooling in Nashville by making rigor the standard for everyone, not a reward for the few. That is not just a philosophical position. It is a structural choice, embedded in every aspect of how the school operates. Why would we not give this school a chance, if it offers the potential for educational success for families? Nashville has a chance to invest in a school that addresses the achievement gap at its source. Please vote yes. John Carney Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 15, 2026 4:05 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1497866071
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Tina Hodges
Email	tina.hodges@af247.com
Phone	(615) 482-1908
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, My name is Tina Hodges. I'm a unicorn, a native Nashvillian and Hillwood High School graduate. My husband and I are proud supporters of The Gate School. We need a challenging academic middle school choice for children in our area. I am writing to ask for your support. The Gate School is a proposed public charter school in Nashville where every student - regardless of prior track placement - takes Algebra and Computer Science and engages in Harkness-style discussion-based learning. Please vote yes on The Gate School. Nashville's students deserve access to this kind of rigorous education. Thank you for your time and your service to Nashville's future. Sincerely, Tina Hodges 37205

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 15, 2026 4:07 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1497866662
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Casey Riggs
Email	criggs@riggsdaviae.com
Phone	(615) 491-5964
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, The achievement gap that persists across Nashville's middle schools is not a mystery. It is largely the result of schools that reserve their most rigorous instruction, advanced coursework, discussion-based learning, high-expectation teaching, for a small group of students who already tested their way in. As a Nashville resident, I believe our families need more high-quality public-school options. No single school model will meet the needs of every student, and charter schools create both opportunity for students and healthy competition that can strengthen public education throughout our community. I've seen how well East End Preparatory School has done and how it created opportunities for its students and think this new school could do more of the same. Please vote yes. Casey Riggs Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 15, 2026 4:08 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1497867143
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Liz Malugen
Email	liz.malugen@gmail.com
Phone	(314) 954-2523
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, I've been working in education here in Nashville for the last fifteen years, and am very excited to support the application for The Gate School. The achievement gap that persists across Nashville's middle schools is not a mystery. It is largely the result of schools that reserve their most rigorous instruction, advanced coursework, discussion-based learning, high-expectation teaching, for a small group of students who already tested their way in. The Gate School is designed to disrupt that pattern by making rigor the standard for everyone, not a reward for the few. That is not just a philosophical position. It is a structural choice, embedded in every aspect of how the school operates. And it is an entirely unique approach for Nashville public schools. Nashville has a chance to invest in a school that addresses the achievement gap at its source. Please vote yes. Liz Malugen Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 16, 2026 5:29 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	50.172.238.213
Unique ID:	1498260529
Location:	29.7925, -95.3673

Name	Chris Barbic
Email	chris@city-fund.org
Phone	(615) 509-4956
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	City Fund is committed to supporting great public schools in communities where they are needed most. The Gate School is filling an unmet need for more high-quality middle school options in Nashville. Please see our attached letter of support.
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20068401380

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 16, 2026 5:35 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	50.172.238.213
Unique ID:	1498262201
Location:	29.7925, -95.3673

Name	Chris Barbic
Email	chris@city-fund.org
Phone	(615) 509-4956
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	City Fund is committed to support great public schools in communities where they are needed the most. There are currently not enough high-quality middle school options in our city. The Gate School will help address that need. Please see our attached letter of support.
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20068422823

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 16, 2026 7:53 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1498291141
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Murray Morrison
Email	tmmorrison1@me.com
Phone	(901) 590-5588
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, I have talked with enough Nashville families to know that one of the most common frustrations is simple: my child is not being challenged. Sometimes that child is in an honors program and still not challenged. More often, they were never in the program at all, because they didn't test in, or because their school didn't have one, or because nobody told their family to ask. The Gate School answers that frustration with a structural commitment: every student is challenged, every day, because high expectations are the school's only standard. Not an option. Not a track. The standard. Please vote yes. Murray Morrison Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 16, 2026 7:55 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1498291549
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Tucker Deaton
Email	deatont14@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 957-1583
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, My support for The Gate School stems from my experience in a discussion-based learning environment that cultivated my ability to think critically and independently, articulate my perspective clearly, listen to others with empathy and respond respectfully to differing views. The development of communication skills is paramount in our younger generations as intelligence in the future will be defined by interpersonal skills and their ability to think critically in the era of AI. While it is a stated goal of Nashville's public education system to develop communication skills, it is dependent on school leadership to ensure it is implemented consistently across all classrooms. I have full confidence in the leadership of The Gate School, whom I know well, to implement their curriculum effectively and achieve the school's stated objectives. Thank you, Tucker Deaton Nashville, TN
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 16, 2026 7:56 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1498291879
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Baxter Jackson
Email	bjackson@tmc-tn.com
Phone	(919) 757-9993
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, In anything in life - business, schools, teams, or organizations - success begins with the people leading the mission. Burrus Cox is one of the most respected, hardworking, and passionate people I know. I have no doubt that he will give this school everything he has to make it a great institution and a place where parents are proud to send their children. I vote yes in support of Burrus and his mission to make The Gate School of Nashville one of the top educational institutions for young people in our community. Algebra and Computer Science are not advanced electives. They are the baseline literacy for almost every meaningful career in the modern economy. The Gate School makes both standard coursework for every enrolled student in middle school, not an accelerated track for a select group, but the floor for everyone. Combined with the communication and critical thinking skills developed through Harkness-style discussion, this school produces graduates who are analytically prepared and can actually talk about their thinking. That combination is what Nashville's economy needs. Please vote yes. Baxter Jackson Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 16, 2026 7:58 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1498292245
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	shawn stankavage
Email	shawnstankavage@gmail.com
Phone	(919) 757-9993
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, My name is Shawn Stankavage, and I live in 37212. I work in Nashville, I've spent the past 12 years residing in and around the greater Nashville area. I am writing to ask for your support. I am a big believer of Burrus Cox's ability to transform and educate the future generations of this country through The Gate School. I know this school will be transformational to the students of our city. Please vote yes. Thank you for your time and your service to Nashville's students. Sincerely, Shawn Stankavage 37212
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 16, 2026 8:00 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1498292686
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Grant Caudill
Email	gcaudill10@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 738-6814
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

The single most important thing that happens inside a school is the relationship between a student and a great teacher.

Everything else is secondary.

I am not satisfied with the current options for my children. I developed a relationship with Burrus Cox and would love for my children to attend whatever school he is a part of. A school led by Burrus Cox is exactly what this city needs. The man is a wonderful leader and it would mean the world for my kids to experience his leadership.

From what I know of him, Burrus is not just starting a school because he has an idea. He is a truly strong teacher and educator who understands what it takes to help students grow. Coming from a family of educators (including a father that is currently an educator and the grandson of a previous superintendent).

That matters to me as a parent. So many school models sound good on paper, but the quality of teaching is what makes the real difference for students. The Gate School is built around that belief. Its leaders will stay connected to the classroom, teachers will be supported and developed, and great teaching will remain at the center of the school.

I want my child in a school where adults believe deeply in students and know how to challenge them well. The Gate School represents that kind of opportunity for Nashville families.

Please vote yes to approve The Gate School.

Thank you,
Grant Caudill
Nashville, TN
(615)738-6814

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 18, 2026 2:05 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	12.47.28.194
Unique ID:	1498895804
Location:	33.0273, -80.1768

Name	Jimmy Ward
Email	james.c.ward92@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 418-5429
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

In Nashville right now, access to rigorous, engaging middle school education depends heavily on which school you test into, which program you qualify for, and often which neighborhood you live in.

Nashville is a growing city and that brings many great things but also challenges. One of those challenges being education. The one thing that is also imperative is the people that are teaching our kids. Having someone like Burrus lead this school is exactly what this city needs and the kids will thrive.

The Gate School does not work that way. It does not have an honors track alongside a standard one. It makes the rigorous track the only track, for every student who walks in the door. The student from a well-resourced neighborhood and the student from a neighborhood without a strong middle school option receive the same challenge, the same expectations, and the same investment.

That is what genuine educational equity looks like. Nashville should say yes to it.

Thank you,
Jimmy Ward
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 18, 2026 2:06 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	12.47.28.194
Unique ID:	1498896276
Location:	33.0273, -80.1768

Name	Clint Smith
Email	clintgsmith94@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 484-8320
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

I have talked with enough Nashville families to know that one of the most common frustrations is simple: my child is not being challenged.

Metro Nashville Public Schools have some of the state's lowest performing schools, largely concentrated in the same neighborhoods year after year. Most families are stuck in the schools they are sending their children too. The cost of private school in Nashville has grown exponentially over the past 10 years, giving families fewer alternatives if they don't find the schools they are zone for as a fit. The Gate School would be a great solution to this issue by giving families all over the city an opportunity for a different path in education. The Gate School would provide students with a unique learning opportunity with smaller class sizes and discussion based learning. I support the need for the opening of the Gate School.

Sometimes that child is in an honors program and still not challenged. More often, they were never in the program at all, because they didn't test in, or because their school didn't have one, or because nobody told their family to ask.

The Gate School answers that frustration with a structural commitment: every student is challenged, every day, because high expectations are the school's only standard. Not an option. Not a track. The standard.

Please vote yes.

Clint Smith

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 18, 2026 2:09 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	12.47.28.194
Unique ID:	1498897189
Location:	33.0273, -80.1768

Name	Michael Buttarazzi Jr
Email	mbuttarazzi@outlook.com
Phone	(615) 815-7724
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, I have talked with enough Nashville families to know that one of the most common frustrations is simple: my child is not being challenged. The Gate School is essential because it brings much needed educational diversity to West Nashville, an area currently served by only one public charter school. By offering the collaborative harkness model, typically reserved for elite private institutions, it will provide local families with a high quality public alternative that empowers students. Furthermore, it looks like its curriculum is designed to equip middle schoolers with high school credits and directly addresses the need to prepare Nashville students. Sometimes that child is in an honors program and still not challenged. More often, they were never in the program at all, because they didn't test in, or because their school didn't have one, or because nobody told their family to ask. The Gate School answers that frustration with a structural commitment: every student is challenged, every day, because high expectations are the school's only standard. Not an option. Not a track. The standard. Please vote yes. Michael Buttarazzi Jr Nashville, TN
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 18, 2026 2:11 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	12.47.28.194
Unique ID:	1498897752
Location:	33.0273, -80.1768

Name	Jake Estes
Email	jake.estes95@yahoo.com
Phone	(615) 574-3580
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, The achievement gap that persists across Nashville's middle schools is not a mystery. It is largely the result of schools that reserve their most rigorous instruction, advanced coursework, discussion-based learning, high-expectation teaching, for a small group of students who already tested their way in. I believe the Davidson county public school system is overwhelmed and struggling in many areas. I have full confidence that the Gate School will raise the floor and the ceiling for many students. The Gate School is designed to disrupt that pattern by making rigor the standard for everyone, not a reward for the few. That is not just a philosophical position. It is a structural choice, embedded in every aspect of how the school operates. Nashville has a chance to invest in a school that addresses the achievement gap at its source. Please vote yes. Jake Estes Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 18, 2026 2:12 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	12.47.28.194
Unique ID:	1498898238
Location:	33.0273, -80.1768

Name	Paul Caudill
Email	caudillp11@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 668-0912
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

The achievement gap that persists across Nashville's middle schools is not a mystery. It is largely the result of schools that reserve their most rigorous instruction, advanced coursework, discussion-based learning, high-expectation teaching, for a small group of students who already tested their way in.

Understanding the school landscape in this town for over 30 years, and hearing Metro's response to the threat of the Gate School taking away students is a case for why this school is needed. If metro schools had their school positioned as an offering where students wanted to stay, then that would be a different story.

The Gate School has proven their offering, it's time to allow them to make their mark in Nashville and provide a strong education for students.

The Gate School is designed to disrupt that pattern by making rigor the standard for everyone, not a reward for the few. That is not just a philosophical position. It is a structural choice, embedded in every aspect of how the school operates.

Nashville has a chance to invest in a school that addresses the achievement gap at its source. Please vote yes.

Paul Caudill
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 19, 2026 9:19 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1499046466
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	David Dingess
Email	david.dingessjr@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 260-8189
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, The achievement gap that persists across Nashville's middle schools is not a mystery. It is largely the result of schools that reserve their most rigorous instruction, advanced coursework, discussion-based learning, high-expectation teaching, for a small group of students who already tested their way in. I believe the school system in Nashville is in desperate need of educators and mentors for young people. The absence of positive influencers in all young kids lives is apparent and Burrus Cox and The Gate School would be an excellent replacement. I personally have observed Burrus's influence and his power to connect. This approval would be a great first step in changing lives of students across Nashville. The Gate School is designed to disrupt that pattern by making rigor the standard for everyone, not a reward for the few. That is not just a philosophical position. It is a structural choice, embedded in every aspect of how the school operates. Nashville has a chance to invest in a school that addresses the achievement gap at its source. Please vote yes.

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 19, 2026 9:20 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1499046711
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Creed McClellan
Email	creedmcclellan@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 939-8058
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, The single most important thing that happens inside a school is the relationship between a student and a great teacher. Everything else is secondary. Education is paramount when choosing a community and where to raise your children. One of the reasons I am excited about this school is the leadership of Burrus Cox. From what I know of him, Burrus is not just starting a school because he has an idea. He is a truly strong teacher and educator who understands what it takes to help students grow. That matters to me as a parent. So many school models sound good on paper, but the quality of teaching is what makes the real difference for students. The Gate School is built around that belief. Its leaders will stay connected to the classroom, teachers will be supported and developed, and great teaching will remain at the center of the school. I want my child in a school where adults believe deeply in students and know how to challenge them well. The Gate School represents that kind of opportunity for Nashville families. Please vote yes to approve The Gate School. Thank you, Creed McClellan Nashville, TN
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 19, 2026 9:24 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1499047291
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Wyatt McClellan
Email	wyattmcclellan23@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 636-6070
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, The achievement gap that persists across Nashville's middle schools is not a mystery. It is largely the result of schools that reserve their most rigorous instruction, advanced coursework, discussion-based learning, high-expectation teaching, for a small group of students who already tested their way in. As my wife and I are beginning to make plans for a family, we are hyper focused on schooling options. In Nashville the quality of education your child may receive is highly influenced by location. The Gate School offers a solution to parents who want their child to receive a high level education, but might not have the resources to live in areas that would get them into those schools. The Gate School is designed to disrupt that pattern by making rigor the standard for everyone, not a reward for the few. That is not just a philosophical position. It is a structural choice, embedded in every aspect of how the school operates. Nashville has a chance to invest in a school that addresses the achievement gap at its source. Please vote yes. Wyatt McClellan Nashville, TN
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 19, 2026 9:27 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1499047657
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Luke Hazen
Email	hazenl13@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 881-4689
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, In Nashville right now, access to rigorous, engaging middle school education depends heavily on which school you test into, which program you qualify for, and often which neighborhood you live in. Seeing my wife work in Metro elementary schools for 7 years and seeing the size of her classroom, adding additional schools can potentially lower the student to teacher ratio and better allow individualized learning and teaching. The Gate School does not work that way. It does not have an honors track alongside a standard one. It makes the rigorous track the only track, for every student who walks in the door. The student from a well-resourced neighborhood and the student from a neighborhood without a strong middle school option receive the same challenge, the same expectations, and the same investment. That is what genuine educational equity looks like. Nashville should say yes to it. Thank you, Luke Hazen Nashville, TN
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 19, 2026 9:28 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1499047837
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Kalyn Conner
Email	kalyn@vergeer.ca
Phone	(865) 724-6582
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

The single most important thing that happens inside a school is the relationship between a student and a great teacher. Everything else is secondary.

The Gate School philosophy will fill a gap in the current school system by allowing children to spend ample time thinking critically to solve complex problems. The academic model of the Gate School will be an excellent match for my child and for similar STEM thinking children in our community, and the use of technology will allow teachers to facilitate exception student learning. We hope this school will not only have a positive impact on our child but be an encouragement to those who feel deep foundational learning is often out of reach.

One of the reasons I am excited about this school is the leadership of Burrus Cox. From what I know of him, Burrus is not just starting a school because he has an idea. He is a truly strong teacher and educator who understands what it takes to help students grow.

That matters to me as a parent. So many school models sound good on paper, but the quality of teaching is what makes the real difference for students. The Gate School is built around that belief. Its leaders will stay connected to the classroom, teachers will be supported and developed, and great teaching will remain at the center of the school.

I want my child in a school where adults believe deeply in students and know how to challenge them well. The Gate School represents that kind of opportunity for Nashville families.

Please vote yes to approve The Gate School.

Thank you,
Kalyn Conner
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 21, 2026 6:00 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1499668756
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Kait Scharein
Email	kait.troy@gmail.com
Phone	(631) 521-4393
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	The Gate School

Written Comment

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

I am an educator, and I am writing in support of The Gate School, specifically, Burrus Cox's experience as a proven educator and the intentional model design.

One thing I appreciate about this model is that it takes teaching seriously as a profession. Too often, the only way for strong teachers to advance is to leave the classroom. That creates a real problem for students, because the people who are best at teaching are often pulled farther away from the work that matters most.

The Gate School's Teaching Firm model offers a different vision. It creates pathways for teachers to grow, lead, and take on more responsibility while continuing to work directly with students. That matters because great schools are built by great teachers, not just strong systems or good intentions.

I also appreciate that The Gate School is designed around rigorous learning for students. When teachers are supported and treated as professionals, students benefit from stronger instruction, deeper relationships, and higher expectations.

Nashville needs more schools that understand the connection between teacher excellence and student success. I hope you will vote yes to approve The Gate School.

Kait Scharein
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 21, 2026 6:02 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1499669261
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Travis Commons
Email	tcommons@valorcollegiate.org
Phone	(312) 919-3522
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	The Gate School

Written Comment

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

On behalf of The Compass Center at Valor, we write in strong support of The Gate School.

We know that MNPS, like other districts nationwide, frequently struggle with teacher turnover, and the consequences on student success are complex and crippling. Offering competitively higher salaries will allow the Gate School to attract top talent, which is a promising starting point. But the bold move to have school leadership teaching daily at the Gate School is a practice that has been proven to keep leaders directly connected to classroom dynamics, and this shift is profound for educators. Having worked with over 100 school leadership teams in urban districts across the country, I can confidently say that bridging the "us versus them" dynamic in school teams can end the revolving door of teacher attrition, and create a culture of consistency, high trust, and efficacy - all of these are proven to improve the student experience and student success. Plus, in a district where fewer than 30% of 3rd-grade students read on grade level, MNPS has yet to widely implement evidence-based practices that deepen comprehension and critical thinking like the Harkness method that the Gate School plans to implement - just one example of the ways this school is creating a thoughtful, purposeful education that all students in Nashville deserve.

We urge the board to authorize The Gate School.

Respectfully,
Travis Commons, Ph.D.
Executive Director, The Compass Center at Valor
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 21, 2026 6:04 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1499669739
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Sara Carlson Striegel
Email	saralucia.carlson@gmail.com
Phone	(720) 437-0988
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	The Gate School

Written Comment

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

I am an educator, and I am writing to ask you to vote yes for The Gate School.

As a former 1st and 2nd grade teacher, I was told many times that our youngest learners couldn't handle deep discussion and the art of grappling with complex topics. I proved time and time again in my own classroom how wrong the people who thought that were. I am so excited by this model because it is going to push our Nashville kids to deeply understand and speak passionately about their learning. When young learners are given the chance to discuss openly on the topics they are learning they both deepen their own identities while also learning to hold multiple perspectives and care for their fellow community members.

As a former principal and now a Leadership Development specialist, I know how quickly leadership can forget the classroom experience and the whole school community suffers from that. We should all want schools where leadership remains deeply involved in the inner workings of classrooms and maintains strong instructional practices and awareness. It takes a village to raise a child and it should take the whole school community to teach a child.

That's the powerful idea the Gate School is built on: the people leading instruction should remain close to instruction.

That matters. Leaders who teach every day are more likely to understand what students need, what teachers are carrying, and what strong instruction actually requires. It also sends an important message to the whole school community: teaching is not lower-status work. Teaching is the most important work.

Students deserve schools where instructional decisions are grounded in real classroom experience, and teachers deserve leaders who understand the complexity of the work firsthand and who did it themselves as this founder has.

I urge you to please vote yes to approve The Gate School for Nashville students and families.

Sara Carlson Striegel
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 21, 2026 6:06 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1499670287
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Christine Murray
Email	calmvol@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 269-6356
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, I have talked with enough Nashville families to know that one of the most common frustrations is simple: my child is not being challenged. I've seen the great results of good charter schools in Nashville. I believe everyone deserves a great education. Sometimes that child is in an honors program and still not challenged. More often, they were never in the program at all, because they didn't test in, or because their school didn't have one, or because nobody told their family to ask. The Gate School answers that frustration with a structural commitment: every student is challenged, every day, because high expectations are the school's only standard. Not an option. Not a track. The standard. Please vote yes. Christine Murray Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 21, 2026 6:08 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1499670686
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Tucker Deaton
Email	deatont14@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 957-1583
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, My support for The Gate School stems from my experience in a discussion-based learning environment that cultivated my ability to think critically and independently, articulate my perspective clearly, listen to others with empathy and respond respectfully to differing views. The development of communication skills is paramount in our younger generations as intelligence in the future will be defined by interpersonal skills and their ability to think critically in the era of AI. While it is a stated goal of Nashville's public education system to develop communication skills, it is dependent on school leadership to ensure it is implemented consistently across all classrooms. I have full confidence in the leadership of The Gate School, whom I know well, to implement their curriculum effectively and achieve the school's stated objectives. Thank you, Tucker Deaton Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 22, 2026 4:04 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	12.25.100.187
Unique ID:	1499986962
Location:	36.0639, -86.7701

Name	Carrington Elcan
Email	carrieelcan@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 708-1674
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, Growing up in Nashville and being a part of a family deeply ingrained in the education system, I have seen time and time again how students unable to afford private school education suffer from the lack of focus, attention, and discussion-based learning a place like the Gate School would offer. As someone who learned around a harkness table throughout high school and college, I can confidently say it's been a key difference maker in setting me apart and above my work colleagues when it comes to being able to handle difficult conversations. There is so much growth in uncomfortable conversations only available in safe settings like a harkness table at school. Please vote YES. Carrington Elcan Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 22, 2026 4:10 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	12.25.100.187
Unique ID:	1499988898
Location:	36.0639, -86.7701

Name	Connor Fair
Email	cjfair597@gmail.com
Phone	(804) 363-7649
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, I've watched several family members work as public school teachers and seen how hard they fight for their students with too few resources to work with. As a Nashville community member, I want to support a high quality, affordable option for local families, because a city is only as strong as the education it offers its kids. The Gate School is exactly the kind of investment in Nashville's future I'm glad to stand behind. Please vote yes. Connor Fair Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 22, 2026 4:13 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	12.25.100.187
Unique ID:	1499989601
Location:	36.0639, -86.7701

Name	Cate Fair
Email	catefair.co@gmail.com
Phone	(615) 445-9644
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Application Staff or Board Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

I am writing in strong support of The Gate School's application for charter approval. I am honored to serve on the school's founding board, and I want to share why I believe this school will meet a real and pressing need for middle school families in our community.

Before joining this effort, I spent four years as a classroom teacher in public schools. That experience showed me firsthand how much of a difference resources and qualified, well-supported teachers make in a student's education, and how often students go without both. It also showed me how difficult it can be to drive meaningful change within the public system, even when the will is there, because of the constraints state law places on individual schools and educators.

The Gate School is designed to solve exactly this problem. It will give middle schoolers access to a high quality, discussion-based education that many public schools simply cannot offer, without requiring families to pay private school tuition to get it. The model is built around fostering independence, strong communication skills, and a genuine sense of community among all students, qualities I saw far too little of during my own years in the classroom and that I believe will set graduates up to succeed well beyond middle school.

I have seen the thought and care that has gone into this school's design, and I am confident it will be a valuable option for families in our area who want more for their children than what is currently available to them. I urge you to approve The Gate School's charter application.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Cate Fair
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 22, 2026 7:32 pm
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	107.208.107.136
Unique ID:	1500041479
Location:	36.0711, -86.7196

Name	Tina Hodges (Advanced Financial)
Email	tina.hodges@af247.com
Phone	(615) 341-5900
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Other
What is your relationship to the application?	The Gate School Funder
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Please see letter of our financial commitment to the Gate School attached.
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20091337752

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 23, 2026 7:46 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	98.230.250.137
Unique ID:	1500141696
Location:	32.7863, -80.1055

Name	Todd Dickson
Email	tdickson@valorcollegiate.org
Phone	(415) 515-1133
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Application Staff or Board Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Attached File
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20092714216

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 23, 2026 7:54 am
Browser:	Chrome 152.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	98.230.250.137
Unique ID:	1500143698
Location:	32.7863, -80.1055

Name	Kevin Hritz
Email	kevin.c.hritz@gmail.com
Phone	(941) 809-5113
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment

Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

I am an educator, and I am writing to ask you to vote yes for The Gate School.

My name is Kevin Hritz, educator of 17 years, trained at Peabody College at Vanderbilt University with teaching experience in Houston, TX & Nashville, TN, currently teaching 7 Math at Valor Voyager Academy. I am writing for my support of The Gate School's charter approval as an advocate of public education & public charter schools as learning laboratories through which all schools can learn how to improve access to an equitable education for all children, and to strategize how to scale that to maximize impact & change trajectories for scholars. The Gate School's model & curriculum is one that merits implementation so that great teachers remain in the classroom while also having a stake in school leadership, and where school leaders have the capacity to keep a foot in the classroom to model excellent instruction & consider more comprehensively the impact of decision-making on teachers who have a direct impact on student outcomes. In addition, The Gate School's commitment to the Harkness Method will ensure that all scholars actively participate in their own instruction, learn the keys skills of discourse, collaboration, & research, and receive a comprehensive education through meaningful relationships with peers from different cultural & socio-economic backgrounds. I believe that The Gate School can be a pioneer for schools can look like in the future & a partner with long-standing MNPS institutions as a public charter school seeking to serve all students with a premier education.

What stands out to me is that The Gate School is built around a simple but powerful idea: the people leading instruction should remain close to instruction. In many schools, leadership can become separated from the daily reality of the classroom. The Gate School's model pushes against that by having school leaders continue to teach.

That matters. Leaders who teach every day are more likely to understand what students need, what teachers are carrying, and what strong instruction actually requires. It also sends an important message to the whole school community: teaching is not lower-status work. Teaching is the work.

As an educator, I find that vision compelling. Students deserve schools where instructional decisions are grounded in real classroom experience, and teachers deserve leaders who understand the complexity of the work firsthand.

Please vote yes to approve The Gate School for Nashville students

and families.

Thank you for your consideration,
Kevin Hritz
Nashville, TN

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 24, 2026 8:48 am
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	38.98.209.135
Unique ID:	1500554256
Location:	36.1081, -86.7738

Name	Jorge Robles
Email	jorge.robles@mnps.org
Phone	16154307798
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	LEA Staff Member
I wish to comment in support of	Metro Nashville Public Schools

Written Comment

Comment in Support of the MNPS Board of Education's Decision

I support the Metro Nashville Public Schools Board of Education's decision to deny the proposed Gate School charter application. After reviewing the applicant's appeal, I believe the fiscal analysis presented by the applicant significantly understates the financial impact that the proposed charter school would have on MNPS and the students the district continues to serve.

A central premise of the appeal is that any reduction in student enrollment would be accompanied by corresponding reductions in district expenses, thereby minimizing the financial impact on MNPS. This assumption does not reflect the realities of operating a large public school system. While public education funding is largely tied to student enrollment, many school and district expenditures are fixed or only partially variable. When students leave for a charter school, the associated per-pupil funding leaves the district. However, many of the costs necessary to operate schools remain.

More than sixty percent of MNPS's state funding is allocated directly to schools through student-based budgeting and staffing allocations. The remaining funding supports essential districtwide functions, including transportation, facilities operations, technology services, custodial support, academic programs, student services, safety and security, and other operational responsibilities that benefit all students. These obligations do not disappear when a relatively small number of students transfer to another school. As a result, enrollment shifts reduce available resources while many service obligations remain unchanged.

The applicant's analysis also overlooks the fact that school-level costs are not reduced proportionally when enrollment declines. A school that loses a modest number of students must still maintain its facility, provide utilities, operate transportation routes, maintain safe and secure learning environments, and offer a comprehensive educational program. In many cases, staffing and operational costs cannot be reduced unless enrollment declines are substantial enough to trigger structural changes. Consequently, revenue losses are often immediate, while potential cost reductions are limited, delayed, or impossible to realize.

The appeal further suggests that the proposed charter school would generate meaningful reductions in MNPS capital expenditures. This claim is unsupported. Capital investments are driven by the condition, age, safety, and functionality of school facilities across the district. Responsibilities such as repairing roofs, replacing HVAC systems, addressing deferred maintenance,

and ensuring safe learning environments continue regardless of modest enrollment changes. The loss of students to a charter school does not eliminate the district's obligation to maintain and improve its facilities, nor does it meaningfully reduce long-term capital needs.

The applicant also appears to misunderstand the nature of public school funding. MNPS operates within a finite budget that must support the educational needs of all eligible students in Davidson County. When students enroll in state-authorized charter schools, the associated funding is redirected from the district to those schools. Similarly, MNPS is required to transfer funding to district-authorized charter schools and absorbs the financial impact of other state-directed funding mechanisms. The district does not retain the funding associated with students who leave traditional schools.

The fact that MNPS manages a large overall budget does not negate the fiscal impact of enrollment losses. Public education funding is a limited pool of resources that must be allocated across competing priorities and student needs. Every student who exits the district reduces the resources available to support the students who remain. Because many costs cannot be reduced at the same rate that revenue is lost, enrollment shifts create real financial pressures on district operations and on the services provided to the vast majority of Davidson County students.

Ultimately, the relevant question is not whether MNPS has a large budget, but whether the district can reduce expenditures in direct proportion to the funding that would leave the system. The evidence demonstrates that it cannot. For this reason, the applicant's fiscal impact analysis significantly understates the burden that the proposed charter school would place on MNPS. The Board's decision appropriately recognized these financial realities and acted in the best interest of maintaining stable, sustainable educational services for all students served by the district.

Accordingly, I support the MNPS Board of Education's decision to deny the application and respectfully urge the Charter Commission to uphold that decision.

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 25, 2026 12:18 pm
Browser:	Mobile Safari / iOS
IP Address:	38.75.111.145
Unique ID:	1500960622
Location:	36.0758, -87.4

Name	John Pisciotta Pisciotta
Email	johnleepisciotta@gmail.com
Phone	+16154000809
Resident District Status	Non-district Resident
What is your resident district?	Dickson
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	This is such a benefit to the students in the city. We need to celebrate initiatives like this instead of slow, walk them into frustration.

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 28, 2026 1:35 pm
Browser:	Chrome 151.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	73.58.239.76
Unique ID:	1501628420
Location:	36.0048, -86.7886

Name	Scott Campbell
Email	scott@nashvilleincubator.org
Phone	(615) 484-0667
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Prospective Parent
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	See attached letter.
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20112146976

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 29, 2026 9:27 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	68.52.120.103
Unique ID:	1502094967
Location:	36.0048, -86.7886

Name	Ben Schumacher
Email	bmschuma@gmail.com
Phone	(314) 518-9445
Resident District Status	Non-district Resident
What is your resident district?	Williamson County
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School

Written Comment	Dear Members of the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, I am writing in support of The Gate School's appeal. In my work on learning design, I care deeply about schools that combine excellent teaching, rigorous shared learning, and support that responds to each student's needs. The Gate School's proposal reflects those priorities. I am especially encouraged by its plan to keep strong instructional leaders teaching, make discussion and clear reasoning part of students' daily experience, and use technology to provide timely feedback and more opportunities to revise their work. I personally know and respect its founders, Burrus Cox and Jim Leckrone, as exceptional leaders. I am confident they will build a school far stronger than most middle school options available in Nashville. Nashville families deserve thoughtful middle school options. I very much hope the Commission will approve The Gate School's appeal and give its team the opportunity to bring this model to students. Sincerely, Benjamin Schumacher
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Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 30, 2026 11:47 am
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	73.58.239.76
Unique ID:	1502257025
Location:	36.0048, -86.7886

Name	Brittany Monda
Email	brittany@nashvilleincubator.org
Phone	(703) 795-5597
Resident District Status	Non-district Resident
What is your resident district?	Shelby
Relationship to Application/District	Other
What is your relationship to the application?	Support organization and coach
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	See attached letter
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20121349173

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	September 30, 2026 4:11 pm
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	67.54.192.153
Unique ID:	1502371365
Location:	32.7797, -96.8022

Name	Lisa Stone
Email	lisa@nashvilleincubator.org
Phone	(202) 445-4789
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Community Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	Please see attached.
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20125503837

Form Name:	New Start Public Hearing Form - Written - The Gate School/MNPS
Submission Time:	October 2, 2026 8:37 am
Browser:	Chrome 153.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	24.120.55.19
Unique ID:	1502877883
Location:	36.102, -115.1447

Name	Holt Madden
Email	holtmadden@gmail.com
Phone	(832) 405-2112
Resident District Status	District Resident
Relationship to Application/District	Application Staff or Board Member
I wish to comment in support of	The Gate School
Written Comment	PLease see attached
Written Comment	https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/20133441264



Dear Tennessee Public Charter Commission,

As a charter school parent, educator, and local leader deeply invested in strengthening the school options available to families in Nashville, I enthusiastically support The Gate School and want to share my perspective on why our community needs this option.

As a parent, I felt the worry and stress of realizing that our zoned middle school is underperforming, especially compared to our MNPS elementary school in that same district. I was lucky that our child got into Valor Collegiate Academy, but many of my friends and neighbors were left on waitlists, facing lottery stress, or leaving the public system entirely for private school options. School choice doesn't mean that some families get lucky; it means that every single parent has a high quality option that meets the needs of their child. This is not yet true in Nashville, especially in the middle grades. The Gate School can be a critical part of raising the bar for middle school options.

Professionally, I serve as the Director of Fellows for the Nashville Incubator, where I've been coaching Burrus Cox for the last year and a half. I am deeply confident in the success of The Gate School because of its leadership and the model itself. As a career educator and experienced coach, I've supported the development of teachers, principals, and senior leaders across our country. I hold a very high bar for those trusted with the privilege of school leadership, and after working closely alongside Burrus, I can say without a doubt that he has the skills, mindsets, and capacity to lead a transformative school. He leads with humility and the rare balance of a high bar for outcomes and exceptional relational skills. Throughout the incubator fellowship, we've set ambitious goals for Burrus, and he has exceeded every one. I'm particularly proud that he has raised over \$500,000 in private local philanthropy alone, built authentic relationships with families resulting in 106 5th grade intent to enrolls, and secured a long term facility home. He has raised the bar on what is possible in the preauthorization fellowship year, creating a strong foundation on which a high quality school will be built.

In coaching Burrus, I've also had a front row seat to the development of his model. The Gate School is grounded in an often overlooked truth: the teacher in front of children is far and away the most impactful lever we can pull for student outcomes and experience. This model is more than a wish list for great teachers. It is a systematic and thoughtful innovation to elevate the teaching profession, built on proof points from high performing charters in New York and Washington, D.C. I toured these schools alongside Burrus, and they inspired even a 20 year education veteran like myself. We can do better by students, and this model is a thoughtful way to make that true.

Making the jump from vision to operation is incredibly hard work, and even great leaders like Burrus shouldn't have to carry it alone. That's why the Incubator has expanded the support we provide to include executive coaching, professional development, and expert support with common needs such as facilities, compliance, operations, and enrollment.

Our partnership with The Gate School doesn't stop with your approval. The Incubator is committed to actively coaching and supporting all of our leaders through their first two years of operation, because we understand those early years are pivotal to creating a high quality school. As his coach, I'll help Burrus execute on the ambitious goals he has set forth in his application, find resources to support his continued development, and be a thought partner through the inevitable pivots he will need to make as a single site charter leader.

I'm honored to be a small part of this team. As a leader who has had a front row seat to the development of The Gate School, I'm asking you to approve this application. Burrus and his team are ready, and they will fulfill the promise of an exceptional middle school for Nashville.

Sincerely,

Lisa Stone

Lisa Stone
Director of Fellows, The Nashville Incubator



To the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission:

I write in strong support of The Gate School. Almost all of my career has been spent working in the charter school space. As a former authorizer, I have reviewed applications, monitored new schools, and saw firsthand which school's struggle in their early years and why. Today, as Director of Strategy at the Nashville Incubator, I support founders from pre-authorization through early operations.

Why the application is strong. The Gate School gives the Commission unusually solid evidence on the factors that most often predict early failure:

- **Leaders with results, not just résumés.** Burrus Cox's students at Republic, East End Prep, and Valor have often outperformed the local average on state math exams by more than 50%. Jim Leckrone helped found East End Prep, one of Nashville's most consistent schools.
- **A coherent model.** Staffing, budget, and talent strategy all serve one premise: excellent teachers in front of students. Coherence is what keeps a new school on course when year one gets hard.
- **Responsiveness to feedback.** The amended application directly addressed reviewer concerns, including a clarified leadership structure and revised bylaws. How founders respond to feedback before approval is the best predictor I know of how they respond to monitoring after it.
- **Funding secured before day one.** Not only has the school placed themselves in a pipeline for grants, they have also proven that they can independently fundraise and pivot to ensure that their non-negotiables do not waiver.

Why the onramp support will be even greater. As an authorizer, I watched strong applications become struggling schools because founders were on their own in years one and two. The Incubator's new two-year launch support is built to close that gap. My team will provide regular leadership coaching, priority setting, operational resources, facilities advisory support, certified board training, and a community of practice with fellow founders.

The Gate School is the kind of school that shows there is a commitment to the right work for students. There are proven leaders, a clear model, and a support system built for the years when new schools are most fragile.

Sincerely,

Brittany Monda
Director of Strategy, The Nashville Incubator



Dear Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

My name is Holt Madden, and I live in 37204. I am on the board helping govern the opening of this school.

I am writing to ask for your support. The Gate School matters to me personally because I believe every child deserves the opportunity to discover their strengths, build confidence, and reach their full potential. In Nashville we need more of this, particularly middle schools. What The Gate does each day changes lives, not just for students, but for entire families. Seeing young people find success in an environment designed to help them thrive is incredibly meaningful to me. And is an integral part of building our overall community that so many of us call home.

It is also personal because of Burrus. He is one of the most gifted teachers and leaders I have ever been around. I have tremendous respect for the way he leads, the way he serves others, and the passion he has poured into The Gate School. When Burrus asked me to join the board, saying yes was an easy decision. I knew I wanted the opportunity to support his vision and be part of an organization that is making such a lasting impact on children and families.

At its core, The Gate School matters to me because it combines purpose and hope in a way that truly changes lives. I am grateful to play a small role in helping advance that mission.

Founder Burrus Cox trained at Phillips Exeter Academy, where the Harkness discussion method was developed, and teachers at The Gate School earn 20–30% above market rate.

Please vote yes on The Gate School. Nashville's students deserve access to this kind of rigorous education.

Thank you for your time and your service to Nashville's students.

Sincerely,

Holt Madden

September 16, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

Since 2016, the City Fund board of directors has approved over \$15M in grants to support public education efforts in Nashville. A portion of that budget is allocated towards creating high-performing public charter schools that provide Nashville students and families the access to more great public schooling options.

Upon authorization, we are prepared to provide start-up financial support to The Gate School team as they work to create a new public school model for the community, and we plan to continue our support until the campus reaches full scale.

We are confident in The Gate School's academic and financial leadership capacity to launch a high-quality option for kids and families in Nashville, and we respectfully encourage you to authorize the school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CB', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Chris Barbic
Partner



September 14th, 2026

Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Advance Financial Foundation, I am pleased to confirm our financial commitment to The Gate School.

The Advance Financial Foundation has made a **\$300,000 commitment to support The Gate School** as it prepares to open and serve students and families in Nashville.

We believe in The Gate School's mission and its vision for providing Nashville students with access to excellent teaching, rigorous academics, and a middle school experience that prepares them for success in high school and beyond.

We are proud to support The Gate School and look forward to continuing our partnership as the school grows.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tina Hodges".

Tina Hodges
Advance Financial Foundation

city fund

September 16, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

Since 2016, the City Fund board of directors has approved over \$15M in grants to support public education efforts in Nashville. A portion of that budget is allocated towards creating high-performing public charter schools that provide Nashville students and families the access to more great public schooling options.

Upon authorization, we are prepared to provide start-up financial support to The Gate School team as they work to create a new public school model for the community, and we plan to continue our support until the campus reaches full scale.

We are confident in The Gate School's academic and financial leadership capacity to launch a high-quality option for kids and families in Nashville, and we respectfully encourage you to authorize the school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CB', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Chris Barbic
Partner



Nashville, TN

info@nashvilleincubator.org

To the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission,

I am honored to write this letter of support on behalf of The Gate School and its co-founders, Burrus Cox and Jim Leckrone. As someone who has spent my entire life in public education, I look at the Gate School and think “of course, why doesn’t everyone do that”. Its common sense design elements make this school “little i” innovative and highly likely to succeed. At its core, The Gate School’s premise is simple: design a school that puts teaching excellence at the center. The best part of The Gate School is that it is being led by two leaders who have proven their leadership in the classroom and in school leadership. Burrus Cox has been one of the most successful middle school math teachers in Nashville for the past seven years. At Republic, East End Prep, and Valor, he has achieved outsized results for his students, often exceeding 50% better than the local average on state math exams. Jim Leckrone is one of the original charter founders in Nashville. East End Prep has continued to be one of the most consistent schools in Nashville, both operationally and academically. Jim is well known and respected throughout the Nashville education community for his collaboration and wisdom. Together, these two leaders will lead a great school. As the Executive Director of the Nashville Incubator, we are proud to walk beside them and provide the financial and social capital needed to successfully launch and operate a high-quality charter middle school in our community.

I want to be clear about what this support will look like over the next 3 years.

First, the Incubator is committed to spending **\$354,000** in Year 0 directly for The Gate School including costs that covers staffing, enrollment, facilities, and some flexible funds for launch needs. This is 100% committed upon authorization this fall and an increase from where we have typically spent due to the increased need created by the TDOE CSP grant decisions. This commitment is \$54,000 more than was originally projected in their budget under Nashville Funders Collaborative and we expect them to still receive additional funding outside of this commitment.

Second, as the Incubator has grown in the past couple of years, we have learned the importance of ensuring a strong operational start and have committed funding and people to ensure that our schools are academically and operationally excellent in their first two years. This support is new to Incubator schools and will be provided in full to our schools launching in 2027. It will include regular leadership coaching, priority setting, operational resources, continued facilities advisory support, certified board training, and community of practice among other founders. After year two, our schools will have the opportunity to join the Nashville Charter Collaborative that will continue to provide support for these growing schools. All of this work is in the effort to ensure a strong pipeline of support for early stage schools to help them reach their academic commitments to families earlier. The estimated value of this in-kind support is \$87,000 / year or \$174,000 total. In addition to this in-kind support, we will continue to allocate close to \$15,000 per school in funding for enrollment/coaching/operational needs. This support should be considered as “likely” and is contingent upon yearly budget approval by the Nashville Incubator Board of Directors.



The Nashville Incubator is supported by the generous contributions and leadership of the Joe C. Davis Foundation, SCORE, City Fund, and the Bill and Crissy Haslam Foundation. These foundations are committed to high-quality, innovative schools in our city and state, and the Incubator is one of the primary strategies identified for launching these schools.

Third, Nashville Incubator board members have generously committed to supporting schools upon approval and opening. One example is a grant opportunity of up to \$250,000 from SCORE to support construction-related costs for incubation facilities. This grant can be used by The Gate School to cover expenses related to construction, down payments, or rent for a short-term incubation facility. This grant should also be considered “likely” when taking into account the full amount of philanthropic dollars. Rest assured that our board members are committed to ensuring that Incubator schools ultimately succeed as high-quality schools, and each school we incubate has opportunities for additional grant funding upon approval and opening.

Finally, on a personal level, I want to share my confidence in Burrus and Jim. I have worked with many talented founders, but this team has been the hardest working and most open to feedback and continuous improvement that I have seen. They have tapped into a simple but powerful idea that resonates with every parent and educator they speak with: “Great schools are made by great teachers.” They have built a model focused on recruiting and retaining excellent teachers in front of students. They are humble, consistent, and exceptionally smart, and it has been a joy to walk beside them in this work. This school meets the state’s rubric in all sections but goes far beyond it. It is an innovative school with strong leadership, significant community support, solid financial backing, and a team of experts committed to helping it open and operate successfully. It will provide a middle school choice that families deeply desire. The Gate School will impact generations of Nashvillians and serve as a model for others across the country. Burrus Cox and Jim Leckrone are extraordinary leaders, and this school will fulfill our shared commitment as public educators in Tennessee to grow an informed and prepared citizenry. I am grateful to play a small role in seeing The Gate School flourish.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Campbell
Executive Director, The Nashville Incubator



VALOR COLLEGIATE
Academies

As the founder of Valor Collegiate Academies and a founding board member of The Gate School, I have had the opportunity to watch this school and its model develop from the beginning.

I support The Gate School because I believe its model is thoughtful, distinctive, and responsive to what students need from middle school. I have been especially encouraged by its focus on excellent teaching, discussion-based learning, student independence, and effective communication.

The Teaching Firm model is compelling because it keeps strong educators close to students while creating meaningful pathways for teachers to grow as leaders without having to leave the classroom. Combined with a discussion-based instructional model that asks students to explain their thinking, listen carefully, and engage with the ideas of others, I believe The Gate School is building around some of the things that matter most for long-term student success.

As someone who has helped build and lead a charter school in Nashville, I do not believe our responsibility is simply to protect the schools that already exist. It is to continue creating high-quality public school options that meet the needs of Nashville students and families. I welcome the opportunity to compete with the Gate School as I know it will help us be better for families.

There is room in Nashville for our existing charter schools to continue getting better and for thoughtful, high-quality new schools to emerge. I do believe that we should keep a *very high bar* for new charter schools AND I believe The Gate School can be one of those schools, and I strongly support giving its team the opportunity to serve Nashville students and families.

- Todd Dickson