



Invictus Nashville
Charter School

**Dear Executive Director Stovall, Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, and
Review Committee:**

Thank you for the time and effort you will be devoting to the appeal of the Metropolitan Nashville Board of Public Education's denial of Invictus Nashville's amended application to establish a new charter for K-8 students. I am confident you will find that the MNPS Board's denial of the application is contrary to the best interests of the students, the LEA, and the community.

Invictus Nashville is a proposed single-site, public charter school serving Nashville-area students and families in grades K-8. The mission of Invictus Nashville is to prepare our K-8 students to become engaged members of society by helping them identify their unique path to personal and professional success. Through a diverse culture, personalized learning that fosters high academic achievement, and community service, Invictus Nashville graduates will be equipped with the necessary habits of success and a heart for service in their communities.

After extensive research and input from community members, our Montessori elementary that transitions to a PBL middle school that is inspired by the Montessori components will be a highly effective addition to the educational landscape in Nashville. We believe that Invictus Nashville stands to serve the best interest of Nashville students in the Northeast Nashville community.

We submit our appeal on the following bases:

1. The MNPS Board's decision to deny Invictus Nashville's application was against the best interests of the pupils of the community.
 - o Invictus Nashville is a community codesign model. Community engagement and input informed the entire design of Invictus Nashville. We created a team of educators, community advocates, parents, and students in 2021. This team spent a year dedicated to gathering input from the community. During that time, we met with over 257 stakeholders, hosted more than 24 events, received over 200 family input surveys, 179 petitions of support, and had over 30 letters of support from families and community partners. This research informed our grade-band, principles, and ultimately the decision to have a Montessori elementary. We are intentional in our plan to continue to engage families and the community post authorization through two of our key design elements; mentoring and community service/expedition weeks.
2. The MNPS Board's vote to decline Invictus Nashville's application was based on recommendations shared by the district's charter review team. Invictus Nashville has publicly noted that errors had been made in the review process that we believe



Invictus Nashville
Charter School

incorrectly justified partially-meets and does-not-meet ratings of our application. We look forward to addressing these errors with the Tennessee Public Charter Commission. Please see **some** of the concerns below:

- **The review team stated that our application lacks details of how WIDA standards for English Learners will be integrated with the curriculum.**
 - The rubric does not require applicants to detail how WIDA standards will be integrated into the curriculum. However, the rubric does ask applicants to describe the methods for identifying ELL students, specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the proposed school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program, plans for ensuring individual learning plans (ILPs) are maintained and addressed, plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of EL students. The application for Invictus Nashville provides these details in Section 1.9D of the application.
 - **The review team noted discrepancies in our budget between our narrative and the worksheet in regards to transportation.**
 - The amended application updated the budget narrative and worksheet to reflect an additional \$50K for a bus for students with disabilities per the recommendation from our initial review. This can be seen in Attachment N and O of the application.
 - **The review team noted insufficient funds for tenant improvements and facility upgrades. The review team lowered our score.**
 - Invictus Nashville has a facilities team that includes LevelField Partners, Southeast Ventures, Gilbert McLaughlin Casella Architects, and the Dowdle Construction Group. This team has conducted a feasibility study and a LOI is in negotiations with our selected site. This team in conjunction with EdTec that supported the creation of our budget are in agreement that we have enough projected money in our very conservative budget to meet the improvements and facility upgrades necessary. Our application identifies a contingency plan and additional facilities funding from our partners and grants.
3. The MNPS Board's decision to deny Invictus Nashville's application was against the best interest of the school district.
- The Invictus Nashville model would be the first of its kind by blending the Montessori (Elementary) and PBL (Middle) curriculum. It has been created and will be led by a native Nashvillian and MNPS graduate. Currently, there are only two



Invictus Nashville
Charter School

elementary school options that offer a Montessori education (Stanford Montessori Elementary and Hull Jackson), and demand far surpasses available seats at the school, leading families to seek private options which are more abundant in Nashville. We would be the third option in a district that serves over 80,000 students.

- Although our school is located in a district that houses one Montessori school, our school is a welcomed curriculum due to the demand for seats and a call for better transitional support as students leave the program. Our approach includes a smooth transition from Montessori to our project-based learning in middle school. Project Based Learning instructional methods are suited to differentiating content, processes, and products to ensure that all students, including ELs, students with special needs, and gifted students reach high levels of achievement in all content areas.
- In addition to our curriculum approach, we have an embedded mentoring to support social and emotional development as well as a community engagement component that will keep the needs of those we serve at the forefront of our decision. These aspects will ensure that the whole child is developed and that the "village" will be integral in the lives of the students we serve.

In conclusion, the Invictus Nashville team believes that we have met the expectations of the rubric. As we have stayed abreast of the changes in the educational landscape, we have been intentional with reasonable enrollment targets, a facility that will allow growth, a conservative budget for sustainability, and partnerships to support licensure requirements for Montessori teachers.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to engaging with you in the appeals process

With Gratitude,

Invictus Nashville Charter School

615.438.0551

bjones@fellow.bes.org