
Education



Synopsis

The Education Background Report provides a platform for public engagement and community planning anchored to the NashvilleNext initiative. The report:

- Analyzes recent assessments of the Metro Nashville Public Schools.
- Highlights how demographic shifts have reshaped the challenges and re-centered the opportunities facing Metro Nashville’s public schools.
- Explores the district’s initiatives and related impact on student outcomes.
- Contains program and policy recommendations for school improvement and reinvigorated “portfolio” governance along with a special emphasis on a “public branding” communications strategy that projects a clear and persuasive message about the unique assets and diverse contributions of public education in Nashville against the backdrop of a “city on the move.”

Prepared by:

Dr. Candice McQueen, Lipscomb University; Dr. Claire Smrekar, Vanderbilt University; and Hillary Knudson, Vanderbilt University

Role and purpose of background papers



This background paper was developed to provide input to the NashvilleNext planning process. It was researched and authored by community members interested, involved, and knowledgeable on the topic. The authors present best practices, an evaluation of the state of the topic in the Nashville community today, and recommendations for consideration during the planning process.

This paper provides a starting point for broader community discussion and reflection based on the research and recommendations of the authors. Throughout the planning process, NashvilleNext will use this and other background papers, ongoing research, departmental involvement, community input and engagement to discuss, refine and formulate the policies and recommendations for the general plan.

The information and recommendations provided in this background paper are solely those of the authors and contributors and are being provided at the beginning of the NashvilleNext process to start community discussion.

The NashvilleNext Steering Committee thanks and extends its sincere appreciation to the authors of and contributors to this background paper for the time and effort to provide this report for community consideration and discussion. The Steering Committee looks forward to the ongoing dialogue on the issues and recommendations that the authors provide.

Any final policies and recommendations endorsed by the NashvilleNext Steering Committee for the consideration of the Metropolitan Planning Commission will be the result of the entire planning process and upcoming community engagement and discussion.

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Introduction

The Education Background Report provides a platform for public engagement and community planning anchored to the NashvilleNext initiative. Section I offers a first-of-its-kind analysis of recently published performance reviews, “report cards” and system assessments. We identify the consistent themes and unpack the critical issues across these external evaluations. The next part examines the social context of public education in Nashville to highlight how demographic shifts have reshaped the challenges and re-centered the opportunities facing public schools in the city. Section II explores the district’s ongoing efforts, recent initiatives, and related impact on student outcomes. We highlight pertinent issues associated with organizational structures, district priorities, and management processes. In Section III, we pivot from this assessment to a set of program and policy recommendations for school improvement and reinvigorated “portfolio” governance, in which the school district acts as a performance manager, overseeing independent school leaders by using sophisticated performance tracking and communication systems, while increasing options for students and their families.

We underscore an array of student assignment, school choice, and housing strategies designed to address issues of socio-economic diversity in Nashville’s public schools. The section places a special emphasis on a “public branding” communications strategy that positions the city and the school district more prominently in an outwardly focused, multi- and social media marketplace. The intent rests with projecting a clear and persuasive message regarding the unique assets and diverse contributions of public education in Nashville against the backdrop of a “city on the move.” Our recommendations are anchored to four policy values: excellence, equity, efficiency, and diversity.

This Education Background Report provides a degree of clarity and specificity in a concerted effort to enhance schooling and educational outcomes for

all students and their families in Nashville. We suggest that steady progress will hinge upon the will and capacity to think locally, organize collectively, and act intentionally across both public and private sectors. This “civic mobilization” must engage city leaders, interested citizens, and policymakers from an array of community-based and governmental organizations, including economic development, housing, health and human services, higher education, transportation, and regional planning. Our role—and our reach—rests with informing the debate and the discourse as the Nashville community launches this bold, broad-based blueprint for progress.

In sum, the Education Background Report includes the following probes and policy questions:

1. Review the performance and recent reform strategies in the district: What are the key issues identified in these reports and evaluations? How has the district responded? Which strategies and implementation plans “fit” best with the pressing, persistent issues in the district? Why?
2. Examine the influence of changing demographic conditions and social contexts on education in Nashville: What new challenges and opportunities do population outflows and demographic shifts create for the school district and the city of Nashville? How does context matter?
3. Present a set of recommendations anchored to a clear and compelling purpose of public education in the community: How do governance models, transportation, housing, and school choice policies coalesce to produce a flexible, responsive and viable blueprint for the next 25 years of continuous growth and improvement? How can city leaders and policymakers re-center schools to maximize and market the city’s abundant assets and the district’s constructive policy goals?

Section I: What We Know – Challenges for Metro Nashville Public Schools

Dr. Claire Smrekar
Hillary Knudson

Issue 1: Performance

Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) has consistently failed to meet state and district performance targets. Although recent gains are notable, numerous reports and external evaluations indicate the need for dramatic growth and accelerated change. Graduation rates have improved significantly, but efforts to improve the preparation of students for college and career have lagged. The Tribal Group, a leading provider of systems and solutions to the education, training and learning markets, issued its Year One report (Tribal Group Inspirational School Partnership Progress Report (2012)). It includes this key finding: “... across the district, outcomes are too low and are not improving fast enough.” The report resonates with the viewpoints of other evaluators, concluding: “This level of underachievement is unacceptable. Value added judgments and indeed the state’s own accountability framework can provide a distorted picture of what is actually happening. Basic statistical principles are being broken, and while the availability of data has increased significantly, data literacy lags behind” (p.10). MNPS strategies and initiatives must be tailored to effectively close achievement gaps and improve student achievement.

Data

Tribal Group Inspirational School Partnership Progress Report (2012, 10) states:

- 1 out of 3 elementary and middle school students meet grade level standards in math.
- 2 out of 5 elementary and middle school students meet grade level standards in reading.
- 1 out of 5 high school students meet college or career ready standards as measured by ACT.

Table 1 provides a snapshot of recent MNPS performance on standardized testing (TCAP, NAEP, and ACT). Table 2 summarizes the state baseline achievement levels and the 2014-15 achievement targets. A

comparison of the data presented in Table 1 and Table 2 highlights the underperformance of MNPS and the wide gap between 2012 achievement and the 2014-2015 targets. Figure 1 shows the percentage of students scoring at least 21 on the ACT for each MNPS high school, and the district average of 29%. Tennessee First to the Top adheres to the benchmarks put forth by ACT.org, which are reached by scoring an 18 in English, 21 in Reading, 22 in Math, and 24 in Science. The state target for ACT “all subject” is 24%; MNPS surpassed this goal by reaching 29% – in other words, about three out of ten students in the district are prepared for college courses in all four subject areas.

Key Questions Moving Forward

- What are the target goals for increasing student performance in the near future and long-term?
- What high-yield strategies will MNPS use to improve target areas?
- How will MNPS strategies and initiatives be tracked and evaluated?

Education

Table 1: Percentage of MNPS Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced¹ in 2010-2012¹

Percent of MNPS students in grades 3 - 8 scoring Proficient or Advanced in Reading/Language Arts by subgroup

Year	All	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Economically disadvantaged	Students w/ disabilities	Limited English Proficient
2012	41%	56%	31%	32%	57%	32%	33%	17%
2011	38%	54%	29%	29%	53%	30%	31%	14%
2010	35%	52%	25%	25%	52%	25%	25%	11%

Percent of MNPS students in grades 3 - 8 scoring Proficient or Advanced in Math by subgroup

Year	All	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Economically disadvantaged	Students w/ disabilities	Limited English Proficient
2012	39%	62%	29%	35%	54%	32%	32%	26%
2011	33%	56%	23%	28%	47%	26%	30%	20%
2010	28%	52%	18%	22%	42%	20%	20%	17%

Percent of MNPS students in grades 9 - 12 scoring Proficient or Advanced in English II by subgroup

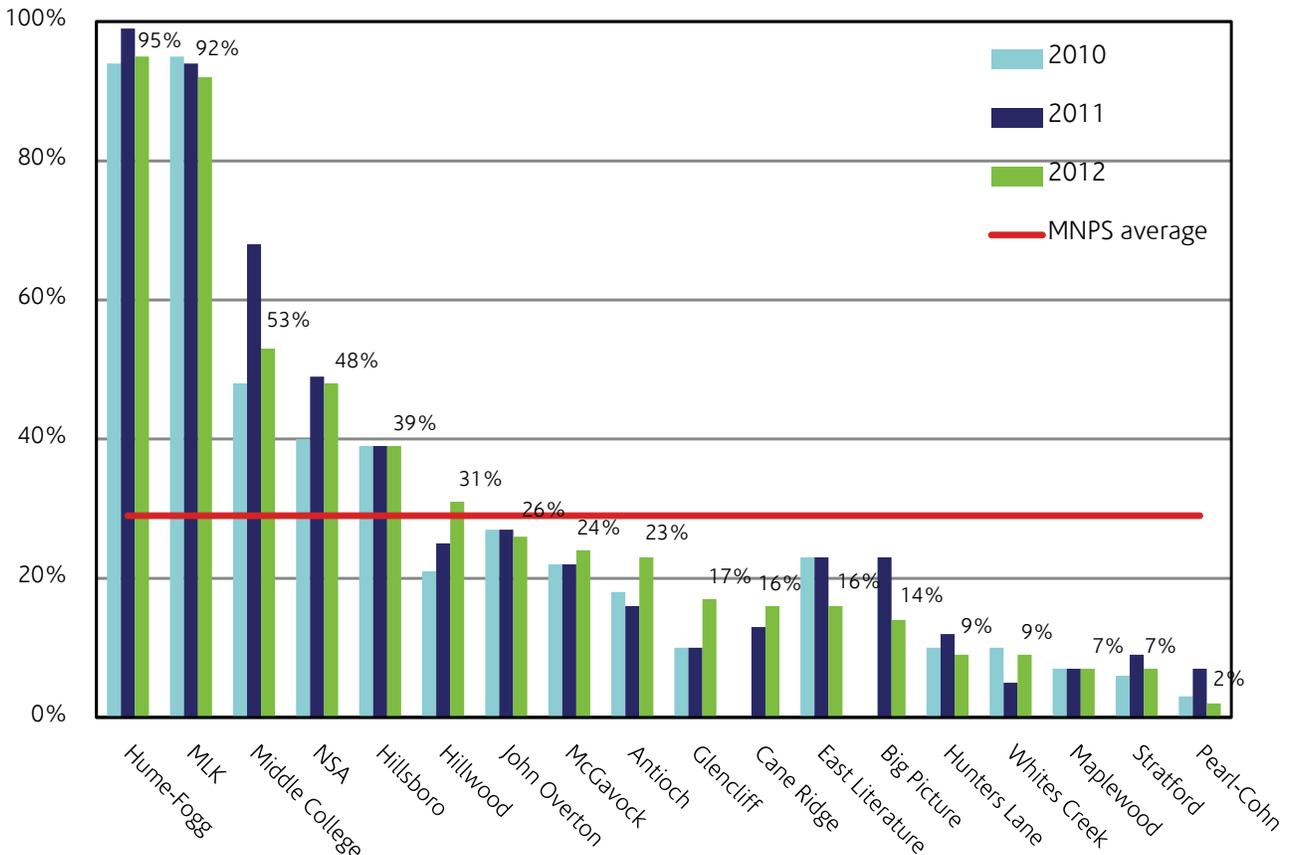
Year	All	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Economically disadvantaged	Students w/ disabilities	Limited English Proficient
2012	49%	53%	40%	37%	68%	39%	28%	16%
2011	47%	59%	36%	37%	67%	37%	26%	13%
2010	47%	71%	37%	36%	66%	36%	22%	21%

Table 2: Tennessee Student Performance Goals in Percent of Students Proficient or Advanced

Student Readiness

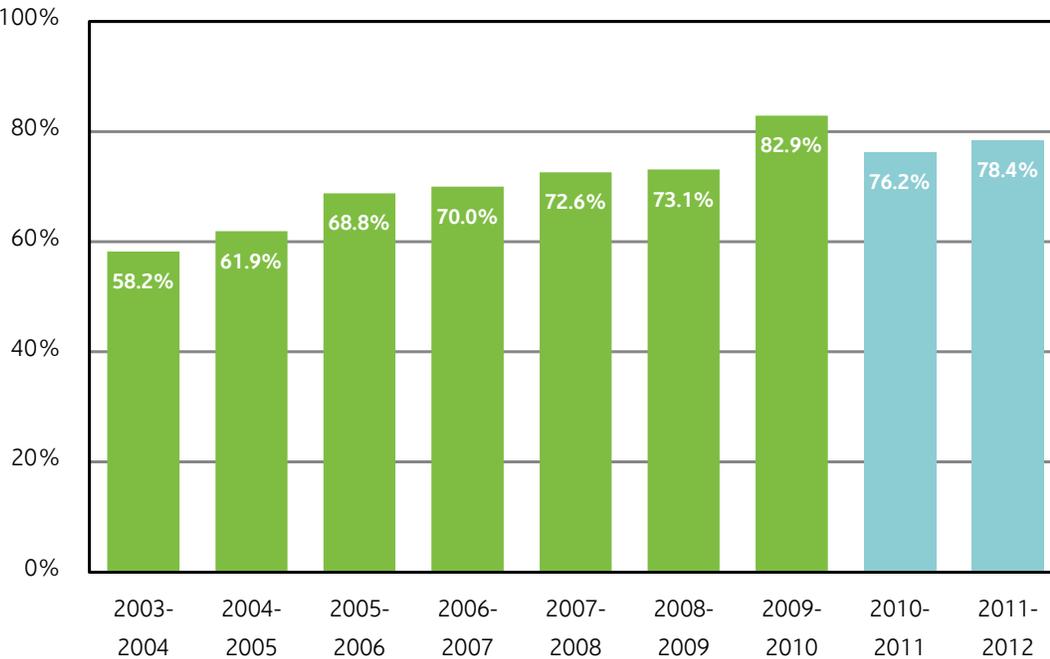
Elementary School	Standardized Test ²	Baseline 2009-2010	Target 2014-2015
Reading and Language Arts	3rd grade at/above proficient on TCAP	42% proficient	60% proficient
	4th grade at/above proficient on NAEP	28% proficient	39% proficient
Mathematics	3rd grade at/above proficient on TCAP	48% proficient	64% proficient
	4th grade at/above proficient on NAEP	29% proficient	42% proficient
Middle School	Standardized Test		
Reading and Language Arts	7th grade at/above proficient on TCAP	43% proficient	57% proficient
	8th grade at/above proficient on NAEP	28% proficient	38% proficient
Mathematics	7th grade at/above proficient on TCAP	29% proficient	51% proficient
	8th grade at/above proficient on NAEP	25% proficient	39% proficient
High School	Standardized Test		
ACT College Readiness ³	ACT English Benchmark = 18	55% meeting benchmark	68% meeting benchmark
	ACT Reading Benchmark = 21	40% meeting benchmark	60% meeting benchmark
	ACT Math Benchmark = 22	24% meeting benchmark	52% meeting benchmark

Figure 1: Percent of MNPS class of 2012 Scoring 21+ on ACT



Source: Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card 2012, 44

Figure 2: MNPS Graduation Rates⁴ 2003-2012



Source: Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card 2012, 48

Issue 2: Coherence

MNPS continues to struggle with the problem of explaining and conveying its mission and how the mission is accomplished. Several reports and evaluations note this concern. These conditions make it difficult for the district to set goals, establish processes with benchmarks, and reach targets. The district needs to identify an over-arching purpose with clear and attainable goals, and a corresponding roadmap for implementation.

Mission and Vision

“This year, many agreed that the district was making progress toward getting everyone working on the same goals...[but] most interviewees agreed that coherence continues to be a significant challenge for MNPS. Several respondents said that there were too many initiatives for principals to have a good sense of the district-wide ‘big picture.’”

Annenberg Institute for School Reform Year 3 Preliminary Findings (2012, 2)

“Reemphasizing the goals and process of MNPS Achieves will mitigate any confusion among participants and potential for burnout. System leadership has already made strides in this area... but leadership needs to periodically reiterate key goals and timelines.”

Annenberg Institute for School Reform Year 2 Evaluation Report (2011, 47)

“The prevailing culture of MNPS central office is one of ‘outside in’ which has created a culture of dependency among principals... If we are to see a step change in outcomes, principals need to be empowered through being autonomous for their improvement journeys. The central office needs to... change what it does and how it works... [hold principals accountable] to the outcomes of students.”

Tribal ISP Progress Report (2012, 16)

While MNPS is taking action to address some of the specific concerns that have been raised, more action is warranted. According to a recent WPLN news sto-

ry, “Lead Principals Will Help Shrink Central Office” (Daniel Potter, January 23, 2013), “The superintendent of Metro Schools is handing more control to a group of select principals. So-called ‘lead principals’ will decide on their own about hiring and budgeting while mentoring leaders at other schools.”

Developing a mission of purpose and a vision for the future will enable all participants within the district to be focused on the end goals and targets. The focus, however, must stem from a bottom-up approach. This better ensures success because of the increased buy-in and improved transparency within and among the teachers, leaders, and staff of MNPS.

Long-Term Strategic Plan

“Respondents acknowledged progress on efforts to connect the many initiatives that are part of MNPS Achieves but expressed concerns about overall coherence. We heard a developing consensus that that is missing is an overarching strategic plan.”

Annenberg Institute for School Reform Year 3 Preliminary Findings (2012, 3)

“...Dr. Jesse Register has demonstrated leadership by instituting a number of reform initiatives that fall under the umbrella of MNPS Achieves. Now, it’s time to measure results and scale up initiatives that are contributing to real academic progress, while eliminating those that are not.”

Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card (2012, 4)

“[Recommendations:] Discuss and agree at individual, team and schools’ levels which processes and procedures do not contribute to raising achievement, with a view to abandoning them... Ensure an achievement culture where student socio-economic circumstances are not blamed for poor outcomes... [and] expand student voice so that students are given more planned opportunities to contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school.”

Tribal ISP Progress Report (2012, 14)

The trajectory of improvement in continuity and communication will rest in the execution of the Strategic Plan clearly explaining the goals of MNPS and the intended implementation. The development is the first hurdle, but the continued tracking and monitoring for progress and “abandonment” of strategies that are proven ineffective is a greater obstacle for MNPS.

Internal Collaboration

“However, the complexity of the [MNPS Achieves] plan, with 46 separate initiatives, has created a communications challenge within the district. The lack of enthusiasm around the direction of Metro Schools exhibited in the public opinion poll was reiterated during the committee’s discussion with several philanthropic leaders who pointed to the absence of a comprehensive vision or plan around which the community could rally.”

Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card (2012, 15)

“Though... [surveys of central office staff and principals/assistant principals] described something of an evolution from an environment where collaboration was practically nonexistent or ‘people didn’t even know people in other departments,’ continuing communication problems, particularly about new developments or initiatives, have impeded the ability of central office staff to adequately support schools.”

Annenberg Institute for School Reform Year 2 Evaluation Report (2011, 13)

“Executive staff and executive directors should be involved in discussions about how... [areas of good instruction] can be linked in a broader framework for instruction and communicated to school-based staff. These conversations might help address the middle-management issue that turned up throughout our data collection.”

Annenberg Institute for School Reform Year 2 Evaluation Report (2011, 48)

“Principals and central office staff had strikingly different responses in several key areas... [including joint decision making].”

Annenberg Institute for School Reform Year 3 Preliminary Findings (2012, 4)

“The increase in the amount and quality of communication and collaboration within the central office and externally to the community was a notable theme again this year. But some individuals and departments struggle with communication, and there was widespread agreement that the district struggles with communication between central office and the schools.”

Annenberg Institute for School Reform Year 3 Preliminary Findings (2012, 2)

Improved communication within central office and between schools is a critical need. In order for all staff and stakeholders to work effectively, clear and distinct goals must be outlined. Progress has been made in this area, but not at the level of urgency or transparency necessary for success.

Key Questions Moving Forward

- What is the best avenue for developing a streamlined strategic plan?
- What are the outcome goals, both cognitive and non-cognitive, for MNPS students?
- What are the best approaches to increase student voice and improved opportunities for involvement?
- How can a bottom-up/outside-in approach be successfully implemented?

Issue 3: Coordination

Evaluators emphasize the need for MNPS to coordinate with community leaders and stakeholders and utilize external involvement effectively through high-yield strategies. The Mayor’s office, other local government, and civic organizations have provided support, but MNPS must utilize that support strategically to be beneficial to the district. Parent involvement

requires renewed coordination efforts. The complex nature of parental engagement deserves significant thought on how the district can improve its ability to involve and support parents.

Partnerships

“[The issues of waning energy and urgency]... suggest that the TLGs [“Transformational Leadership Groups”] may no longer be the most effective vehicle for transformational change, raising the question of how to maintain focus and urgency and continue to integrate community leadership and support in transformational work.”

Annenberg Institute for School Reform Year 3 Preliminary Findings (2012, 3)

“While Nashville’s business and nonprofit communities have worked to build a strong foundation for our city’s public schools, it is imperative that the city and school system not become complacent about the importance of community support around public school improvement. That’s why we encourage the mayor and Metro Council to continue their support of Metro Schools, while also expecting MNPS to increase the pace toward dramatic gains.”

Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card (2012, 11)

“... [T]he district is making this information available through the MNPS Scorecard... [but] providing access to every Tennessee high school’s report through the Tennessee Department of Education website would help increase transparency and accountability on this important measure across the state.”

Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card (2012, 10)

Parent Involvement

According to the May 2012 telephone surveys commissioned by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, “parental involvement” was selected as the most important issue facing MNPS in 2011 and 2012 by 25% and 22% of respondents, respectively.

The summary of the “NashvilleNext Issues Survey” (Collective Strength, 2012), identifies parents of kids in K-12 schools as a key audience, and notes that these parents should be considered in the planning and decision-making for the future (slide 33).

Key Questions Moving Forward

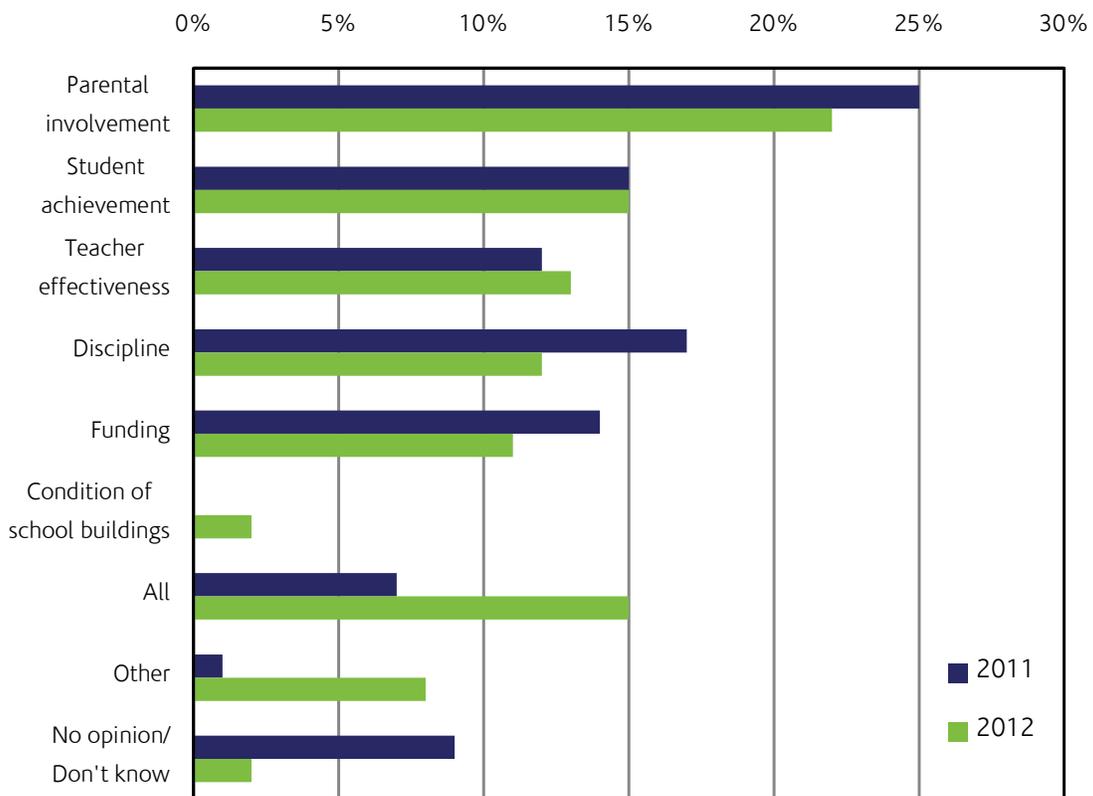
- What are the best strategies for working with partners in order to maximize opportunities?
- Is MNPS working with other Tennessee LEAs [Local Education Agencies] to inform strategies?
- How can MNPS bolster parental involvement and at-home engagement?

Issue 4: Public Perception

According to the recent Chamber of Commerce report, a majority of the Nashville community views public schools and the district in a negative light. The Collective Strength report summary conducted for the NashvilleNext process (NashvilleNext Issues Survey [Collective Strength, 2012]) underscores the problems of limited communication and negative perceptions, reporting the commonly held belief that “education is holding Nashville back” (slide 37). The lack of transparency and publicly shared information regarding the district’s progress and the state’s related education reform initiatives is a continued problem. Some recent improvement in public perception is notable, but an information gap and negative perceptions persist. MNPS could improve its negative image through branding and marketing, as well as increase transparency and improve the accessibility of key information regarding school reform and progress.

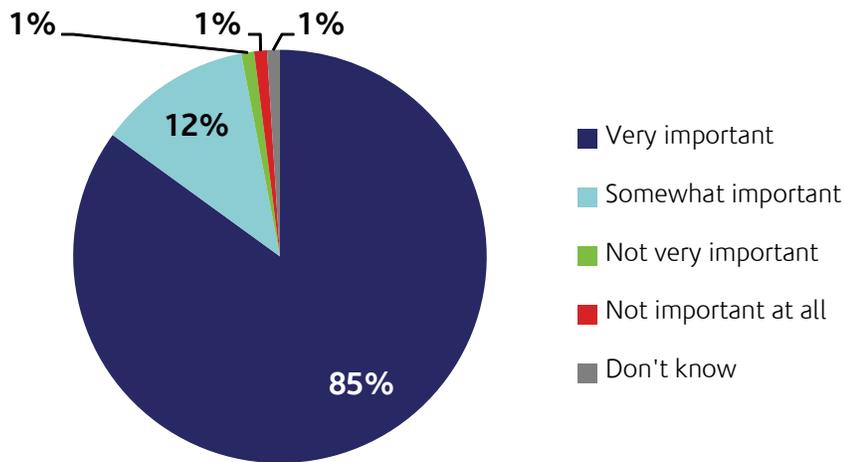
“While the city has made its support of Metro Schools clear, public perception has remained stagnant for the past four years, despite incremental progress in student achievement. Clearly, significant gains are needed to affect public opinion on the progress and quality of our schools. MNPS achievement levels remain below the state average, as well as the average of most of our

Figure 3: Answers from May 2012 telephone survey⁵
“When it comes to education, what do you think is the most important issue facing Metro Public Schools today?”



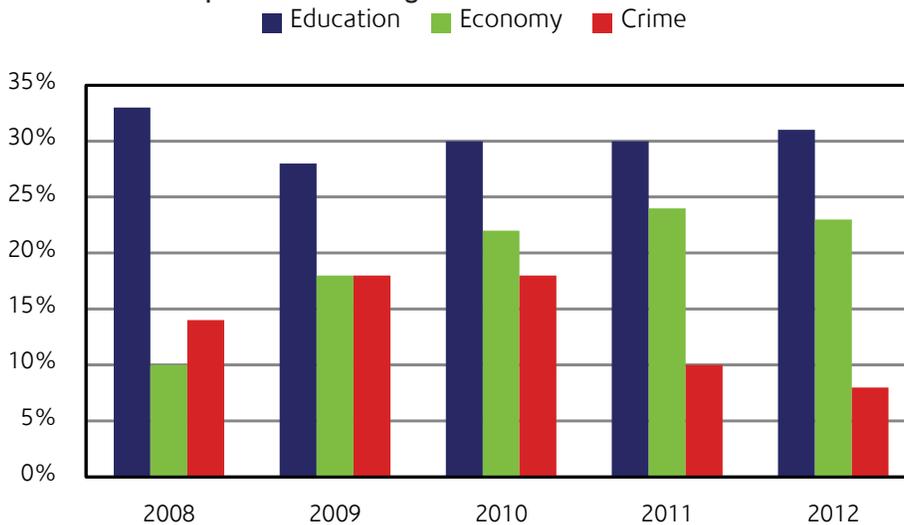
Source: Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card (2012, 29)

Figure 4: Answers from May 2012 telephone survey
“How important is it to you personally for Metro to improve public education?”



Source: Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card (2012, 31)

Figure 5: Answers from May 2012 telephone survey:
What is the most important issue facing Nashville?"



Source: Chamber of Commerce
 Annual Report Card (2012, 28)

regional and large urban system peers in the state. We cannot be satisfied with small steps forward; we must aim for dramatic growth.”

Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card (2012, 11)

Education has ranked as the most important issue/problem facing Nashville for five consecutive years and the overall performance of public schools averages a score of 2.8 on a 5-point scale.

Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card (2012, 30)

Key Questions Moving Forward

- How can MNPS better showcase successes and improvement to the public?
- Who will be responsible for implementing improved communication strategies?
- How will the need for increased transparency be accomplished?

Issue 5: Demographic Shifts & Population Outflows

The socio-economic composition (i.e., poverty level) of schools shapes peer interactions and behavior, is related to parent involvement levels, influences teacher labor markets, and affects the quality and depth of academic rigor in the school. Schools with concentrated poverty face particular challenges. The challenges include higher rates of social disorder, higher student and teacher mobility rates, lower attendance rates, and lower rates of parental involvement. In sum, these challenges place students in high poverty schools at higher rates of academic risk and academic failure. Additional evidence (see *Whither Opportunity? Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children’s Life Chances*, 2011) supports the strong correlation between the socioeconomic composition of the school and student performance; only a student’s own family income and broader family background are as strongly predictive of student success. The evidence is compelling regarding the beneficial consequences of schools that are “socio-economically integrated” – also referred to as low poverty schools (see *The Future of School Integration: Socioeconomic Diversity as an Education Reform Strategy*, 2012). The strong and positive outcomes of socio-economically integrated schools include: peers who are academically engaged and motivated; parents

who are involved and focused on accountability and academic performance; and strong teachers with high expectations for all students.

Given the challenges of producing consistently strong performance in high poverty schools, and against the backdrop of the beneficial consequences of low poverty schools and racially balanced schools, the most recent and 10-year demographic trends in MNPS paint a troubling portrait:

- Over 72% of all students in MNPS are economically disadvantaged
- More than 78% of all MNPS schools are mid-high or high poverty schools
- Nearly 10% of MNPS students leave MNPS schools each year and re-enroll in a different public school district or private school
- Most students who leave MNPS schools are white
- Most MNPS magnet schools are racially unbalanced

Source: TN Dept. of Education Report Card & Metro Nashville Public Schools, 2000-12

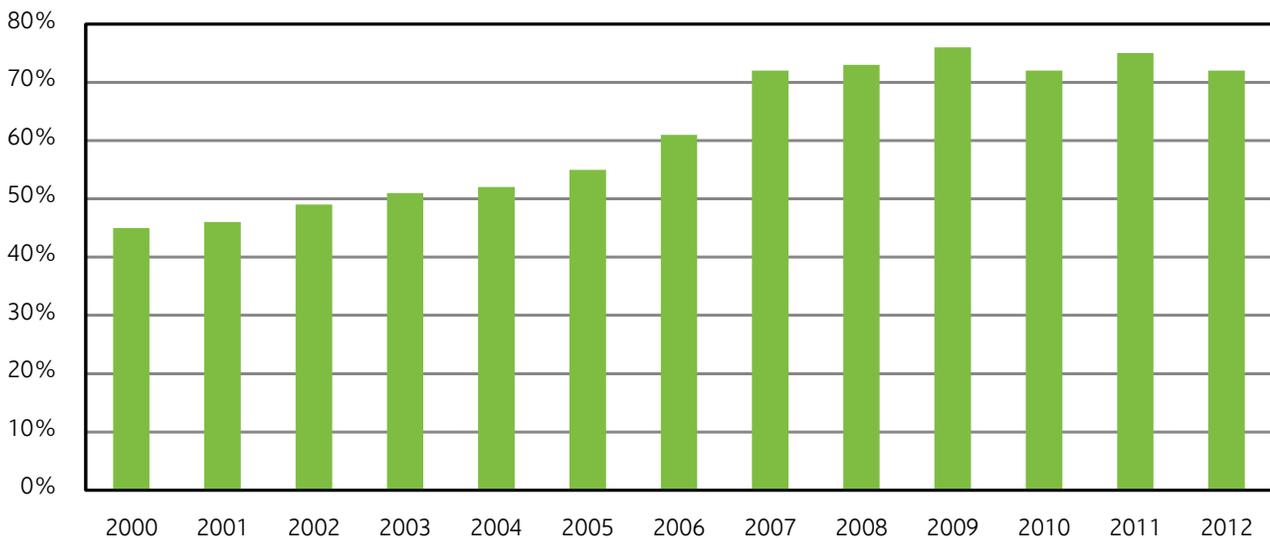
Next, we analyze these trends and unpack the associated indicators of risk and challenge.

Indicator 1: Rise in the proportion of economically disadvantaged students

The portion of Nashville students who are “economically disadvantaged” has increased steadily since 2000 (see Figure 6), when fewer than half of all enrolled students were eligible for free and reduced-price meals (FARM) under the National School Lunch Program.⁶ The district was granted “unitary status” by the federal court in 1998, ending decades of court supervision, cross-town busing patterns and attendance zones, and race-based magnet school lotteries. The FARM rate in 1998-99 was 44%. The subsequent School Improvement Plan (SIP) adopted by the district and approved by the federal court created new school configurations, feeder patterns, and “closer-to-home” student assignment zones. The district implemented the SIP over the next five years, from 1999-2004.

The percentage of economically disadvantaged children in the district surpassed 50% in 2002-03 and has climbed consistently and dramatically ever since. The highest FARM rates are in the district’s elementary schools, but the most dramatic changes are among high school students, where FARM rates have risen rapidly from 52% in 2007-08 to over 65% in 2012-

Figure 6: MNPS Percent Economically Disadvantaged 2000-2012



13. Today, more than 72% of the district's enrolled students are economically disadvantaged. We address these issues in a set of policy proposals outlined in Section III.

Indicator 2: High number of high poverty schools

The increasing rates of economically disadvantaged students in the district is mirrored – and amplified – by our analysis of the number and overall percentage of mid-high and high poverty schools⁷. Figure 7 illustrates the share and magnitude of economically disadvantaged schools in Nashville: in total, 112 of the district's 143 schools report FARM rates that range between 50.1% to 100%. Notably, 82 schools in Metro (57% of total) have poverty rates over 75% (as measured by FARM eligibility guidelines) and an additional 30 schools in Nashville (21% of the total) report poverty rates between 50.1% and 75%.

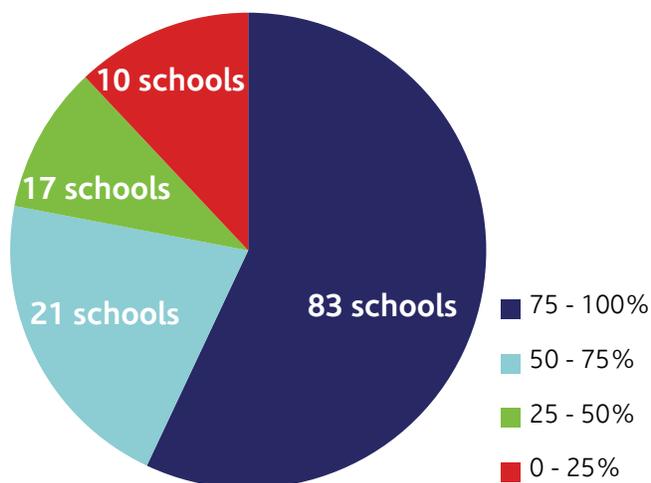
About one out of four MNPS schools has a low or mid-low poverty rate (using FARM eligibility guide-

lines). The pattern of neighborhood poverty and high poverty schools across Nashville is depicted in Figure 8, and linked to two main factors: the density of poverty in particular census tracts (neighborhoods) in the county, and the traditional use of “closer-to-home” or neighborhood zones to assign students to schools in the district.

Figure 9 maps census data and 2011-12 school FARM rates using geographic information systems (GIS) software to depict this relationship between neighborhood poverty and school-level economic disadvantage in Nashville (see Figure 9).

Nashville residents, scholars, and city leaders understand how geography and the culture of neighborhoods shape opportunities and expectations for children and adults. In high poverty neighborhoods, clusters of inter-locking and corrosive conditions are persistent, and are reflected in dense and dilapidated housing, a real and constant threat of violent crime, inadequate and inaccessible health care, a lack of employment opportunities that pay a living wage, and unreliable and limited public transportation. Concentrated poverty leads to concentrated disadvantage in the social and geographical space shared between high-risk neighborhoods and nearby schools. Under-scoring the challenges of producing high achievement in high poverty schools, these patterns trigger the need for rethinking student assignment and parent information policies in Nashville, and point to the potential benefits of alternative zoning strategies that utilize GIS mapping, in both choice schools (e.g., magnet) and traditional public schools. These alternative approaches are outlined in Section III (policy recommendations) of our report.

Figure 7: MNPS Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Schools



Source: Tennessee Department of Education, School Report Card 2012

Figure 8: Pattern of Neighborhood Poverty and High Poverty Schools in Nashville

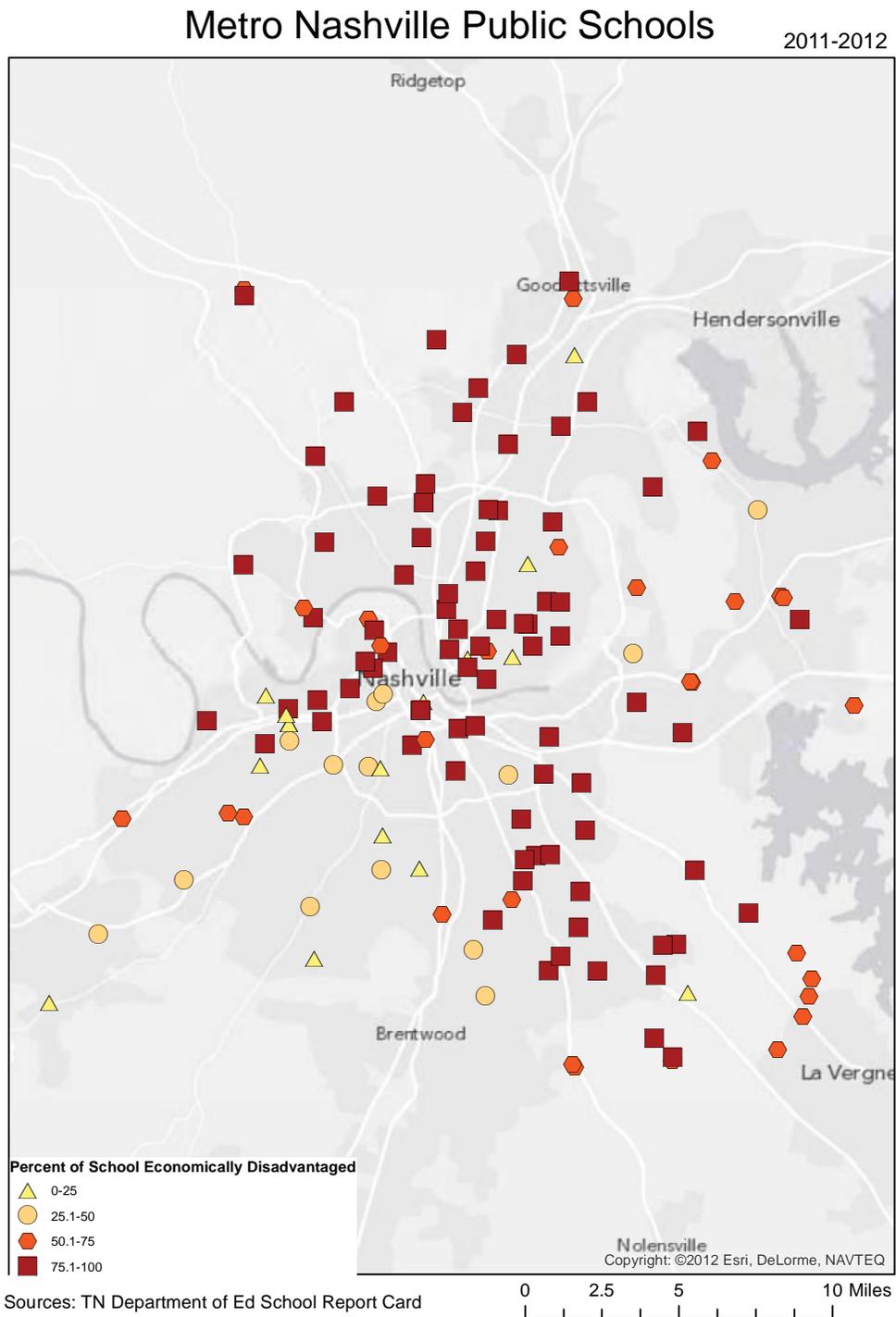
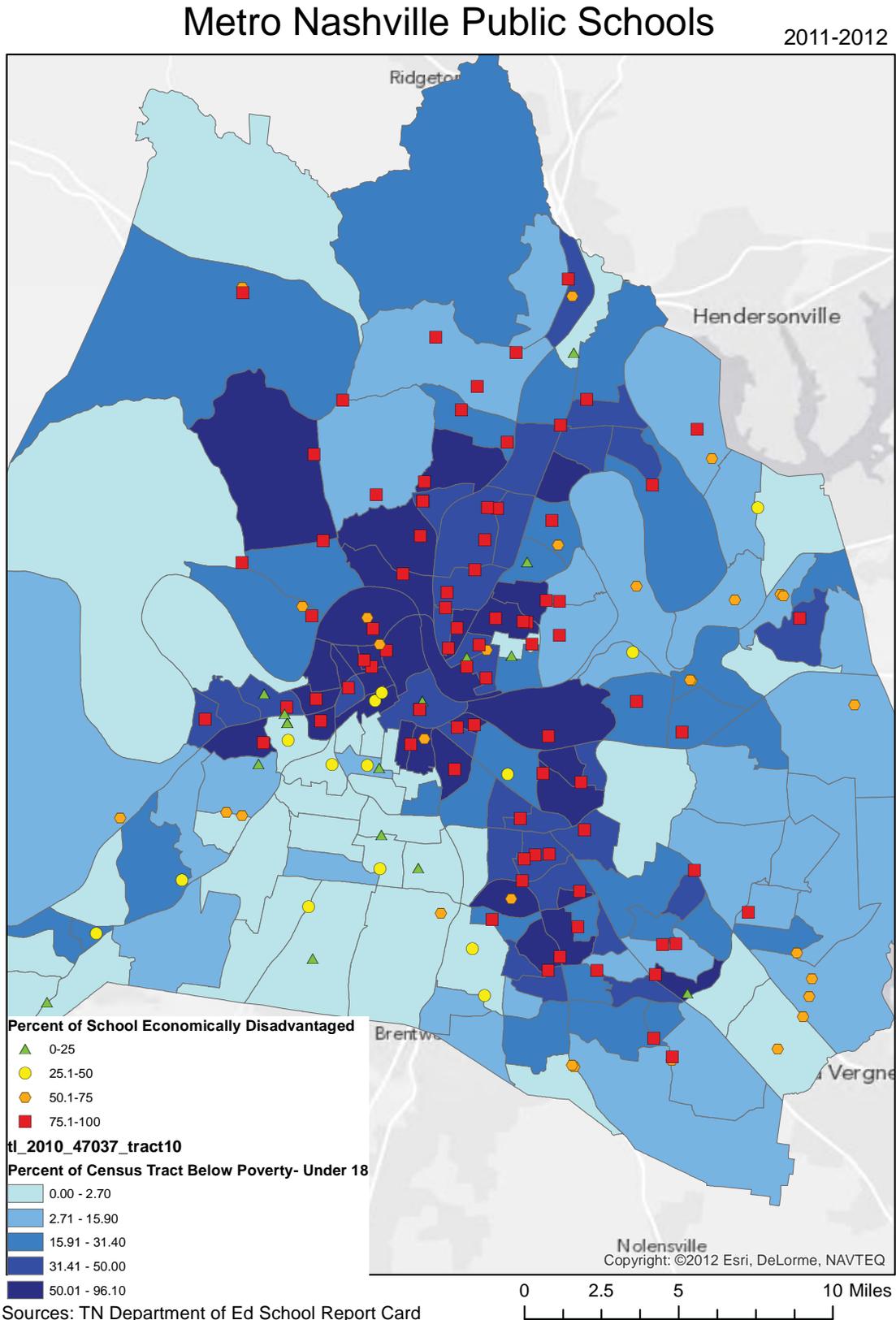


Figure 9: Map of Neighborhood Poverty and School-Level Economic Disadvantage



Education

Indicator 3: Problem of Departure

Over each of the past five years, almost 10% of students enrolled in Metro schools at the beginning of each school year left the district by the beginning of the following school year. This 10% attrition rate includes an array of interesting and important characteristics. Some students enroll in a private school – either in Davidson County or in an adjacent county.

Notably, the private school enrollment rate for the school-aged population in Nashville is more than twice the national level – about 24% – according to recent estimates; this rate has held steady since the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Most “leavers” enroll the following school year in a public school located in a nearby suburban county.

Table 3: Metro Davidson County and Suburban County School Districts: Demographic Portraits (2011-12)

County	FARM %	FARM %	Percent by Sub Group			% poverty
	2012	2000	White	Black	Hispanic	under age18
Davidson County	72	51	34	46	16	28
Cheatham County	50	25	95	2	3	14
Montgomery County	47	31	61	25	11	23
Robertson County	51	26	80	10	9	19
Rutherford County	44	23	70	16	10	16
Sumner County	40	20	84	10	5	14
Williamson County	12	6	88	4	3	7
Wilson County	29	12	87	7	3	10

Data: Tennessee State Report Card, 2011-12; 2011 ACS

Table 4: MNPS & Davidson County Demographics

Demographic	1995 - 1996	1999 - 2000	2004 - 2005	2011 - 2012	Davidson County residents under 18 (2010 Census)	
	Pre-Unitary*	Post-Unitary**	Full SIP**			
White	54%	48%	40%	34%	White	42%
Black	41%	45%	46%	46%	Black	35%
Hispanic	1%	4%	10%	16%	Hispanic	16%
Asian	3%	3%	3%	4%	Asian	3%
Native American	0%	0%	<1%	<1%	Two or more	4%
Total Enrollment	68,978	68,345	70,089	74,680		

* **Pre-Unitary** refers to the period when the Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) were under court-ordered desegregation, which was the result of the settlement of the landmark *Kelley vs. the City of Nashville (1955)* suit.

The *Kelley* case resulted in the “Nashville Plan” otherwise known as the grade-a-year plan for desegregating Nashville’s schools. Desegregation would begin with the first grade in 1957 and continue until 1968 when all grades were desegregated (*Pride & Woodard, 1985*).

** **Post-Unitary** is a legal term that signifies that a school district has satisfied its desegregation responsibilities. The Post-Unitary period for MNPS began in 1998 when the *Kelley* case of 1955 was finally settled by the crafting of a new desegregation plan.

*** An **SIP** is a School Improvement Program, required for all public schools in the state of Tennessee.

Figure 10: MNPS Average Attrition by Elementary School Zone (2008-2012)

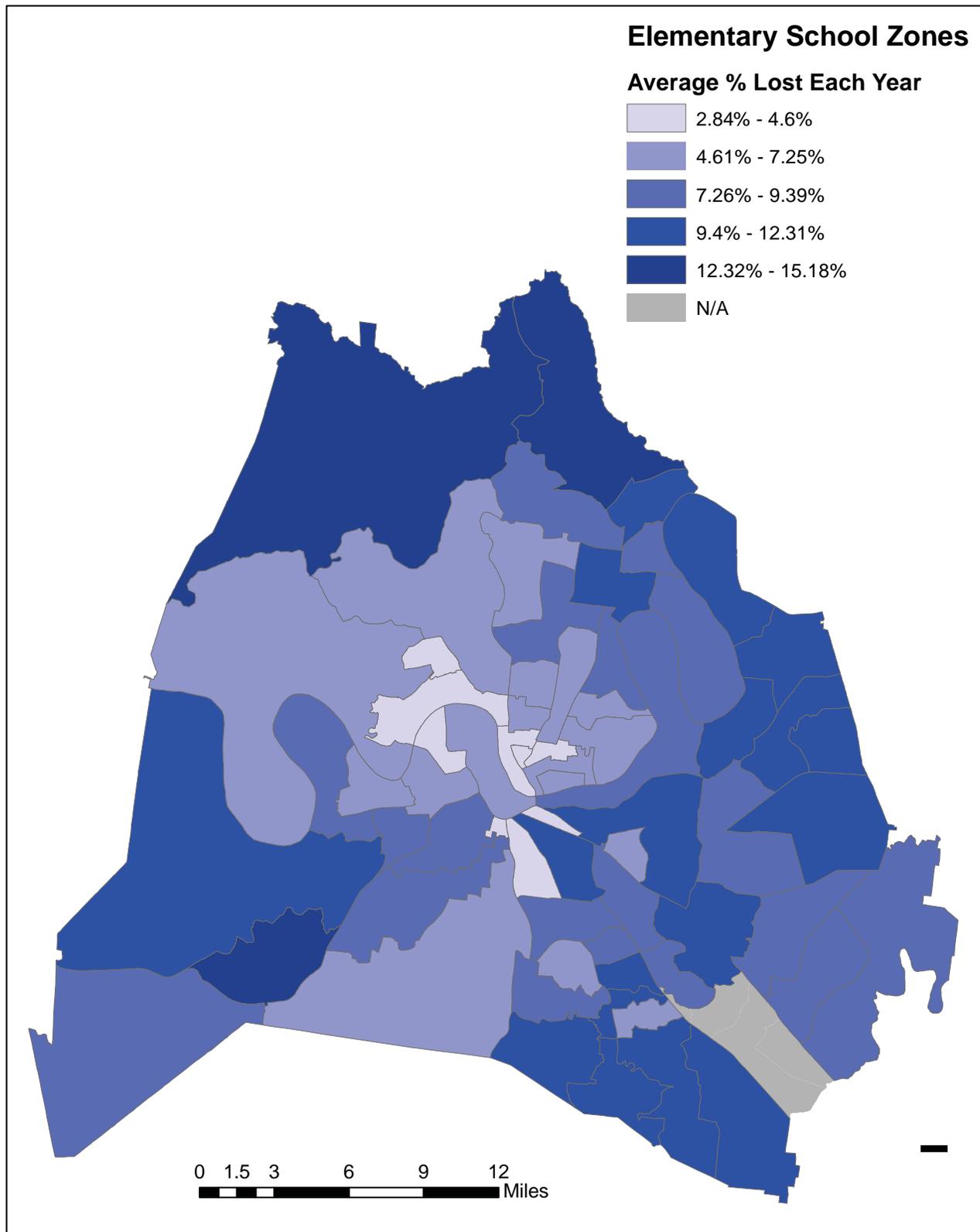
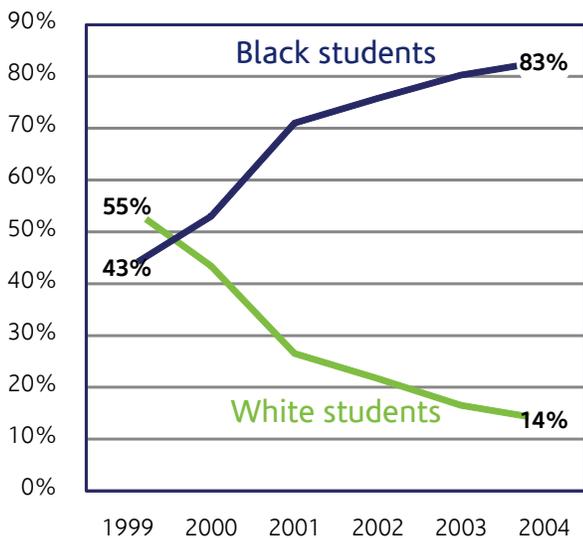


Table 3 highlights the sharp and distinctive differences in poverty (as measured by free and reduced lunch rates) and racial composition of suburban school systems, as compared to Metro Nashville Public Schools. Poverty rates have climbed steeply in these suburban school contexts over the past decade, some doubling or nearly doubling between 2000 and 2012, but none approaches the high poverty level in Davidson County schools, despite higher student growth rates overall in these suburban counties over this period (e.g., 35% in Wilson County; 53% in Rutherford County; and 65% in Williamson County).

A close examination of district data suggests that there are two “peak” departure points: following completion of the first grade and following the end of the fifth grade. Moreover, school zones on the periphery of the district – or near the edges of Davidson County – report higher attrition rates than the district average (See Figure 10). White students leave each year in disproportionately higher numbers, given the demographic composition of the district.

Figure 11: Tipping out of balance: Shifts in racial Composition at Jones Paideia Magnet School (MNPS) 1998-2004



Indicator 4: Racial imbalance and role of magnet schools

Racial shifts have also marked this period of demographic change in Nashville, with the proportion of white students in Metro declining from 48% in 1999-00 to 34% in 2011-12. The district’s Hispanic enrollment has increased from 4% in 1999 to over 16% today (see Table 4), with virtually no change in African American student enrollment over this time period. The 2010 Census data for Davidson County indicate that whites are under-represented in Metro Nashville public schools, given the broader demographic make-up of school age residents. Whites comprise 42% of the 18 and under population in the county, but equal just 34% of the MNPS enrollment.

Magnet schools were established as a tool for racial desegregation, but trends in MNPS suggest that only a small number actually achieve the goal of racial balance. The racial make-up of the district’s magnet schools has tipped dramatically out of balance since 1999, when race-based lotteries were eliminated following the grant of unitary status from the federal court. This shift is illustrated (see Figure 11) by the changes in racial composition at one MNPS magnet school – Jones Paideia Elementary Magnet School – but these changes were repeated in other established magnet schools as well throughout the early 2000s.

Today, most of the district’s magnet schools that were racially balanced under court-ordered, race-based lotteries have tipped out of balance, and many of the recently created magnet schools in the district (legally required to use a single lottery and race neutral policy) are disproportionately African American and mid-high to high poverty (see Table 5). These challenges reflect a broad set of issues related primarily to how parents choose a school – based on quality, composition, proximity, and safety.

Table 5: Nashville Magnet Schools: Racial Makeup & Percent Economically Disadvantaged (2011-2012)

School	% Black	% White	% Hispanic	% Asian	% Other	% FARM	Total Enrollment
Carter-Lawrence Elementary Magnet	85.2	8.1	5.1	1.3	0.3	85.2	352
Robert Museum Churchwell Magnet Elementary School	91.7	5.5	0.9	1.7	0.2	91.7	610
Hattie Cotton STEM Magnet Elementary	64.1	21.2	12.0	2.7	0.0	89.8	411
Hull-Jackson Elementary Montessori Magnet	89.3	4.5	2.5	3.5	0.2	73.6	326
Jones Paideia Magnet School	95.5	2.7	1.6	0.3	0.0	67.9	353
Bailey STEM Magnet Middle School	72.4	21.8	4.0	1.8	0.0	95.0	459
Isaiah T. Creswell Arts Magnet Middle School	86.8	9.7	2.7	0.8	0.0	69.1	510
John Early Middle School	84.1	13.2	1.2	1.6	0.0	86.1	402
East Nashville Literature Magnet Middle & High School	76.2	18.5	4.2	1.0	0.1	63.6	1203
Head Middle Magnet	58.1	30.9	2.8	7.9	0.3	42.2	598
Martin Luther King Academic Magnet	39.1	42.9	4.3	13.4	0.3	28.4	1154
Meigs Magnet School	26.5	61.7	3.9	7.7	0.1	24.4	708
Rose Park Math & Science Magnet	64.8	24.5	7.4	2.9	0.5	56.9	405
Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet	22.3	65.0	4.6	7.9	0.2	19.4	908
Nashville School of the Arts	35.2	57.2	5.0	2.4	0.3	37.4	702
Pearl-Cohn Entertainment Industry Magnet High	91.7	4.7	3.1	0.5	0.0	88.1	764
Stratford STEM Magnet High School	69.0	22.9	5.3	2.5	0.3	84.0	660

Summary

We conclude that these trends – the consistently higher than average private school enrollment and the demographics of student departure – contribute to the increasing proportion of high poverty schools and high economic disadvantage in the district overall. But district policies and what we consider a set of “missed opportunities” may have also influenced the demographic trends over the past decade. Our policy recommendations in section III focus upon reducing the overall poverty rate in the schools by attracting and “holding” more families who are non-poor. Our strategies are pegged to expanded school choice information dissemination, a focus on regional demography, and new communication-marketing programs.

Key Questions Moving Forward

- How can the district attract and hold more non-poor students?
- How can school choice policies, school siting, and information dissemination strategies coalesce to produce socio-economically integrated schools?
- How does “civic mobilization” help develop cross-sector collaboration and implement new housing and education policies in the city, over the next 25 years?

Section II: What Education Leaders and the District Are Doing

Dr. Candice McQueen

Actions

The speed of national education reform during the past five years outpaces any other single period in our nation's past. And Tennessee has been at the forefront in leading many of the state reform efforts. In the recent Report on The State of Education in Tennessee (2012) prepared by the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), it is noted that Tennessee's students made the most progress in the state's history with "...proficiency levels on 23 out of 24 state assessments improved" (SCORE, 2012, 13). In addition, the state has led the nation in improving high school graduation rates while also enrolling more high school graduates in higher education over that last two years than ever before. So, it is with this knowledge that we attempt to highlight the actions and early results of many changes that have occurred specifically in Nashville as a result of both national and state reform efforts.

In Nashville, leaders from every part of the community have become energized and engaged in working to improve public education. This citywide focus on improving education has been led in many ways by Mayor Karl Dean. From the moment he took office, Mayor Dean has pushed all sectors of Nashville to value public education. One of the most significant moments in Mayor Dean's first term was the defeat of "English Only" in the city. This significant defeat and Mayor Dean's framing of Nashville's vision for newcomers sent a clear message to not only the community at large, but also to the school district about the importance of embracing our immigrant students and looking for the best ways to educate and integrate them into Nashville. In addition, he actively sought to bring Teach for America and the New Teacher Project to Nashville to help supply human capital to many of our neediest schools. Also in his first term, Mayor Dean mobilized efforts to bring more high quality charter schools to Nashville with the creation of the Tennessee Charter School Incubator. At the

same time, he also supported a systematic approach to serving middle grades youth in high-quality after-school programming through NAZA or the Nashville After-School Zones Alliance. Mayor Dean has been a champion for great teachers, great schools, and better educational opportunities to improve Nashville's economy and to secure Nashville's future.

While Mayor Dean's first term was fruitful, he started his second term with just as much fervor for education. He recently actively advocated for better starting teacher pay, which was passed in the budget, and has been a voice for improving the teaching profession. Mayor Dean's choices have pushed the city to envision a better educated society that is not dependent on one system (the traditional school district), but welcomes competition in various forms – from charter schools to alternative teacher licensure programs that attract additional human capital. This commitment to public education in Nashville is borne out by the fact that each year since he took office, Mayor Dean has presented a budget that includes the amount requested by MNPS. In each of these years, Council went on to pass the requested MNPS budgets.

Dr. Jesse Register has also been a tireless advocate for improving our district schools. The MNPS Director of Schools came to Nashville in the heat of the mayoral school control debate after the resignation of a former director of schools had significantly decreased school morale while student performance remained stagnant. Dr. Register immediately began connecting community members to district transformational groups to draft ideas for improvements in various impactful areas. The early planning ultimately became MNPS Achieves, which has been monitored for yearly progress by the Annenberg Group. In May 2009, MNPS Achieves involved the collaboration of 100+ district and community leaders to develop strategic initiatives to transform nine identified areas of need in order to dramatically improve schools. The areas of need include five student performance areas: High School, Middle School, English Language,

Special Needs and Economically Disadvantaged; and four district process areas: Human Capital, Communications, Data Management & Information Technology and Central Office Effectiveness. The goal of MNPS Achieves is to promote high student achievement across all subgroups of students.

Later in 2009, Dr. Register hired Alan Coverstone and created the first district office that had ever been entirely committed to charter schools and more recently to innovative school structures or themes such as magnet schools. Also in 2009, Dr. Register and others community stakeholders brought Jay Steele to Nashville to start and run the high school academies model for the district. The Cameron Transformation Partnership began in 2010 with the first district to charter school conversion in the district and the state. In addition, this partnership utilized a third party, Lipscomb University, for unique teacher support during the transition. The Charter District Collaboration Compact was signed at the end of 2010. Dr. Register also formed a unique master's degree partnership with Vanderbilt University to train math and science teachers for urban settings. The iZone, or Innovation Schools, effort began in 2011 with moving multiple low-performing schools to an alternative school governance model to increase yearly growth. This year, the school district determined that the school calendar needed reform, so the year began on August 1st using a balanced calendar with two intercessions.

More recently, Dr. Register announced the reorganization of central office roles and a new leadership structure for his principals in an effort to engender more accountability and autonomy. Dr. Register has responded to various recent assessments of the district's progress and determined that scaling up the Network Lead Principal model to include more school leaders and reorganizing central office to support principal autonomy and accountability was appropriate. At the same time, Dr. Register and the Office of Innovation has created the MNPS Academic Performance Framework to offer standard-

ized accountability metrics to complement increased school-level autonomy and to inform decisions regarding rewards, support, and resource allocation for schools. The reporting tool will also provide school communities with a transparent set of indicators to understand school performance. In another move to support his efforts toward school-level autonomy and accountability, Dr. Register has started conversations with the city's charter leaders and this Network Lead Principals to begin collaborating in a more formal way. Thus far, the group of leaders has met three times with facilitation from the Ayers Institute at Lipscomb University. The last meeting in late January focused a re-evaluation of the Collaboration Compact with guests from the Gates Foundation and on specific opportunities for formalized sharing of practices through a joint project.

Other community members and entities have rallied around improving PreK-12 education in the city. Businesses, non-profits, and higher education institutions have become more engaged in the city's education improvement than ever before – partly because of the energy and openness of the city's education leadership as embodied in Mayor Dean and Dr. Register – and because of the state's significant efforts to improve education standing on a national scale. Reform efforts noted in Tennessee's Race to the Top application have had a significant impact on Nashville particularly, as it is one of the two largest cities in the state. Also, communication about the school district's failures in terms on student achievement has become very public. Community members have heard the news and are seeking to engage.

Early Results

High School Reform

One of the district's primary focus areas has been high school reform. To date, the district has demonstrated that high school reform has impacted modest positive growth in both graduation rates and ACT results. To frame the early results, it is important to

Figure 12: MNPS Graduation Rate (2003-2012)

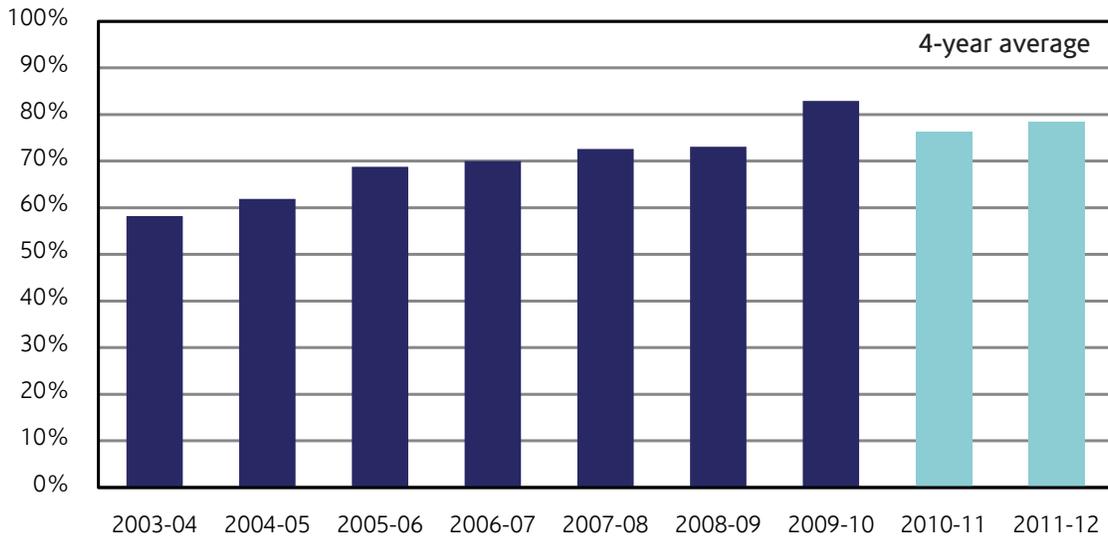


Table 6: ACT Projected versus Actual scores, 2012

	Projected mean score	Actual mean score
Composite	17.49	18.43
English	17.14	18.19
Math	17.05	17.92
Reading	17.82	18.66
Science	17.55	18.50

Table 7: ACT Projected versus Actual scores, 2012 Three Year Average

	Projected mean score	Actual mean score
Composite	17.50	18.25
English	17.09	17.89
Math	17.04	17.73
Reading	17.82	18.66
Science	17.55	18.45

Table 8: Composite ACT scores (2012) by race/ethnicity for MNPS and the State of Tennessee

	MNPS 2012 ACT Composite	MNPS %	State 2012 ACT Composite
All Students	18.4	100%	19.7
Black/African American	16.7	45%	16.4
American Indian/Alaska Native	<10 students	0%	18.1
White	21.1	28%	20.7
Hispanic/Latino	17.3	12%	18.3
Asian	20.9	5%	22.4
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	<10 students	0%	20.1
Two or more races	20.0	3%	20.2
No response	17.8	6%	19.0

understand the goals of the district's high school reform. The district's high schools share the following mission statement: All high school students will belong to a personalized smaller learning community engaged around interests where relationships are valued. Instruction will be project-based, applied and integrated where meaningful business engagement is evident, post secondary institutions are involved and the community is supportive. In addition, the district highlights the following goals for every high school graduate:

- a plan for postsecondary education and career
- at least a 21 composite score on the ACT
- a work-based or service learning experience, or a capstone research project
- at least one course completed online
- college credit, a nationally-recognized professional certification, or both

High school reform in MNPS has been embodied in the Academies of Nashville model. This model is characterized by the following:

- Freshmen Academies
- Academies with career or thematic focus for grades 10-12
- Teacher teams with common planning time
- Academy Assistant Principals, Academy Coach, counselors
- Academy offerings informed by workforce projections/college degrees
- 10 National Standards of Practices for academies

Transforming the learning space

Early results from the Academies of Nashville indicate that graduation rates have increased. Figure 12 is an adaption of the figure used by the Academies of Nashville to represent the increase in graduation rates.

The 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 graduation rates were calculated based on a four-year graduation rate for all students. Prior to 2010-11, ELL and special education were given a fifth year to complete a regular diploma.

The district's high schools have also shown modest increases in overall ACT composite scores. The district's average ACT composite of 18.4 is higher than the projected 2012 score of 17.5. Moreover, Davidson County was in the top ten districts in Tennessee for growth in the composite score for ACT for both 2012 and for the three-year measure.

Similar positive trends exist for all the core ACT subjects. In English, students performed 1.02 points better than their previous test scores predicted, in Math the value added gain was 0.86 points, in Reading the gain was 0.82 points, and in science 1.01 points on the 2012 ACT. See below for a table of these figures.

Every subject shows this type of gain, every year, for the past three years. For example, the three-year average composite score on the ACT was projected to be 17.5. The actual average composite score over three years was 18.25. Below are the three-year predicted versus actual ACT scores in the district.

Below are district scores by race/ethnicity compared with the state in 2012. The district's Black and White students outperformed the state average for the ACT composite, but were below the state average for Hispanic and Asian populations.

While modest improvements have been realized, the MNPS high school reform efforts have not yet realized the stated goal of "every high school graduate will have a 21 on the ACT" so that all MNPS graduates have significant post-secondary options and opportunities.

Choice (magnet and charter)

Charter options in Nashville have expanded choice for Nashville's families. In fact, all six of the top performing middle schools in Nashville are charter schools: Nashville Preparatory, STEM Prep, KIPP Academy Nashville, Liberty Collegiate Academy, New Vision Academy, and Cameron College Preparatory. Two of these charters, Nashville Preparatory and Liberty Collegiate Academy, were shepherded by the Charter School Incubator created by Mayor Karl Dean. The incubator began work in 2010 and has the goal of attracting high-quality charter operators to Tennessee and to support local leaders in starting charter schools. Since inception, the incubator has enticed the two high quality schools, and continues to bring exceptional talent to the area for charter school development.

In the absence of careful and strategic management, school choice policies and programs can produce separate and unequal systems. Recognizing this risk and embracing co-equal goals of diversity and excellence, the MNPS mission and vision, endorses the use of all the district's tools to foster development of schools that are both diverse and excellent.

The district created six new magnet schools established and supported through the Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) in 2010. A Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) cluster in East Nashville with robotics programs from Lipscomb University, and scientists in the classroom from the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach show the power of specialized and theme-based education. The Stratford Cluster now offers elementary, middle, and high school choices for an integrated STEM curriculum. MNPS is submitting another MSAP grant application to support both significant increases in STEM choice schools and significant investment in East Nashville area schools to deepen the choice offerings added in the past few years.

Innovation Cluster

The district has also created an Innovation Cluster or the I-Zone schools. The Innovation Cluster was created a year before the state of Tennessee submitted a waiver application for the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements of No Child Left Behind and formed the foundation for the dedicated school turnaround zone ultimately included in the state's waiver request. When the State's AYP waiver was approved, the Innovation Cluster in Nashville combined rigorous leadership selection with consistent turnaround leadership development and schools built on the combination of accountability and autonomy. The district derived these ideas from the charter sector and combined these notions with the value of a theme-based school approach similar to magnet schools. Innovation Cluster schools support Dr. Register's plans for expanding school-level autonomy, identity, and accountability as the basis for dramatic reform.

Human Capital

MNPS' Human Resources division has undergone significant transformation over the last several months. Most notably, the division is no longer called Human Resources; it is now the Human Capital Division. Though a name change can sometimes be just that, this change increases the responsibility of the division substantially. Previously, Human Resources managed payroll, benefits, compensation, recruiting and qualifications. By moving to Human Capital, where the emphasis shifts to what every educator and staff person knows and can do to improve student success, the division will also oversee performance management, professional development and career pathways/growth opportunities. The mission of the division is to attract and retain the best educators and staff in all areas of MNPS. The division is moving from historically transactional activities and processes to truly transformational initiatives.

Specifically, the division has drafted five key goals and essential strategies aligned to those goals. The goals include the following:

Education

- Goal: All educators and staff understand and own their role in ensuring all students have access to highly effective teachers, leaders, and staff.
 - Strategy: Co-develop the human capital vision, mission, and theory of action with human capital staff and communicate them to all MNPS educators and staff.
- Goal: Processes for attracting and retaining the best talent are streamlined and efficient.
 - Strategy: Build efficient human capital processes, reporting and accountability systems that support desired MNPS outcomes.
- Goal: The best educators and staff are working in MNPS.
 - Strategy: Develop and implement strategic recruitment, staffing, and selection initiatives.
- Goal: Human capital decisions are being made at the building level.
 - Strategy: Build the capacity of principals to serve as human capital managers.
- Goal: Excellent staff continue working for MNPS.
 - Strategy: Provide exceptional supports, benefits, compensation, and growth opportunities to all staff.

All strategies relate to specific outcomes that will be measured twice annually. Outcomes include:

- A supportive culture of continuous growth and learning is standard in all buildings in MNPS.
- Human Capital staff job satisfaction improves.
- Potential high quality candidates are attracted to MNPS.
- Educators in each building are meeting the needs of their student populations.
- Teachers receive targeted supports to improve.
- Principals have autonomy over hiring, placement, and staff structures.

- Highly effective educators stay teaching in MNPS.
- MNPS has an equitable distribution of highly effective educators across all schools.

Each of these outcomes leads to the Human Capital Division's ultimate impact: increasing student achievement and success.

As noted in the second goal, the Human Capital Division is transitioning from a paper-laden, onerous system of staff tracking to an efficient, streamlined, online system. Though the transition will take several months, the move will allow MNPS to access and evaluate human capital data efficiently in order to make key policy and support decisions and will also eliminate unnecessary barriers (such as laborious application processes) to attracting great talent.

In addition to streamlining processes, year one of the restructuring will focus on significantly expanding the district's recruiting pool and maximizing results from the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) evaluation. Building the capacity of principals to serve as human capital managers will begin in year one and expand into year two. MNPS believes year two will likely focus on the implementation of strategic compensation, the implementation of career pathways, and a rigorous selection process that includes a competency-based approach to talent selection.

MNPS has demonstrated early success in the area of human capital. They continue to partner with Teach for America and have started a more strategic recruitment fair in the spring that targets new hires from high-quality teacher preparation programs. Recently, MNPS hired a Director of Talent Acquisition to implement an expanded data-driven recruitment strategy.

Section III: Policy Recommendations

Dr. Candice McQueen

Dr. Claire Smrekar

Hillary Knudson

Our policy recommendations relate directly to the challenges outlined in Section I and Section II. We describe a distinctive school management framework, innovative communication and marketing models, and a civic mobilization effort that involves monitoring demographic trends while re-centering school choice, urban-suburban work and residential patterns, and housing policies. The issues outlined in Section I and Section II trigger a set of pressing priorities that require increased will and capacity from Nashville and its school district, with support and active participation from both public and private sectors.

New Vision of Governance

While many reviews and external evaluations have pinpointed strikingly similar challenges in the district, few have laid out a comprehensive plan for change. Several assessments have included insightful recommendations for changes, such as the recent Chamber of Commerce Report Card. The Report recommends a more comprehensive approach to early identification of low performing school choice programs and for meaningful charter school inclusion. Additionally, the Report recommends an investment of time “in engaging all stakeholders – including local and state education leaders, elected officials and community partners – in an open discussion about the best way to move forward as a district, working intentionally and collaboratively with charter school operators. By ensuring community input in the process, the implementation of the strategy will be much easier” (Chamber of Commerce Report Card, 2012, 25).

Another recent report from the Tribal Group indicates that “As a system, outcomes are too low and are not improving rapidly enough. Four out of five MNPS students leave school not college or career ready.” (Tribal ISP Report, 2012, 10) In addition, Tribal found that there were three key barriers to the

success of the schools: culture of MNPS central office; lack of principal autonomy; and, lack of defined accountability.

One of our key recommendations is to place more emphasis (time, energy and manpower) on creating a defined portfolio strategy for the city. The portfolio strategy is a complex approach to a highly complicated and often messy problem. This approach engages a variety of stakeholders in responding to the growing needs of a big city with either years of persistent failure and/or changing demographics. The portfolio approach does not happen overnight and can be altered to fit the needs of the city. It also relies on the notion that the adults working toward a better education future of a city do so with good will toward each other and an eye toward sustainability of efforts.

Portfolio Strategy

The portfolio strategy situates the school district as a performance manager that creates autonomy for individual school leaders, and also establishes highly sophisticated school performance “tracking” and communication systems for constant monitoring. The performance manager has the sole responsibility of building a high quality network of high performing schools, through increased autonomy and accountability.

Officials with Metro-Nashville Public Schools might suggest that the district has already started advancing toward a portfolio strategy. We would agree that a quasi-version of a portfolio strategy has emerged in pockets of the district, but the city-wide vision, broad stakeholder involvement, strategic goals, coordinated processes, and effective communication of the portfolio strategy is far from developed or complete. We recommend revisiting what has transpired and moving forward with plans to develop a full and robust portfolio model. The portfolio strategy is not “the” strategic plan; it is a method of problem solving to improve schooling for all children in a city and should be part of a strategic planning process. The portfolio strategy is comprised of seven components (Table 9).

Table 9: The 7 Components of a Portfolio Strategy

1	Good Options and Choices for All Families Opening of new schools based on parent/student/neighborhood need Opening of new schools with outside operators (e.g., charters) School choice for all families Coordination of enrollment and school information for families across sectors Aggressive recruitment of external new school providers Intentional development of internal new school providers Equity and access to charter and non-traditional schools for special education and ELL students
2	School Autonomy Universal autonomy: all schools control staff selection and de-selection, budget, pay, and curriculum choice Freedom to seek waivers on contracts regarding use of time, teacher resources, and student grouping
3	Pupil-Based Funding for All Schools Pupil-based funding High proportion of district funds being sent to schools Common pricing of facilities and services across sectors School-level flexibility to pay for new models of teaching and organization (e.g., hybrid learning) Plan in place for low-enrollment schools that cannot survive on pupil-based funding (e.g., plan closure and provides extra funding to see current cohort of students finish)
4	Talent-Seeking Strategy Recruitment of new teachers and principals to the district Intensive development of strong teachers and leaders from within the district Policies in place for using alternative pipelines to find/develop talent Performance-based Teacher Retention Contractual arrangements in place that free up schools to have performance-based teacher pay
5	Sources of Support for Schools Schools free to choose support for diverse independent providers Strategy to intentionally attract and support diverse independent providers
6	Performance-Based Accountability for Schools Data systems that allow measurement of annual student growth Accountability systems that compare schools on student growth, climate, and improvement Rich information systems to guide school self-assessing and planning Common student performance standards for all schools Publication of a school report card Closure of persistently low-performing district and charter schools
7	Extensive Public Engagement Communication plan to convey information about reform strategy and progress (including need for school closures) Public criteria and schedule for school closings and openings Feedback loop for parents and community members to express concerns and receive response Partnerships and coalitions with key stakeholders

*Source: The Center on Reinventing Public Education,
University of Washington, June 2012*

While many of these components may not seem new, the portfolio strategy directs districts to determine to make all of the components and related actions complement one another and to adopt the continuous improvement process as the district's core strategy.

The portfolio strategy can function in a variety of ways. One of the first and most important questions is to determine who should serve as the performance manager. Most urban cities that have adopted this model look to the district to serve as the performance manager. In these cities, the superintendent takes on the leadership role of not only the daily "business" of school, but also the role of accountability, strategy, and communication.

MNPS has made some early decisions that already point to the desire to serve as a performance manager. For example, the district has created an Office of Innovation and is creating academic performance metrics. Some questions to still consider are the following:

- Does the district have a simple portfolio strategy design that all stakeholders understand?
- Does the district have the capacity to lead a portfolio model? Autonomy and accountability come with great responsibility and managerial needs.
- Does the city have good-willed people with one mission (student achievement) leading and supporting the portfolio strategy?

Another approach is to move away from the district as the performance manager and create a new entity to serve as the performance manager. In this approach, a new entity, the Office of the Chancellor of City Schools, becomes the most significant and overarching K-12 education body. This new office oversees the city's entire portfolio of schools. The Office of the Chancellor does not run the schools, but oversees the system of schools that run independently. This shift is profound. There is no longer a school system, but a system of schools.

As noted in Andy Smarick's *The Urban School District of the Future*, the Office of the Chancellor of City Schools would be a new office, not a replication of a Director of Schools or a central office. This office would not be in the school operation business, but would serve to hold all schools accountable and keep them functioning properly. The Chancellor would essentially have three primary roles: to hold all schools accountable for their results by replicating and expanding good schools and closing low-performing schools, to start new schools that reflect the needs of the city with attention to performance, diversity, and geography, and to assist families in understanding school choices and making decisions. Since the Chancellor needs authority to make decisions in the best interest of the city, this position could be an appointment made by the mayor or could potentially be appointed by the governor.

School authorizers are also a vital part of this new system. They would approve the creation of new schools, monitor school performance and compliance issues, and close failing schools. School authorizers would look much like charter authorizers do today, but would be expanded. School operators are the entities that run the daily life of a school (typically leading 2 or more schools), such as charter management organizations (CMOs) or the traditional public school district. In addition, in this new system, private schools could also be part of the system.

Our recommendation is to consider all portfolio options and resist a quick answer.

Student Assignment & School Choice: Responses to Demographic Trends and Challenges

Student assignment plans often reflect complex, matrix designs that are the product of multiple iterations and difficult compromises. The Nashville case points out the origins of cluster school assignment plans designed to provide system-wide stability and continuity within flexible diversity and opportunity goals. But under current conditions in which residential (demo-

graphic) patterns demand changes in student assignment plans in order to address increasing numbers of high (and extremely high) poverty schools, these changes must be considered appropriate and justified—and may involve employing new diversity indices. Still, the district's demographic composition and associated challenges (to avoid high poverty schools and social isolation) make this single strategy insufficient.

Diversity index

Under federal court rulings that prohibit race conscious student assignment and magnet school admissions policies (unless under court-order to remedy the effects of past discriminatory practices), district efforts to promote diversity in choice and traditional public schools hinge upon alternative, race neutral strategies. Some districts like Nashville (with a grant of unitary status) have recently adopted a diversity index that utilizes socio-economic and/or geographical residence indicators in order to achieve a diverse student body. MNPS should consider investing adequate resources to effectively coordinate (using GIS mapping and geo-coding) and implement effective student assignment and admissions policies pegged to avoiding extreme social and racial isolation that is evidenced in the analysis presented in this paper.

Magnet schools

We highlight the design and intent of magnet schools as distinctive among the array of choice options offered in a portfolio of district offerings. We emphasize that merging urban demography and parent choice patterns provides a new pivot point for attaining educational equity, diversity, and strong student performance in magnet schools. Free and reliable transportation to all magnet schools, multiple media outlets for information dissemination that reach all socio-economic and cultural groups, and new enrollment strategies that take account of home-to-work migration patterns anchor our framework for new and innovative magnet school policies. These strate-

gies pinpoint school choice and other options as the mechanism for academically high performing, socio-demographically balanced schools.

Strategic siting

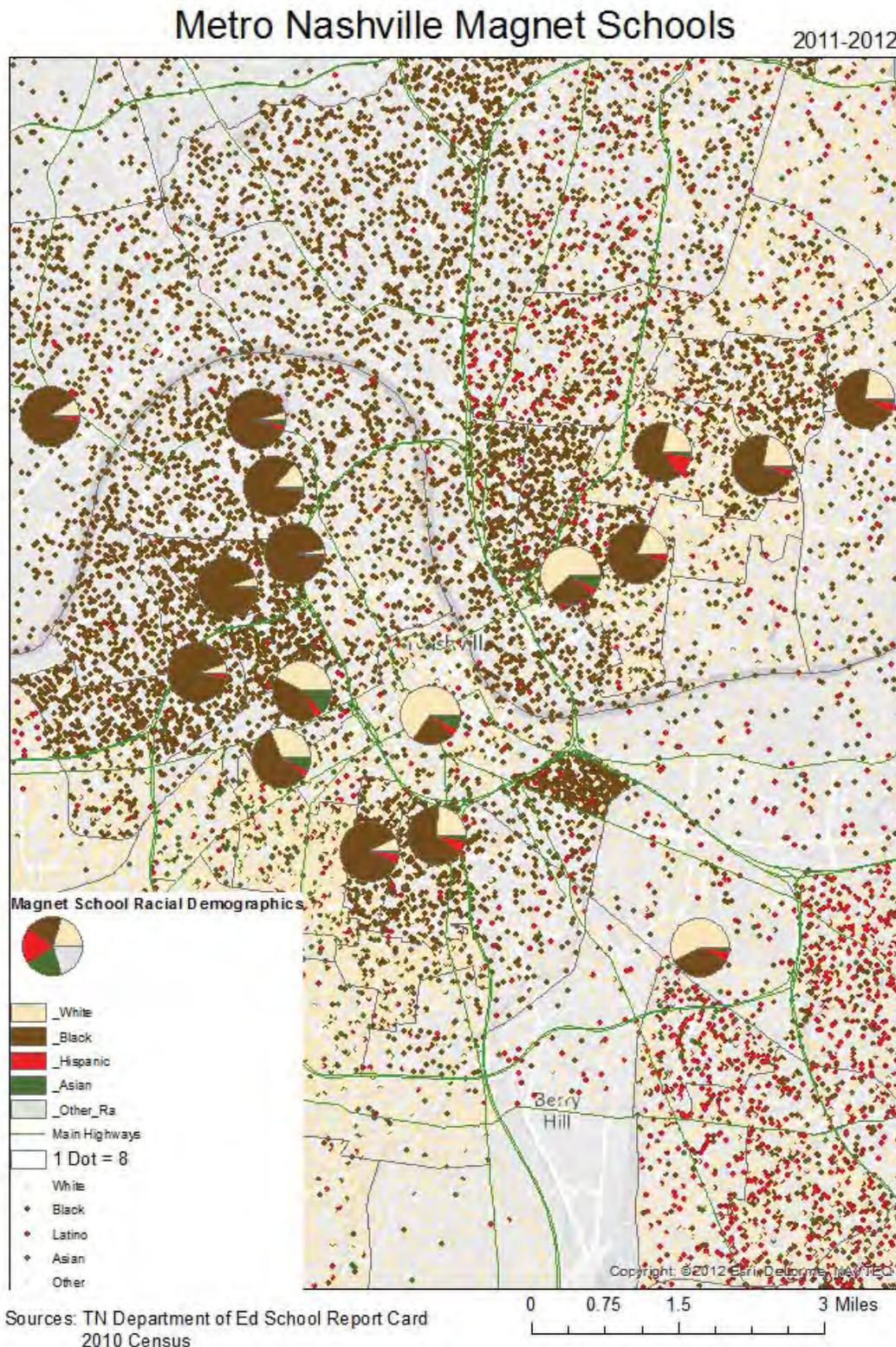
The school choice literature clearly identifies a linkage between parents' preferences for schools and school poverty rates (and racial composition). School choices among non-poor families are driven by a desire to avoid schools with high poverty rates. These choice patterns lead to increasing segregation by social class (and race). As poverty rates increase in MNPS, issues of social class isolation and segregation are exacerbated. Figure 13 uses GIS mapping to illustrate the problem of racially unbalanced magnet schools in the district. In general (though not entirely), the district's magnet schools reflect the racial composition and racial density of the neighborhoods in which the schools are situated (with the exception of academically selective and arts-themed schools). This pattern is repeated in other urban school districts with magnet schools, including Hamilton County, TN, Clark County, NV, and Wake County, NC.

Recent analysis suggests that GIS mapping can provide a powerful analytical tool for district planners in siting magnet schools that take into account parents' preferences and choice sets. Notably, magnet schools located in neighborhoods with lower than (district) average poverty and racial minority rates, and magnets in high poverty/high minority neighborhoods that offer "gifted and talented" programs or that include Montessori programs-- all tend to attract more socio-demographically diverse families. We suggest that the complexity and clarity derived from the research literature on how parents choose choice and how parents choose with specific attention to particular demographic factors should shape siting decisions.

Transportation

Equity and opportunity principles are clearly violated

Figure 13: Demographics of magnet schools and surrounding areas



in school choice programs that provide only limited (bus passes) transportation for students. Magnet school and other choice programs established for purposes of enhanced access to quality education programs are undermined by Nashville's lack of attention to this fundamental issue. Under agreements that recognize transportation as a fundamental element of equity and diversity goals, MNPS should establish bus patterns that enable all students to attend schools outside of their neighborhoods. An appropriate strategy involves bus pick-up zones close to students' homes that are organized for drop off at the clustered students' closest choice program.

Inter-district workplace schools

Over the past two decades, corporate-sponsored elementary schools have been established in dozens of workplaces across the nation, including the corporate headquarters of Ryder Trucks and Radisson Hotels, and the sprawling campuses of Mt. Sinai Medical Center and Agilent Technologies. These arrangements typically require corporate partners to provide the facility and assume full responsibility for maintaining it; school districts provide the staff and assume the entire responsibility for instruction. Before- and after-school childcare is provided to match the work schedules of the parent-employees. These public "schools of choice" give parents who are employed by the corporate sponsor the option of selecting the workplace for their "neighborhood" school.

Over the past twenty years, demographic shifts in urban and suburban school districts have shaped a new reality, one that is evidenced in Nashville and its surrounding suburban counties: school segregation is far more intense between districts than within these boundaries. Workplace magnet schools address these demographic conditions by capturing the racial and socio-economic diversity found across school district lines that coalesces in hospitals, universities, large service and manufacturing businesses, and in downtown "neighborhoods." Metro Nashville government could "reward" schools-at-the-workplace with

a priority status that underscores the value and vision found in merging educational innovation and social diversity with enrollment plans that utilize inter-district arrangements. A downtown workplace (elementary or middle) school could embrace all the assets of the urban "neighborhood" as a canvas for learning and exploration – including the downtown public library, Frist museum, Farmer's Market, and the state capitol building. Our research on workplace schools suggests that these schools are comprised of families who share similar values about education, but who reside in various neighborhoods (many of which are racially and socio-economically distinct) across the city and in adjacent suburban counties.

Information dissemination & workplace human resources

For some parents, school choice and information collection processes remain a social activity; parents utilize social networks linked to neighborhoods, places of worship (e.g., churches, synagogues), and children's schools. Our research on the central role of work in parents' lives, however, underscores the urgency to explore how compression on the work lives of parents is creating new patterns of social networks anchored to the workplace, and placing new demands on policymakers engaged in information dissemination processes under programs of school choice. Consider this fact: the proportion of families with children under age 18 in which both parents work outside the home is about two-thirds, continuing an upward trend in employment patterns among two-parent families. These work patterns are reflected in the relocation of adults' primary social networks from the religious, civic, and social organizations that marked earlier decades, to the place of work in today's society.

Parents would be this well served if the city and MNPS collaborated with major and mid-size employers (e.g., medical centers, universities, manufacturing plants, hotels and restaurant chains, construction companies their sub-contractors in the building trades) to disseminate information to all employees

related to school choice options. Information at the workplace provides a channel-ready means to expand the networks of information about school choice and the assets and offerings of all MNPS schools to parents who might otherwise remain disconnected.

Universal choice

We suggest that issues of motivation and incentive shape parent information search patterns. Under an option-demand magnet program, only the parents with the most motivation and ability – those fleeing under-achieving schools equipped with knowledge of alternative programs – search broadly and utilize an array of school- and personal-based networks. We argue for magnet programs within a universal choice model under which all parents must choose a school, inclusive of neighborhood and alternative/magnet schools (adopted by the schools systems in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Montclair, New Jersey, among others). This approach would effectively eliminate the two-step process associated with the option-demand model in which parents first must choose to choose, and then select a particular school. The universal choice model imposes a “must choose” obligation on families to select a school – whether magnet or neighborhood.

The power to inform parents would theoretically expand under a universal choice model as information regarding magnet schools would need to appear side-by-side in all district information dissemination plans (rather than a special announcement, application, or brochure that could be ignored or discarded). The general problem of awareness is perhaps more salient than the more particularized problem of parent search modes. In sum, many parents simply don't know what “magnet” or “charter” means, and as a consequence, choose not to choose. This lack of parents' awareness or understanding of magnet schools may confound policymakers interested in large and diverse applicant pools. A mandatory decision making process should have a positive, trickle-down impact on the type, quality, and availability of informa-

tion. Evidence from the health care sector documents the productive elements that inform and expand the “culture of choice” under a must-choose model.

Exit Surveys

A recent report produced by Peabody College (Johnson, Natrass, & Phillips (2013): *Clarifying the Complexity of MNPS Departure: Why, When and Where Families Leave*), unpacks the “out-migration” of students and their families from MNPS schools, including the general characteristics of students who leave, the demographics of schools with high departure rates, and the reasons for parents' exit decisions. Demographic and “satisfaction” survey data (a kind of education consumer report) would increase the capacity of the district to address the underlying issues of out-migration linked to parents' relocation and private school enrollment decisions. We recommend the district develop a standardized, required exit survey and implement a systematic review of the data to inform the development of high quality academic programs, marketing, and stable school policies.

Housing Policies and Socio-Economic Integration: School Implications

Inclusionary zoning

Socio-economically diverse neighborhoods can be created (and consequently, zoned neighborhood schools) through a housing policy known as inclusionary zoning (IZ) that requires developers of market rate single family dwellings or multiple-unit sites to set aside a percentage of the total residential units for sale (usually between 12% and 15%) at below-market rates. These set-aside units are known as moderately priced dwelling units (MP-DUs) and provide the basis for socio-economically integrated neighborhoods. Researchers estimate that more than 500 localities currently operate some form of inclusionary housing policy in the U.S., including Montgomery County, Maryland, where the education benefits of this socio-economic integration recently received notable attention. Montgomery County in-

cludes not only moderately-priced housing units in their IZ program, but also includes provisions to allow low-income residents to occupy units within market-based housing developments. The county's public housing authority manages this provision. Up to one-third of the units set aside for reduced income occupants are rented to low-income residents from the housing authority. In Montgomery County, the school-aged children living in IZ units who attend low-poverty schools (where less than 35% of the school population qualify for free and reduced lunch) outperformed their low-income counterparts who attend higher poverty schools. The research suggests that the poverty rates of schools (and neighborhoods) matter far more than the extra resources provided in high poverty schools (health and social services, smaller class size, after-school programs).

Mixed Income Neighborhood Model

In 1992, Congress enacted the HOPE VI program to overhaul the nation's public housing. Nashville received \$13.5 million for Vine Hills in South Nashville, \$35 million for Preston Taylor in West Nashville, \$20 million for Sam Levy in East Nashville, and \$20 million for John Henry Hale in North Nashville. HOPE VI provided a critical context to "test" mixed income public housing policy as a lever for racial and socio-economic integration that merges public housing reform with desegregation aims. Though a small handful of school districts have partnered with local public housing authorities and developers to establish a new school (sometimes a magnet) or "reform" an existing one to attract a mixed income population to neighborhood's HOPE VI project, the evidence suggests little changes if any in the socio-demographics of the neighborhood school. This is the case in Nashville in the four HOPE VI sites and associated schools.

Our case studies of HOPE VI neighborhoods in Nashville underscore three preconditions that influence the degree of socio-economic diversity in these neighborhoods and neighborhood schools: context,

partnerships, and social processes. While future federal funding for mixed income neighborhoods is uncertain, the creation of mixed income neighborhoods through the private or public sector remains valuable. Our finding related to context suggests that the ability to create socio-economically and racially diverse neighborhoods and schools is dependent upon the degree to which public housing authorities, other developers of mixed-income housing, and school leaders tailor strategies to specific community assets. Planners should assess the interests and priorities within such neighborhoods in Nashville and look for opportunities to create strategic reforms – linked to magnet schools – that attract new families to the neighborhoods in and around mixed income developments. These magnet schools could act as the lever to mobilize and activate local community resources (e.g., arts education, historical architecture, medical professions). Utilizing that information, planners should develop partnerships that include a range of stakeholders and tap into each organization's area of expertise in order to maximize available resources. Consistency in leadership is essential; our case studies highlight the finding that partners must understand and commit to social processes that will take years to develop and evaluate.

It seems unlikely that one mixed income neighborhood model will emerge that can be generalized and disseminated to all communities, but the consensus among community development experts is that these public education-public housing partnerships have the potential to be more successful in addressing the needs of urban communities plagued with poverty and failing, segregated schools than the previously "siloes" efforts, such as full-service schooling. Simultaneously, mixed income neighborhoods may hold the potential for creating more racially and socio-economically diverse school contexts as these communities mature and as new development is incentivized to provoke revitalization beyond the neighborhood blocks defined by public housing. We agree with other scholars who have noted the yet-unfulfilled prom-

ise of HOPE VI (and other mixed income neighborhood initiatives) as a partner with high quality, high profile, magnet school programs designed to integrate children within and across district lines to produce racially and socio-economically diverse schools.

Message and Media

A wide gap exists between MNPS and the public audience. Communication by MNPS that is both accessible and comprehensible is currently lacking, although Mayor Dean consistently discusses the need for improvements to Metro Schools and efforts to make those improvements. The need for clarity in vision and increased transparency of achievement and improvement is crucial if the current issues and challenges are to be remedied. One successful strategy for mitigating the problems of coherence, coordination, and public perception is improving engagement with the media and launching a marketing campaign. Refining communication and leveraging a focused mission will encourage positive support and improved understanding among community stakeholders, future partnerships, and parents of children in K-12 schools.

Marketing is more than creating an advertisement, logo, and slogan. In today's hyper-competitive marketplace the public is inundated with near limitless choices. The evidence presented regarding the challenges of MNPS in the annual report card, evaluation reports, and telephone surveys suggests the district's actions, initiatives, and progress are either inaccessible or underemphasized to the public audience. It is imperative that MNPS improves its public perception. If the district does not employ new communication strategies for clearly demonstrating its progress and reform agenda, then expectations and overall culture may not change. The need for streamlined communication, improved access, and enriched explanations can be attained through a modern marketing strategy.

MNPS can develop a compelling brand by addressing five concepts of successful branding: differentiate, collaborate, innovate, validate, and cultivate (Neu-

meier, 2005). By addressing each of these concepts, MNPS may foster a distinct identity, while simultaneously overcoming its problems of public perception and information transparency.

Differentiate

developing a personal identity that can explain the who, the what, and the why of an organization

- Current Issue – MNPS does not currently market itself to demonstrate why it should be the first choice for Nashville families. The current MNPS website is not a useful interface and does not provide a straightforward explanation of progress and achievements.
- Strategy – Begin to brand and market by first developing a mission, vision, and strategic plan. The development of a coherent plan should influence the re-design of a significantly more user-friendly MNPS website. The current website is cluttered and overwhelming, which severely limits clear communication of progress to the public. The MNPS homepage should be easy to navigate and make it simple to find pertinent information for students, parents, community leaders, and staff.

Collaborate: everyone involved must help to build the brand

- Current Issue – The consistently negative public perception and under utilized external partnerships beg for change and improvement. The lack of connectedness between MNPS and other key partners is problematic. Fixing this gap will help support positive change.
- Strategy – The strengths, achievements, and initiatives of MNPS should be highlighted, not only on the MNPS this reportsite, but on other key this reportsites where it currently is not prominently featured. This will improve the accessibility and transparency.
 - Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce (www.nashvillechamber.com)
 - » The 'relocate your family' page should be

- used as a platform for engagement and admiration of MNPS.
- » Currently, the link to the directory of public schools is (alphabetically) listed after the directory of private schools, without any additional information regarding the district offered on this page.
 - Metro Nashville-Davidson County (www.nashville.gov)
 - » The ‘Learning’ page under the ‘Live’ tab simply offers links to MNPS webpages, the public library, and Nashville Community Education.
 - » It does not emphasize the progress of the district or its accomplishments, other than serving “...almost 80 thousand students...”
 - Visit Music City (www.visitmusiccity.com/Visitors)
 - » By leveraging the current excitement around Nashville and the tourism industry, MNPS can broadcast its successes, as the website currently promotes local attractions and events.
 - » “Nashville’s Latest Big Hit Could Be the City Itself” <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/09/us/nashville-takes-its-turn-in-the-spotlight.html?smid=pl-share>
 - » Lisa Gill picked Nashville as one of the top 5 places to visit in 2013 <http://www.cntraveler.com/daily-traveler/2013/01/today-show-top-travel-destinations-2013-010113#>
 - Tennessee Department of Education (www.tn.gov/education/index.shtml)
 - » The district should pursue the use of the “Spotlight on Tennessee Education” top-story loop to draw attention to the progress being made by MNPS, and articulate its strategies and goals for the future.
- Innovate:** merging creativity and execution of brand development
- Current Issue – MNPS continues to develop innovative initiatives, but there is no connection between progress made and changes in public perception.
 - Strategy – Partner with a Nashville public relations firm and enlist support from local universities to create a video or commercial, similar to the following examples, to be showcased on the re-designed MNPS website, posted on other key websites, and/or televised.
 - Pittsburgh Public Schools (<http://youtu.be/DWtkn0Uu-4Q>)
 - » Example of a 35 second TV commercial highlighting the assets of Pittsburgh Public Schools, and ending with their initiative tag line: ‘Pathway to the Promise.’
 - Inside AISD TV Show (<http://youtu.be/V4Z5aNCh-kk>)
 - Austin Independent School District broadcasts a television show created by high school students, which is available on the AISD YouTube channel and the district website. The production provides students the opportunity to learn about broadcast journalism while publicizing key issues and current events regarding the district. Vanderbilt University Student Activities (<http://youtu.be/nKAgImmz2c8>)
 - » Vanderbilt creates videos for viewing on its admissions website and its YouTube channel to share the outstanding work of the institution. The ‘Activities – Explore Student Life at Vanderbilt’ is a 2:30 minute video of student testimonials regarding the activities Vanderbilt offers its students and what they are achieving through those opportunities.

Validate: obtain feedback about the brand and use it to influence future actions

- Current Issue – MNPS is aware of its negative public perception issue. It is difficult to find a solution when there is no clear way to determine what the community's beliefs and concerns are, and how those issues can be addressed.
- Strategy – Develop an easy-to-use mechanism through the re-designed MNPS website to receive feedback on issues and concerns. The use of telephone surveys can also be used to gather common beliefs of stakeholders. The key findings can inform and influence the district's attention to stakeholders' concerns and alleviate the misperceptions of the public.

Cultivate: continually adapt in order for the 'behavior' to match the 'image'

- Current Issue – The lack of continuity in mission, vision, and goals is a significant hurdle affecting engagement with the public and establishment of a positive image.
- Strategy – Continue to create and refine the brand of MNPS, through the recommended marketing strategies, and increase transparency, in order for the community to have the opportunity for productive engagement and response.

Our focus rests on enhancing the public perception of Metro Nashville Public Schools. A clear and connected message can enhance the public perception of public schools. When MNPS creates a distinctive mission with a clear and compelling message, then the district will be better able to promote itself. The recommended strategies for improving public perception include re-designing the MNPS website, prominent positioning on key websites, and creating a high quality testimonial video. By adopting these strategies, MNPS could significantly improve its ability to overcome challenges of coherence, coordination, and public perception.

Summary Statement

We suggest that defining a purpose of public education in this city conveys a clear and pointed message of coherence, commitment, and collaboration. Historically, public education has served as a means for developing skilled workers and enhancing economic productivity, as a way of forming an engaged citizenry and sustaining a stable democracy. In sum, education serves both a public good and a private good, as individual opportunities are expanded and civic virtues are deepened.

Beyond the standard measures of educational accountability and student success, what larger accomplishments are envisioned for public education in this city? Our view of public education reflects the values of excellence, efficiency, equity and diversity for all students across all schools. The immense promise – and benefit – of public education requires a commitment to being responsive to the public's interests, to ensuring student success, and to fostering innovation in our curriculum and instructional designs. We anchor these core beliefs and defining purpose to a portfolio of public school options that emphasizes authentic choices across an array of distinctive school programs, with a promise of accessibility to all families regardless of residential location or resources.

Endnotes

- 1 *As explained in the Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card (2012) the “State of Tennessee sets Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) based on increases in the percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced and decreases in achievement gaps. In grades 3-8 TCAP tests, students are measured based on their scores in Reading/Language Arts and Math. Students are classified as Below Basic, Basic, Proficient or Advanced. High schools are measured by whether they meet Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) in end-of-course exams (English II and Algebra I) and for meeting a specific on-time graduation rate (77.5 percent in 2011-2012). English III and Algebra II will be included at a later date” (44).*
- 2 *The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) is a set of state-wide assessments given to measure students’ skills and progress. <http://www.state.tn.us/education/assessment/achievement.shtml>*
- 3 *The ACT is a curriculum and standards based test to assess student readiness for college. ACT.org defines benchmarks as the “scores on the ACT subject-area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses.” (<http://www.act.org/solutions/college-career-readiness/college-readiness-benchmarks/>)*

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides results on subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences, and school environment for populations of students and subgroups of students. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/>
- 4 *The 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 graduation rates were calculated based on a four-year graduation rate for all students. Prior to 2010-2011, ELL and special education students were given a fifth year to complete a regular diploma.*
- 5 *The following graphs represent results from a telephone survey commissioned by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. The survey was designed, written and analyzed by McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations in Nashville. The Parker Consulting Group of Birmingham, Ala., randomly surveyed 545 Davidson County registered voters May 8-9 and 13-14, 2012. The survey has a margin of error of approximately plus or minus 4.2 percent for the total sample. (Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card 2012, 28)*
- 6 *Eligibility for free lunch is calculated by multiplying the federal income poverty guideline (for given household size) by 1.30; eligibility for reduced-price lunch is calculated by multiplying the federal income poverty guideline by 1.85*
- 7 *High poverty schools are defined as public schools where more than 75 percent of the students are eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) federal program, and mid-high poverty schools are those schools where 51 to 75 percent of students are eligible. Low-poverty schools are defined as public schools where 25 percent or fewer students are eligible for FRPL, and mid-low poverty schools are those schools where 26 to 50 percent of students are eligible for FRPL. (Source: U.S. Department of Education, 2009)*

Resources

Reports

1. Annenberg Institute Year 2 Evaluation Report 2011
<http://annenberginstitute.org/news/2011/12/14/metro-nashville-public-school-reform-moving-right-direction-reports-evaluation-team>
2. Chamber of Commerce Annual Report Card 2012
<http://www.nashvillechamber.com/Homepage/AboutUs/ChamberInitiatives/Education.aspx/>
3. Tribal Year One Report 2012
<http://www.mnps.org/Page102980.aspx>
4. SCORE Report “The State of Education in Tennessee” 2012-2013
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/123849199/SCORE-2012-Annual-Report>

Websites

1. ACT.org
<http://www.act.org/solutions/college-career-readiness/college-readiness-benchmarks/>
2. Mayor’s Office
www.nashville.gov/Mayors-Office.aspx
3. Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce
www.nashvillechamber.com
4. Tennessee Department of Education
www.tn.gov/education/index.shtml
5. Tennessee First to the Top
<http://tn.gov/firsttothetop/goals.html>

Additional Resources

1. ACT “The Condition of College and Career Readiness” 2012
<http://www.act.org/research-policy/college-career-readiness-report-2012/>
2. Tennessee Department of Education Report Card on Tennessee Schools
<http://www.tn.gov/education/reportcard/>
3. US Department of Education Race to the Top Annual Performance Report
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance.html>