



Ms. Tess Stovall
Executive Director
Tennessee Charter Commission

Dear Ms. Stovall:

Please consider this letter as ReThink Forward's official appeal of the denial of Nashville Collegiate Prep High School's (NCPHS) amended new start high school application on July 25, 2023.

As outlined in Tennessee state charter law, the purpose of charter schools is six-fold: To improve learning for all students; provide options for parents to meet educational needs of students; encourage use of different and innovative teaching methods; measure performance of students; ensure opportunities to reach academic proficiency on state assessments; and create new professional opportunities for teachers.

The NCPHS school model meets each of these purposes, has been well-researched, and provides a foundation for student success that extends well beyond the years they spend in our school. As presented, the academic model is proven to close the achievement gaps in the targeted population of students, and is supported by the same sound operational and financial plans that have made Nashville Collegiate Prep (NCP) a resounding success.

The main impetus behind the NCPHS application is to offer parents and students a K-12 school choice option that offers high quality educational opportunities for all students while developing close relationships with families that will be sustained and strengthened throughout the years a student attends our schools. Our NCPHS students will attend school in a brand new, state-of-the-art building, with a curriculum that not only is rigorous, but designed to offer academic pathways not present in any other MNPS school. As presented, the curriculum meets Tennessee academic and graduation standards.

There are numerous reasons why NCPHS is a desirable and urgently needed school choice option, but we will elaborate on only three (3) of them:

1) The surrounding high schools are not meeting the academic needs of their students.

Struggling schools can have profound political and financial impacts, but their biggest, most harmful effect is that they damage students and families. As evidenced from the updated chart below (2023 results are not yet posted on the state website), the need for a high quality high school with a rigorous curriculum, strong character development, relevant career pathways, and a strong emphasis on differentiating for individual students is clear and compelling.

MNPS High Schools Within NCPHS’s Enrollment and Recruitment Area: Academic Trends:

YR	State Designation	Academic Rating (Success Rate)	TVAAS Growth (Composite)	*Graduation Rate	*Ready Graduate	Chronically Out of School
Antioch High School						
2019	ATSI: Additional Targeted Support and Improvement	7.7%	Level 1	72.8%	17.1%	27.1%
2020	Hold Harmless	Hold Harmless	Hold Harmless	81.1%	16.8%	31.6%
2021	ATSI: Additional Targeted Support and Improvement	< 5%	Level 1	74.8%	14.9%	54.1%
2022	ATSI: Additional Targeted Support and Improvement	5.5%	Level 1	74/8%	14.9%	51.2%
2023	Not yet posted on TN State Report Card Site					
Cane Ridge High School						
2019	Targeted Support and Improvement	9.2%	Level 1	84.5%	20.8%	24.0%
2020	Hold Harmless	Hold Harmless	Hold Harmless	83.5%	24.1%	23.2%
2021	Targeted Support and Improvement	< 5%	Level 1	81.3%	25.9%	40.5%
2022	ATSI: Additional Targeted Support and Improvement	6.5%	Level 1	81.3%	25.9%	46.3%
2023	Not yet posted on TN State Report Card Site					
Glencliff High School						
2019	Targeted Support and Improvement	5.6%	Level 1	74.7%	11.0%	22.7%
2020	Hold Harmless	Hold Harmless	Hold Harmless	62.8%	13.9%	34.3%
2021	Targeted Support and Improvement Exit	< 5%	Level 1	61.2%	8.7%	58.5%
2022	Priority School	< 5%	Level 1	61.2%	8.7%	44.1%
2023	Not yet posted on TN Report Card Site					

Source: TN State Report Card <https://www.tn.gov/education/families/report-card.html>

2) Current NCP parents are clearly wanting a high school so their students have continuity and continued excellence and high quality.

In a survey of our current parents, the responses overwhelmingly resulted in 100% of participants indicating they would prefer a full K-12 option; 90% of the respondents agreed that a high-quality high school option is needed in the community; and parents were most interested in seeing college prep, STEM, Fine Arts, and Leadership/Entrepreneurship focus areas. We listened to our parents to

create NCPHS and are offering a robust curriculum that consists of what current NCP parents and students want to see in the new school.

3) Growth in the Nashville area will result in new schools being needed sooner rather than later.

According to the Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research, University of Tennessee, Davidson County has grown by 2.7% since 2021. There are 158,613 children between the ages of 0-17, representing 22% of the population. From these statistics, it is clear that there will be many more students entering school in the coming years, necessitating MNPS to continue to build new schools or expand existing ones to accommodate the growth.

NCPHS has already broken ground on a brand-new campus that is designed to house both the NCP middle school and NCPHS. We will have the means and facility to open a 9th grade academy in Fall 2024 if our application is approved. NCPHS will mitigate the need for MNPS to build a new school in the southeast Nashville area, and is prepared to serve students for many years to come.

In summary, the NCPHS application clearly establishes the need for additional school choice opportunities in the southeast area of Nashville where it will be located. ReThink Forward's partner, Noble Education Initiative, has a proven track record of improving student achievement among all student populations, as well as ensuring a diverse and talented teaching and administrative staff.

Failure to authorize a potentially successful school for children in need of one is just as devastating to a community as authorizing a school that ultimately fails to educate them. It is evident that the denial of NCPHS by the MNPS school board is contrary to the best interests of students and parents within the Nashville community. The application clearly demonstrated that NCPHS will benefit the families and children of southeast Nashville by providing a high quality educational choice option that maximizes the chance for success at the highest level, offering the opportunity for students to forge their own pathway to the future. We appreciate and look forward to the opportunity to present our vision for providing excellent educational options for all Nashville students to the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Commission.

Dan Boone

Dr. Dan Boone
ReThink Forward Chairman