



THE OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

160 South Hollywood Street, Room 138 • Memphis, Tennessee 38112 • 901-416-5321 • www.scsk12.org/charter

Tennessee Public Charter Commission Board Members:

Memphis-Shelby County Schools (“MSCS”) appreciates the opportunity to address the Tennessee Public Charter Commission Board (“the Commission”), regarding the Shelby County Board of Education’s (“SCBE”) decision to revoke the charter agreements for Memphis Academy of Health Sciences High and Memphis Academy of Health Sciences Middle (“MAHS”), pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-122(b)(1) and (3). MSCS acknowledges that decisions such as these are difficult and that such a decision will have a direct impact on the students, families, and employees of MAHS. However, based on the actions and inactions of MAHS employees and Board members, MSCS requests that the Commission accept the recommendation of the Executive Director and to affirm the revocation of MAHS Middle and High Schools.

MAHS was entrusted with public dollars to be used for educational purposes. Throughout the charter agreements, MAHS assured and represented that it would use all funds in accordance with state and federal law. However, as detailed in the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury’s December 1, 2021 Report, over the course of four years, the MAHS Board’s inaction resulted in the misappropriation of funds totaling approximately \$800,000. Those funds could have and should have been used for student benefit. Additionally, the Report cited four findings and five internal controls and compliance deficiencies within the MAHS organization. The Board did not have meaningful oversight of the school and failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. No plan of action could correct or address the mismanagement of funds for a period that spanned over four years prior that allowed MAHS employees to operate to the detriment of MAHS. This was an egregious act of fiscal mismanagement and a material violation of MAHS’ charter agreements, which, in turn, required MSCS to conduct a review and the SCBE to revoke the charters.

MSCS is aware that the MAHS Board disagrees with our local process of review for the proceedings; however, MSCS followed all requirements under state law, Tennessee Quality Charter Authorizing Standards, and SCBE Policy 1011. We notified MAHS thirty days prior to the revocation hearing and vote, provided a Closing Impact Report, and afforded MAHS an opportunity to be heard at a closure hearing prior to the SCBE vote for revocation.

Prior to the SCBE’s revocation decision, the Office of Charter Schools prepared a Closing Impact Report, which included a proposed revocation communication timeline, academic impact on students, and an analysis of the impact the revocation would have on students, teachers, parents, and the neighborhood. Furthermore, prior to the appeal to the Commission, MSCS and MAHS met twice to establish a transition team and discuss the closure of the schools, in compliance with T.C.A. § 49-13-130. If the SCBE decision is affirmed, MSCS will continue conversations with the MAHS transition team and will work and communicate with families to address concerns, provide the necessary information and resources to assist in enrollment and registration, and ensure continuity of each student’s education plan.

MSCS recognizes the autonomy provided to charter schools and knows that the Commission has the best interest for Tennessee students in mind. However, that autonomy cannot be taken for granted or misused. Thus, MSCS requests that the Commission affirm the Director’s recommendation and the SCBE’s decision to revoke MAHS Middle and High Schools.

Sincerely,

Brittany Monda, Assistant Superintendent, Memphis-Shelby County Schools