



Executive Director's Recommendation

KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary School Appeal

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-13-108, sponsors proposing to open a new charter school may appeal the denial of their amended application by a local board of education to the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission ("Commission"). On July 22, 2022, the sponsors of KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary School ("KIPP SE Elementary" or "Sponsor") appealed the denial of its amended application by the Metro Nashville Public School Board of Education ("MNPS") to the Commission.

Based on the procedural history, findings of fact, analysis, and Review Committee Report, attached hereto, I believe that the decision to deny the KIPP SE Elementary amended application was contrary to the best interests of the students, the LEA, or the community.¹ Therefore, I recommend that the Commission overturn the decision of the MNPS Board of Education to deny the amended application for KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary School.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-108 and Commission Policy 2.000, Commission staff and an independent review charter application review committee conducted a de novo, on the record review of KIPP SE Elementary's amended application. In accordance with the Tennessee Department of Education's charter application scoring rubric, "applications that do not meet or exceed the standard in all sections (academic plan design and capacity, operations plan and capacity, financial plan and capacity, and, if applicable, past performance) . . . will be deemed not ready for approval."² In addition, the Commission is required to hold a public hearing in the district where the proposed charter school seeks to locate.³

In order to overturn the decision of the local board of education, the Commission must find that the application meets or exceeds the metrics outlined in the department of education's application-scoring rubric and that approval of the amended charter application is in the best interests of the students, the local education agency (LEA), or the community.⁴ If the local board of education's decision is overturned, then the Commission can approve the application, and thereby authorize the school, or to affirm the local board's decision to deny.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

1. On December 3, 2021, the Sponsor submitted a letter of intent to MNPS expressing its intention to file a charter school application.
2. The Sponsor submitted its initial application for KIPP SE Elementary to MNPS on February 1, 2022.
3. MNPS assembled a review committee to review and score the KIPP SE Elementary initial application.
4. On March 22, 2022, MNPS's review committee conducted a capacity interview with representatives of KIPP SE Elementary.

¹ T.C.A. § 49-13-108.

² Tennessee Charter School Application Evaluation Rubric – Ratings and Scoring Criteria, pg. 1.

³ T.C.A. § 49-13-108.

⁴ Id.



5. The MNPS review committee reviewed and scored the KIPP SE Elementary initial application and recommended to the MNPS Board of Education that the initial application be denied, indicating that the initial application partially met standards in academics, operations, past performance, as well as the application did not meet standards in financials.
6. On April 26, 2022, the MNPS Board of Education voted to deny the KIPP SE Elementary initial application based on the review committee's recommendation.
7. The Sponsor amended and resubmitted its application for KIPP SE Elementary to MNPS on May 26, 2022.
8. The MNPS review committee reviewed and scored the KIPP SE Elementary amended application based on the charter application scoring rubric.
9. The MNPS review committee rated each section of KIPP SE Elementary's amended application identical to the recommendations of the initial application and recommended denial to the local board of education.
10. On July 12, 2022, the MNPS Board of Education voted to deny the amended application of KIPP SE Elementary.
11. The Sponsor appealed the denial of the KIPP SE Elementary amended application in writing to the Commission on July 22, 2022, including submission of all required documents per Commission Policy 2.000.
12. The Commission's review committee independently analyzed and scored the KIPP SE Elementary amended application using the Tennessee Department of Education's charter school application scoring rubric.
13. The Commission's review committee conducted a capacity interview with key members of the KIPP SE Elementary leadership team on September 2, 2022 via Microsoft Teams.
14. On September 7, 2022, the Commission staff held a public hearing at Davy Crockett Tower in Nashville, Tennessee. At the public hearing, the Executive Director, sitting as the Commission's Designee, heard presentations from the Sponsor and MNPS and took public comment regarding the KIPP SE Elementary amended application.
15. After the capacity interview, the Commission's review committee determined a final consensus rating of the KIPP SE Elementary amended application, which served as the basis for the Review Committee Recommendation Report, attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

FINDINGS OF FACT

District Denial of Initial Application

The review committee assembled by MNPS to review and score the KIPP SE Elementary initial application consisted of the following individuals:

Name	Titles
Dr. David Williams	MNPS Executive Officer, Teaching and Learning
Kenneth Stark	MNPS Executive Officer of Operations
Conor Rayel	MNPS Data Analyst, Research Assessment and Evaluation
Molly Hegwood	MNPS Executive Director, Office of English Learners
Debra McAdams	MNPS Executive Director of Exceptional Education
Dr. Elisa Norris	MNPS Executive Officer, Strategy Performance Management
Casey Meow	MNPS Assistant Director of Facility Planning & Construction
Ryan Latimer	MNPS Director of Boundary Planning and Enrollment Forecasting
Dr. Alyson Lerma	MNPS Director of Grants Management
Dr. Gay Burden	External Reviewer

The KIPP SE Elementary initial application received the following ratings from the MNPS review committee:

Sections	Ratings
Academic Plan Design and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Does Not Meet Standard
Portfolio Review	Partially Meets Standard

After the MNPS review committee completed its review and scoring of the initial application, its recommendation was presented to the MNPS Board of Education on April 26, 2022. Based on the review committee’s recommendation, the MNPS Board of Education voted to deny the initial application of KIPP SE Elementary.

District Denial of Amended Application

The review committee assembled by MNPS to review and score the KIPP SE Elementary amended application mirrored that of the committee that reviewed the initial application. Upon resubmission, the MNPS review committee conducted a review of the amended application, and the amended application received the following ratings from the MNPS review committee:



Sections	Ratings
Academic Plan Design and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Partially Meets Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Does Not Meet Standard
Portfolio Review	Partially Meets Standard

After the MNPS review committee completed its review and scoring of the amended application, its recommendation was presented to the MNPS Board of Education on July 12, 2022. At the July 12, 2022 board meeting, the MNPS Board of Education voted to deny the amended application of KIPP SE Elementary.

Commission Review Committee’s Evaluation of the Application

Following the denial of the KIPP SE Elementary amended application and subsequent appeal to the Commission, Commission staff assembled a diverse review committee of internal and external experts to independently evaluate and score the KIPP SE Elementary amended application. This review committee consisted of the following individuals. Additional information about the committee’s expertise is available in Exhibit A.

Name	Title
Ashley Davis	External Reviewer
Maggie Lund	Commission Staff
Gomer Pascual	Commission Staff
Susie Smith	External Reviewer
Clare Vickland	External Reviewer

The review committee conducted an initial review and scoring of the KIPP SE Elementary amended application, a capacity interview with the Sponsor, and a final evaluation and scoring of the amended application resulting in a consensus rating for each major section. The review committee’s consensus rating of the KIPP SE Elementary application was as follows:

Sections	Ratings
Academic Plan Design and Capacity	Meets Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Meets Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Meets Standard
Portfolio Review	Meets Standard



The review committee recommends the approval of the amended application for KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary because the applicant demonstrated clearly detailed plans and proven experience to fulfill the plans as outlined within the application, and the application meets or exceeds the standards established in the state’s scoring rubric. Specifically, the academic plan presented by the applicant includes a data-driven approach that is responsive to the needs of the local community, and the network has clear, demonstrated success with this approach with their other Antioch schools. The application outlines a demonstration of parent demand for another KIPP Nashville elementary school within the Antioch area given the robust waitlist at KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary.

The applicant’s operations plan was developed, and will be implemented, by an experienced governing board and network team with a track record of success. The existing governing board represents stable leadership, allowing for consistency in the implementation of the mission and vision. The applicant also demonstrated its reflective processes and ability to use the lessons learned from the previous successful KIPP Nashville openings to outline a comprehensive startup plan for the proposed school. The financial plan reflects conservative startup and operational budgets, and the school can draw on resources from the KIPP Nashville network, which has a strong financial position with allocated funds for network expansion. All existing KIPP Nashville schools are in good financial standing, demonstrating that there are strong fiscal policies, procedures, and controls in place.

Lastly, the portfolio review and performance record demonstrate proven success within the Nashville area in addressing achievement gaps. KIPP Nashville’s schools have earned a majority of TVAAS 5 composite scores during the last ten years, and their Antioch schools, which are near the proposed new location and will serve a similar demographic of students, have met proficiency standards under the Commission’s framework in the 2021/2022 school year. KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle also earned Reward Status for 2022. Based on the totality of the evidence presented, the review committee determined that the application meets the standards established by the department of education’s scoring rubric.

For additional information regarding the review committee’s evaluation of the KIPP SE Elementary amended application, please see **Exhibit A** for the complete Review Committee Recommendation Report, which is fully incorporated herein by reference.

Public Hearing

Pursuant to statute and Commission Policy 2.000, a public hearing chaired by the Executive Director was held on September 7, 2022. As a matter of efficiency and, with the agreement of both parties, testimony and presentations for the applications from KIPP Southeast College Prep Elementary School and KIPP Southeast College Prep Middle School were heard during the same proceeding. MNPS’s presentation at the public hearing focused on the lack of sufficient demand for the proposed school given incorrect assumptions of overcrowding in the area, issues with the category of application submitted, violations of class size requirements, along with an insufficient pre-opening budget for furniture costs and concerns regarding other KIPP Nashville elementary school’s past performance. Representatives from MNPS indicated that KIPP Southeast College Prep Elementary School’s amended application was denied based on these reasons for denial which were provided to the MNPS board within the review committee report.

In the Sponsor’s opening statement, Randy Dowell, Executive Director of KIPP Nashville, spoke about



the fact that the two new proposed KIPP SE Schools are in the best interest of the students, the community, and the LEA. Dowell provided information as to the student population KIPP Nashville primarily serves, including special populations and subgroups. KIPP Nashville students, particularly in the Black and Latino subgroups, consistently outperform MNPS. In addition, KIPP Nashville has operated with a five-school feeder pattern in their North and East locations. These two new proposed Southeast locations in the Antioch community would fill out a similar five-school feeder pattern for Southeast Nashville. Dowell spoke about his interactions with families in the Antioch community and the need for more available KIPP Nashville seats as the number of applications available indicates, with roughly 500 applications for only 250 seats. KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary received over 1,000 applications for the 2022-2023 school year, 440 of which were for kindergarten. KIPP Nashville, as they have grown, has developed a robust regional leadership team with varied expertise and a proven track record of acquiring facilities. Within the proposed application, KIPP Nashville provided a plan for incubation for the school in an already-acquired facility that will house their high school, which is opening in the 2023-2024 school year.

During questioning by the Commission regarding the exact reasons for denial used by the MNPS board, the MNPS charter office clarified that the reasons for denial of the application were everything cited in the review committee report. Commission staff asked for MNPS to clarify why the category of application was used as a reason to deny the application, and MNPS stated that they denied the KIPP Southeast applications in part because they did not see a change in grade structure or model indicated within the application, which would apply to a category two application. MNPS shared that the operator was asked during the capacity interview about the category, and KIPP Nashville responded that had changed its mission, and thus decided to file as a category two. MNPS cited additional concerns about KIPP's grade structure given the ReimagineED plan that MNPS is adopting to move 5th grade from middle school into elementary school. MNPS cited that while charter schools are not required to adopt the same grade structure, information regarding this change is publicly available, and MNPS suggests that charter schools should adopt a similar structure. MNPS also provided details regarding the recent utilization report and details regarding cited overcrowding in the Antioch area. While MNPS board members raised questions regarding the accuracy of the report during the board's discussion of the application, the charter office clarified that the perception of this rapid development does not directly translate into school-aged students. As the utilization report demonstrates, four to five new housing units typically only generate about one student. Finally, MNPS stated that they considered the waitlist information provided by KIPP Nashville; however, their SmartChoice system that runs their lottery does not indicate similar waitlist numbers as reported by KIPP.

The Commission then questioned the Sponsor. KIPP Nashville clarified that they chose to complete a category two application due to changes in their mission since they submitted applications for their original KIPP schools at least ten years ago. They also believed that a category two application more than satisfied the needed information as a part of the application, including past performance data. KIPP Nashville also provided updated performance data for the 2021-2022 school year, including KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle School earning a TVAAS 5 and 78% of students at KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary reading on grade level. KIPP Nashville also shared some lessons learned when serving students in this area, including changes to their coaching model through adopting more real-time coaching. KIPP Nashville also clarified evidence of demand for the two proposed schools in Antioch, stating that MNPS's waitlist claims are incorrect as their system does not include KIPP Nashville's Antioch schools, as they are authorized by the Commission and do not use MNPS's



lottery system. For the 2022-2023 school year, KIPP Nashville stated it has almost 500 students on the current waitlist for their Antioch elementary school and almost 250 for their Antioch middle school. KIPP Nashville representatives spoke to their community partnerships, including the YMCA, as well as contingency plans should enrollment not materialize, which involves adjusting staffing. KIPP Nashville states that they estimated costs conservatively in the application to accommodate for any under-enrollment they may experience in their first year, and they also spoke to their strong financial standing as a network.

The public hearing concluded with closing statements by both parties and the receipt of 17 in-person comments, with zero speaking in support of MNPS and 17 speaking in support of KIPP Nashville. The Commission also accepted written comments, and the Commission received 16 written comments, with zero writing in support of MNPS and 16 writing in support of KIPP SE College Prep Elementary.

ANALYSIS

State law requires the Commission to review the decision of the local board of education and determine if the application “meets or exceeds the metrics outlined in the department of education’s application-scoring rubric and⁵,” whether “approval of the application is in the best interests of the students, LEA, or community⁶.” In addition, pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-108, the Commission adopted the State Board of Education’s quality public charter schools authorizing standards set forth in State Board Policy 6.111 and utilizes these standards to review charter applications received upon appeal. In making my recommendation to the Commission, I have considered the Review Committee’s Recommendation Report, the documentation submitted by both the Sponsor and MNPS, the arguments made by both parties at the public hearing, and the public comments received by Commission staff and conclude as follows:

The Review Committee’s report and recommendations are thorough, citing specific examples in the application and referencing information gained in the capacity interview in support of its findings. For the reasons explicated in the report, I agree that the KIPP SE Elementary amended application does rise to the level of meeting or exceeding the standards required for approval. KIPP SE Elementary presented an application evidencing a solid and proven academic plan, a sound operational foundation, and a significant financial proposal. Moreover, the past performance of KIPP Nashville network schools across two (2) authorizers bolsters my confidence that, if approved, KIPP SE Elementary would be a successful option for parents in the Antioch/Cane Ridge area.

KIPP SE Elementary has an academic model that is closely aligned with its mission and values. The proven success of prior schools is evidenced by its reward school designations and TVAAS Composite Score of 5 in this past year. KIPP Nashville network has maintained this successful academic model across multiple authorizers, showing that under any partnership, this option for students is in their best interests. A showing of community demand is most evident in the large waitlist for enrollment. The two KIPP Nashville schools located near the proposed location of the new school received over 1,000 applications for the upcoming school year, creating a waitlist of approximately 500 students. Approval of this application would serve a demonstrated need in the community. As the Commission looks to its charge, I would be remiss in not including consideration of the LEA and authorizer. The Commission is responsible for ensuring that it only approves those applications

⁵ T.C.A. § 49-13-108(5)(E).

⁶ *Id.*



that have a high likelihood of success and will be in the best interests of students. Based on the amended application and the clear track record of success of KIPP Nashville, I am confident that bringing KIPP SE Elementary under the Commission's portfolio would only strengthen it and signals that only charter school applications of the highest quality will be recommended for approval.

Operationally, the proposed plan for KIPP SE Elementary is sound. KIPP SE Elementary put forth a five (5) year plan and has the network support for their staff recruitment, retention, and professional development to support the school's ongoing growth. While the district's review committee found that KIPP SE Elementary's Operational Plan partially met the standard, I believe that the sponsor's intent to maximize the network support only adds to the strengths of their ability to operate a new charter school. The sponsor's plan for expansion matches anticipated growth and includes contingency plans that will allow the school to succeed should enrollment projections not materialize. KIPP SE Elementary's plans include the use of current campuses to incubate in their current high school, making their facility plans realistic, reasonable, and cost-effective.

I am confident in the KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary School's financial plan based on their intended use of the KIPP Network to provide financial oversight, through staffing positions and their past success with the current charter schools in the area. The current schools in the KIPP Nashville network are in good financial standing, with none showing fiscal probation. KIPP SE Elementary has access to a \$2.5 million line of credit for any unanticipated contingencies to support the school in its early years. The KIPP SE Elementary's budget is realistic and viable, giving me the confidence to recommend that the sponsor's financial plan meets the standard for approval.

KIPP Nashville's existing schools have demonstrated clear academic success. For the 2021-22 school year, four KIPP Nashville schools earned reward school status by the Tennessee Department of Education, and when looking at the schools within the Commission's portfolio, both schools met the academic performance expectations set by the Commission's performance framework. Additionally, both of the Commission authorized KIPP Nashville schools outperformed the geographic district of MNPS in proficiency rates for students. This further demonstrates the sponsor's ability to deliver on its mission and vision and provide a high-quality option for its intended population.

The Commission's review committee assessed this sponsor's fitness to open and expand its network of charter schools, specifically responding to a demand in the Antioch/Cane Ridge area, and determined in the review of the entire application, that the KIPP SE Elementary's application met the state's scoring rubric. The statute also requires consideration as to whether approval would be in the best interest of the students, LEA, or community. KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary School presented a large waitlist for its Antioch schools, as well as an academic plan to address the needs of the community. MNPS states that there is no need for additional schools within the area, citing that the sponsor's targeted zone did not have an issue with overcrowding. However, there is clear and demonstrated demand from parents for additional seats in a KIPP Nashville school in the Antioch/Cane Ridge area through application and waitlist figures. This school appears wanted in the community and has the foundation and support to be successful in the area.

Any authorized public charter school is entrusted with the great responsibility of educating students and a significant amount of public funds. For these reasons, the Commission expects that only those schools that have demonstrated a high likelihood of success and meet or exceed the required criteria in all areas will be authorized. The application for KIPP SE Elementary clearly meets the bar for approval, and for the reasons



expounded on in this report, I recommend that the Commission approve the KIPP SE Elementary amended application.

CONCLUSION

For these reasons, and for the reasons stated in the Review Committee Report attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, I do believe that the decision to deny the amended application for KIPP SE Elementary was contrary to the best interests of the students, the LEA, or the community. Therefore, I recommend that the Commission overturn the decision of the MNPS Board of Education to deny the amended application for KIPP Southeast College Prep Elementary.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tess Stovall".

Tess Stovall, Executive Director
Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

10/5/22
Date



EXHIBIT A

Charter Application Review Committee Recommendation Report

October 5, 2022

School Name: KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary School

Sponsor: KIPP Nashville

Proposed Location of School: Metro Nashville Public Schools

Evaluation Team:

- Ashley Davis
- Maggie Lund
- Gomer Pascual
- Susie Smith
- Clare Vickland



This recommendation report is based on a template from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.



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Introduction

Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-13-108 allows the sponsor of a public charter school to appeal the denial of an application by the local board of education to the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (Charter Commission). In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-108, the Charter Commission shall conduct a de novo, on the record review of the proposed charter school's application, and the Charter Commission has adopted national and state quality authorizing standards to guide its work. As laid out in Charter Commission Policy 3.000 – Core Authorizing Principles, the Charter Commission is committed to implementing these authorizing standards that are aligned with the core principles of charter school authorizing, including setting high standards for the approval of charter schools in its portfolio.

In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-108, the Charter Commission adopted Charter Commission Policy 2.000 – Charter School Appeals. The Charter Commission has outlined the charter school appeal process to ensure the well-being and interests of students are the fundamental value informing all Charter Commission actions and decisions. The Charter Commission publishes clear timelines and expectations for applicants, engages highly competent teams of internal and external evaluators to review all applications, and maintains rigorous criteria for approval of a charter school. In addition, the Charter Commission plans to evaluate its work annually to ensure its alignment to national and state standards for quality authorizing and implements improvement when necessary.

The Charter Commission's charter application review process is outlined in T.C.A. § 49-13-108, Charter Commission Policy 2.000 – Charter School Appeals, and Charter Commission Policy 2.100 – Application Review. The Charter Commission assembled a charter application review committee comprised of highly qualified internal and external evaluators with relevant and diverse expertise to evaluate each application. The Charter Commission provided training to all review committee members to ensure consistent standards and fair treatment of all applications.

Overview of the Evaluation Process

The Tennessee Public Charter School Commission's charter application review committee developed this recommendation report based on three key stages of review:

1. Evaluation of the Proposal: The review committee independently reviewed the amended charter application, attachments, and budget submitted by the sponsor. After an independent review, the review committee collectively identified the main strengths, concerns, and weaknesses, as well as developed specific questions for the applicant in the three sections of the application: Academic Plan Design and Capacity, Operations Plan and Capacity, and Financial Plan and Capacity, and Portfolio Review and Performance Record.
2. Capacity Interview: Based on the independent and collective review of the application, the review committee conducted a 90-minute interview with the sponsor, members of the governing board, and identified school leader (if applicable) to address the concerns,



weaknesses, and questions identified in the application, and to assess the capacity to execute the application's overall plan.

3. Consensus Judgment: At the conclusion of the review of the application and the capacity interview, the committee submitted a final rubric and developed a consensus regarding a rating for each section of the application.

This recommendation report includes the following information:

1. Summary of the application: A brief description of the applicant's proposed academic, operations, and financial plans and performance review.
2. Summary of the recommendation: A brief summary of the overall recommendation for the application.
3. Analysis of each section of the application: An analysis of the four sections of the application and the capacity of the team to execute the plan as described in the application.
 - a) Academic Plan Design and Capacity: school mission and goals; enrollment summary; school development; academic focus and plan; academic performance standards; assessments; school schedule; special populations and at-risk students; school culture and discipline; marketing, recruitment, and enrollment; community involvement and parent engagement; and the capacity to implement the proposed plan.
 - b) Operations Plan and Capacity: governance; start-up plan; facilities; personnel/human capital; professional development; insurance; transportation; food service; additional operations; waivers; network vision, growth plan; network management; network governance; network-wide staffing projections; and the capacity to implement the proposed plan.
 - c) Financial Plan and Capacity: budget narrative; budgets; cash flow projections; related assumptions; financial policies and procedures; network financial plan; and the capacity to implement the proposed plan.
 - d) Portfolio Review and Performance Record: past performance.

The Charter Commission's charter application review committee utilized the Tennessee Department of Education's Charter School Application Evaluation Ratings and Sample Scoring Criteria (the rubric), which is used by all local boards of education when evaluating an application. The rubric states:

An application that merits a recommendation for approval should present a clear, realistic picture of how the school expects to operate; be detailed in how this school will raise student achievement; and inspire confidence in the applicant's capacity to successfully implement the proposed academic and operational plans. In addition to meeting the criteria that are specific to that section, each part of the proposal should align with the overall mission, budget, and goals of the application.

The evaluators used the following criteria and guidance from the scoring rubric to rate applications:



TENNESSEE
PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

Rating	Characteristics
Meets or Exceeds Standard	The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It clearly aligns with the mission and goals of the school. The response includes specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation.
Partially Meets Standard	The response meets the criteria in some aspects, but lacks sufficient detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
Does Not Meet Standard	The response is significantly incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; is unsuited to the mission and vision of the district; or otherwise raises significant concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to carry it out.



Summary of the Application

School Name: KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary School

Sponsor: KIPP Nashville

Proposed Location of School: Metro Nashville Public Schools

Mission:¹ KIPP Nashville’s mission is that together with families and communities, we create joyful, academically excellent schools that prepare students with the skills and confidence to pursue the paths they choose – college, career, and beyond – so they can lead fulfilling lives and build a more just world.

Number of Schools Currently in Operation by Sponsor: The sponsor currently has two (2) operating charter schools authorized by the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (TPCSC). KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary School opened in 2018 and serves students in grades K-4. KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle School opened in 2019 and serves students in grades 5-8. Additionally, the sponsor has one (1) charter school authorized by the TPCSC, KIPP Antioch College Prep High School, scheduled to open in 2023. The sponsor also has five (5) operating charter schools authorized by Metro Nashville Public Schools: KIPP Kirkpatrick Elementary School, KIPP Nashville College Prep Elementary School, KIPP Academy Nashville Middle School, KIPP Nashville College Prep Middle School, and KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School.

Proposed Enrollment:²

Grade Level	Year 1: 2024-2025	Year 2: 2025-2026	Year 3: 2026-2027	Year 4: 2027-2028	Year 5: 2028-29	At Capacity:
K	120	120	120	120	120	120
1	0	120	120	120	120	120
2	0	0	120	120	120	120
3	0	0	0	120	120	120
4	0	0	0	0	120	120
Totals	120	240	360	480	600	600

Brief Description of the Application:

The sponsor, KIPP Nashville, is proposing to open a charter school in Davidson County, Tennessee and serve students in kindergarten through 4th grade when fully built out. The school, KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary School, is a new-start school and would be the ninth school for the sponsor. The school intends to operate in the Southeast Nashville community of

¹ KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary School Amended Application, pg. 8

² Ibid, pg. 14



Davidson County to “provide students living in Antioch access to an elementary school that places them on a K-12 pathway that will prepare them for the paths they choose – toward college, career or beyond.”³ The school proposes to focus on reading, “setting an expectation that 90%+ of students in grades K-4 will read on grade level,”⁴ and provide students in the Antioch area with additional school options.

The proposed school will be governed by the KIPP Nashville Board of Directors, which serves as the governing board for the network’s seven currently operating schools and one school slated to open in the 2023/2024 school year. In Year 0, KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary has budgeted \$433,333 in revenue, receiving \$333,333 from a Charter School Program (CSP) grant and \$100,000 from fundraising and philanthropy, and \$143,115 in expenses for the school.⁵ As discussed in the capacity interview, if any of these start-up funds do not materialize, KIPP Nashville has a healthy fund balance of roughly \$24 million, which is sufficient to cover any short-term deficits experienced by the charter school in Year 0. KIPP Nashville projects the school will have \$2,167,416 in revenue and \$2,052,129 in expenses in Year 1, resulting in a balance of \$405,504.⁶ By Year 5, the school projects to have \$7,235,886 in revenue⁷ and \$6,429,131 in expenses,⁸ resulting in a positive ending balance of \$1,939,497.

The school anticipates that 48% of the student population will qualify as economically disadvantaged, 10% of the student population will be students with disabilities, and 24% of the student population will be English Learners.⁹

³ Ibid, pg. 8

⁴ Ibid, pg. 8

⁵ Amended Budget Worksheet, pg. 70

⁶ Amended Budget Worksheet, pg. 79

⁷ Amended Budget Worksheet, pg. 82

⁸ Amended Budget Worksheet, pg. 84

⁹ Ibid, pg. 14

Summary of the Evaluation

The review committee recommends the approval of the amended application for KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary because the applicant demonstrated clearly detailed plans, and proven experience to fulfill the plans, as outlined within the application.

The academic plan presented by the applicant includes a data-driven approach that is responsive to the needs of the local community. The KIPP Nashville regional team has varied, relevant experience to be able to adjust the academic model, schedule, and instructional strategies to address any achievement gaps that may exist, and they have experienced success in this approach with their other Antioch schools. This is particularly evident within their plan to service special populations as reflective of the area in which they intend to locate. The application outlines a demonstration of parent demand for another KIPP Nashville school within the Antioch area, given the robust waitlist at the KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary's waitlist of over 800 students.

The applicant's operations plan was developed, and will be implemented, by an experienced governing board and network team with a track record of success. The existing governing board represents stable leadership, allowing for consistency in the implementation of the mission and vision. The network team provides robust operations support to each KIPP Nashville school and has grown in recent years to add increased specialization and capacity. The applicant also demonstrated its reflective processes and ability to use the lessons learned from the previous successful KIPP Nashville openings to outline a comprehensive start-up plan for the proposed school.

The financial plan reflects conservative startup and operational budgets, in addition to a comprehensive budget narrative that clearly outlined the assumptions behind revenue and expenses contained in the budget worksheets. While the school will seek grant and fundraising dollars, it will also be able to draw on resources from the KIPP Nashville network, which has a strong financial position with allocated funds for network expansion. All existing KIPP Nashville schools are in good financial standing, demonstrating that there are strong fiscal policies, procedures, and controls in place.

Lastly, the portfolio review and performance record demonstrate proven success within the Nashville area in addressing achievement gaps. KIPP's Nashville schools have earned a majority of TVAAS five composite scores during the last ten years, and their Antioch schools, which are near the proposed new location and will serve a similar demographic of students, have met proficiency standards under the Commission's framework in the 2021/2022 school year. KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle also earned Reward Status for the past school year.

Summary of Section Ratings

In accordance with the Tennessee Department of Education's charter application scoring rubric, applications that do not meet or exceed the standard in all sections will be deemed not ready for approval⁶ and strengths in one area of the application do not negate weaknesses in other areas. Opening and maintaining a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete,



coherent plan and identifying highly capable individuals to execute that plan. The review committee's consensus ratings for each section of the application are as follows:

Sections	Rating
Academic Plan Design and Capacity	Meets Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Meets Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Meets Standard
Portfolio Review and Performance Record	Meets Standard

Analysis of the Academic Plan Design and Capacity

Meets or Exceeds Standard

Strengths Identified by the Committee:

The applicant's Academic Plan Design and Capacity meets standard because the applicant has demonstrated experience implementing their academic model in a high-quality manner and closing achievement gaps for the Antioch community of Nashville in which they propose to locate. The applicant's program is tailored to this community based on the operator's experience within the Antioch area, and they have designed their instructional model and staffing to address the unique needs of the community, particularly when it comes to the service of special populations. KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary has a robust plan to serve special populations, which includes the significant projected populations of economically disadvantaged students and English Learners. This plan includes low teacher to student caseloads, appropriately certificated staff to serve English Learners to satisfy the 1:35 ratio, and clear early identification protocols. The RTI² program is also clearly laid out within the application and appropriate intervention time is included within the provided student schedules including push-in and pull-out services. In the capacity interview, the regional leadership team spoke to the lessons they learned throughout serving the Antioch community and how they have adjusted their model over the years to ensure appropriate services to English Learners.

The application also outlines a clear assessment plan aligned to Tennessee State Standards and quality curriculum that is data-driven and responsive to student needs. As a result of the pandemic, changes to state law, and an analysis of testing data, the KIPP regional leadership team redesigned the foundational reading program to better focus on the science of reading. They have also learned the importance of teaching Science and Social Studies starting in kindergarten as it creates better readers and provides important real-world applications. As a result, they have updated their schedules and curriculum to accommodate the ELA curriculum and additional time for Science and Social Studies in kindergarten through 2nd grades. The regional leadership team also shared that they are seeing successful results from this redesign, as four out of the five schools eligible for a TVAAS score earned a composite score of five.

During the capacity interview, KIPP Nashville also spoke to the community partnerships they have established through their other Nashville schools and how they plan to continue those partnerships with the proposed school. These partnerships include before and after care programs with the YMCA, as well as other community centers in the area. The leadership team also provided updated waitlist numbers showing approximately 800 students on the KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary waitlist. This clearly demonstrates parent demand in this area not only for another charter school option, but another school that employs KIPP Nashville's proven model. There is a strong recruitment plan in place for students, along with a clear feeder pattern and matriculation plan across the proposed five schools in Antioch under the network. The leadership team also spoke of growth within the Antioch area, citing that it is the fastest growing area in Nashville, and this is demonstrated by the latest census report allocating a new council member to the area. The proposed location in which they intend to locate is also near to many new apartments and single-family houses being built



in the area. Based on the totality of the information within the amended application and the capacity interview, the review committee determined that KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary meets the standards of the scoring rubric.



Analysis of the Operations Plan and Capacity

Meets or Exceeds Standard

Strengths Identified by the Committee:

The applicant's Operations Plan and Capacity meets standard because the proposed school will be part of the established KIPP Nashville network of schools. The network provides robust services in the area of operations, including governance and oversight, startup support, human resources support, and facilities acquisition support. KIPP Nashville provided evidence of organizational capacity to open and operate high quality schools in Tennessee and elsewhere, including specific timelines for building organizational capacity. The network has seven schools currently operating in Nashville.

The network has a detailed strategic vision for the organization that includes a five-year network growth plan, which aligns with the mission and vision and is based on prior experience in the Nashville education sector. The proposed school will expand yearly by grade level and has accompanying contingencies for facilities and staffing should enrollment not meet projections.

The startup plan is strong and addresses key areas of new school development and implementation, in addition to addressing potential challenges that may occur. The network developed this plan based on lessons learned from past experiences with school openings, including its two most recent openings in the Antioch area. The network provides a robust level of support to its schools, and it has added additional capacity and specialization as the network team has grown over the past few years.

The network also supports the recruitment, retention, and professional development and growth opportunities for its schools. The school will offer competitive salaries with compensation rates above the local district. Teachers in the KIPP Nashville network will receive ongoing differentiated professional development and support. The network has a well laid out plan to ensure that all teachers are properly licensed. The organization will support new hires who are in the process of obtaining their Tennessee teacher's license by utilizing partner agencies to provide additional credential and course work, as well as working with the state to seek individual licensure waivers, if necessary. Given the national shortage of qualified teacher candidates, this structure will allow the school to attract a broader range of professionals. The review committee clarified with KIPP Nashville that while individual teachers may apply for waivers through the department of education regarding certification and endorsement, the network understands that they cannot waive teacher licensure requirements. If authorized, Commission staff will work closely with the KIPP Nashville network team to monitor and ensure the organization has teachers who are appropriately licensed. Additionally, the network has an established leadership pipeline to develop future school principals, along with other advancement opportunities for teachers and staff.

The network has experience in facility acquisition and is currently working with a local realtor on solidifying a three-year facility plan. KIPP Nashville has secured an initial facility space by incubating the proposed school in the network's Antioch high school facility for the first two years. Post incubation, the KIPP network plans to build a new facility on recently purchased land in the Antioch area, and KIPP anticipates this will be completed by 2027. The application contains a realistic facility



contingency plan based on KIPP's experience with past school openings, including longer incubation in their current facility or identifying and relocating to a smaller temporary facility. Additionally, the network team has experience incubating an elementary program in a high school facility and will use that knowledge to appropriately design learning spaces for all students. Based on the totality of the evidence presented, the review committee determined that the operations section of the application meets standard.



Analysis of the Financial Plan and Capacity

Meets or Exceeds Standard

Strengths Identified by the Committee:

The applicant's Financial Plan Design and Capacity meets standard because the team is composed of experienced charter school finance staff, has a strong network financial position, and submitted a conservative operating budget for the proposed new school.

The network dedicates several staff positions to overseeing the finances of KIPP Nashville schools. The Chief Financial Officer, Financial Controller, and Manager of Accounting all have experience in charter school finance and have demonstrated a record of success with the existing KIPP Nashville schools. The network utilizes a distributive cost model in which expenses are shared across their schools. All the current KIPP Nashville schools are in good financial standing, with positive fund balances and healthy cash positions. The proposed school will have access to a \$2.5 million line of credit from the network. Additionally, the network has raised \$15 million to support the growth of new schools in the region, which provides for a strong contingency option in the budget should other revenue fall short of projections.

The application contains both startup and five-year operating budgets that are complete, realistic, and viable based on past experience, including a strong fiscal plan in relation to their short and long-term facility plans. Additionally, the budget narrative clearly explains and supports revenue and cost assumptions. Based on the totality of the information presented, the review committee determined that the finance section of the application meets standard.



Analysis of the Portfolio Review and Performance Record

Meets or Exceeds Standard

Strengths Identified by the Committee:

The applicant's Portfolio Review and Performance Record meets standard because since 2005, the performance of the KIPP Nashville network has been strong, demonstrating that the academic model is working to close achievement gaps. Since the first KIPP Nashville school opened in 2005, the network has expanded to open six additional schools including three elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. As stated within the application, KIPP Nashville schools have been eligible to receive a TVAAS score fourteen times in its history, and, twelve of the fourteen times, KIPP Nashville schools have earned a composite score of five. Additionally, KIPP Nashville schools have received the highest designation of schools in the state of Tennessee, earning reward status in 2017, 2018, 2019, and most recently for their KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle School, KIPP Nashville College Prep Elementary, KIPP Nashville College Prep, and KIPP Academy Nashville in 2022. At the high school level, 60% of KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School students earn a 21+ on the ACT, which outperforms district and state averages, and the graduation rate is 85%, also outperforming district and state averages.

When examining KIPP Nashville's schools, KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary and Middle Schools, that serve similar populations to the proposed new school, the 2021/2022 school year data demonstrates clear success in proficiency standards on the Commission's School Performance Framework. KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary met or exceeded year one proficiency goals for their first year of having state testing data, with over 40% of their students demonstrating proficiency in ELA and math. KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle also met or exceeded their proficiency standards, earned a TVAAS composite score of five, and as previously mentioned, was named a reward school by the Tennessee Department of Education. Both schools outperformed the resident district in proficiency scores as well. KIPP Nashville's data-driven instructional model is clearly closing achievement gaps for students in some of the most underserved neighborhoods in Nashville. Based on the totality of the evidence presented, the review committee determined that the past performance section of the application meets standard.



Evaluation Team

Ashley Davis has worked in education for over ten years as an elementary educator, principal and teacher coach. She also worked as an adult education instructor and literacy tutor. Ashley received a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from the University of Pennsylvania. She then attended Columbia University where she graduated with a Master of Science in Digital Media in 2010. She most recently served as the Director of the Teacher Residency for Relay Memphis Graduate School of Education where she coached first-year teachers. In 2019, she transitioned to working full-time as an author, publisher and educational consultant through a joint venture with her sister, Kifani Press | Kifani Works. Some of their previous partners include Man-Up Teacher Fellowship, The Teacher Leader Circle, ALLMemphis, Promise Academy, Memphis Scholars and Journey Community Schools (formerly Aspire Public Schools). They are currently working on literacy projects for the Shelby County Government and the Downtown Memphis Commission.

Maggie Lund is the Deputy Director of Authorizing at the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission. Additionally, she serves as an adjunct professor in the Lipscomb College of Education Master's Program, teaching Planning, Instruction, and Assessment and Building Classroom Communities. Prior to her role at the Charter Commission, Maggie served as the Director of Family Engagement at STEM Prep Academy where she led all community engagement efforts for two schools along with enrollment, school culture, and operations pieces. Maggie holds a BA in Business Administration and Marketing from Loyola University New Orleans, a Doctor of Education degree, and a Master of Education degree with a specialization in English Language Learning from Lipscomb University. Her dissertation research focused on Restorative Justice Practices and school culture. Most recently, her research article, *Mindsets Matter for Equitable Discipline* was published in the Middle School Journal. Maggie is a teacher at heart and has a passion for ensuring the most vulnerable populations in Nashville receive a high-quality education.

Gomer Pascual is the Finance Programs Manager for the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission. Prior to joining the commission, he served the Tennessee Department of Education for 14 years, and was the budget director prior to his departure from the department. Before coming to the United States, he is a former college instructor of accounting and business management for Tomas del Rosario College in the Philippines for 8 years and computer teacher to K-6 students of the same school. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in accounting and Masters in Business Administration from the same school where he honed his teaching skills. He loves working with his colleagues in the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission.

Susie Smith is a recently retired Charter School Oversight Administrator from Riverside County Office of Education, in Southern California, acting as an authorizer on the behalf of the Riverside County Board of Education. Her work has been to provide high-quality charter school options for students, families, and communities by providing a rigorous and comprehensive charter petition process. She continues to ensure that all reviews include the appropriate level of due diligence. She has promoted effective oversight of all approved charter schools in Riverside County by closely monitoring academic performance and non-academic outcomes, such as finances and governance. Her clear and



transparent reporting on public charter school performance of all approved charter schools in the region has left the public better informed about locally operating charter schools.

Clare Vickland has over a decade of experience in the charter school sector, focusing on special populations. She is currently working as an independent education consultant and her clients include state and local charter school authorizers, independent charter schools, and school districts. Clare specializes in high impact leadership and instructional coaching, systems evaluation and development, charter school authorization, project management, and advocacy for students with disabilities. Previously, Clare worked at the Colorado Charter School Institute as the Director of Student Services and Professional Learning for 6 years after serving as a classroom teacher, special education teacher, instructional coach, and school leader in Denver-area charter schools. Clare holds a B.S. in Special Education from Vanderbilt University and her M.Ed. in Risk and Prevention from the Harvard Graduate School of Education