

## **Nashville-Davidson County Collaboration Compact:**

### **A collaboration to transform education in Nashville, TN**

“Charter schools are public schools, and the service they provide should be celebrated as completely as any other school in the MNPS system.... [T]hese recommendations are submitted to the Metro Nashville School Board as a working document that may serve as a template for increased collaboration, renewed commitment to ensuring an excellent school for every child in Nashville, and a shared sense of dedication to our city and its students and families.”

*-Choosing Our Future, MNPS, Charter School Working Group Report, February 24, 2009*

Recognizing that high performing schools prepare all students for college and career by providing every student highly effective instruction in every classroom, every year, a safe learning environment and a focus on the whole child that supports student achievement and engagement, and

Recognizing that public charter schools are public schools sharing deeply and directly in this mission, and

Whereas, high performing schools are not identified by any specific governance structure, and

Whereas, we desire every public school in Nashville to be a high performing school,

Collaboratively undertaking to build a system of high performing public schools throughout the county, we, the undersigned, pledge:

- To rely on, cultivate, develop, and support highly effective school leaders and teaching professionals
- To disseminate and implement at scale schools that are student-centered, pursuing innovation and actively sharing demonstrated best practices
- To empower parents by offering meaningful choices for students and developing creative ways to engage families in the design and success of their school.
- To collaborate as partners in the city-wide effort to provide an excellent education for all students and, as partners, work to share best practices between classrooms, schools, and leaders

### **High performing schools rely on, cultivate, develop, and support highly effective school leaders and teaching professionals**

#### **Joint Commitments:**

Deepen and extend joint engagements that promote efforts to enlarge and enrich the pool of prospective educators and school leaders from both traditional and non-traditional sources.

Create a team of highly effective instructors from both charter schools and other public schools to take part in formal and engaging exchange programs to become the most informed collaborators in the district, taking a leading role in planning and directing an annual Shared Practices Summit.

**Charter Commitments:**

Provide information within annual reports detailing teacher recruiting, evaluation, and support practices for the purposes of collaborative district-charter learning and continuous improvement.

Continue innovative partnerships to recruit, cultivate, and retain highly effective teachers and school leaders.

**District Commitments:**

Allow public charter schools access to MNPS staff openings web-site and invite charters to have booths at teacher recruiting events.

Continue to provide leaves of absence for teaching professionals who choose to work in an MNPS public charter school for up to three years.

Continue to offer access to District professional development as widely as practicable for public charter school teachers, leaders, and other personnel, including but not limited to on-line resources such as MNPS Tube.

**High performing schools are student-centered, pursuing innovation and actively sharing demonstrated best practices to support their dissemination and implementation at scale****Joint Commitments:**

Organize, plan and hold an annual Shared Practices Summit that brings together all high performing public schools in Nashville for sharing and training on specific topics such as support for underserved youth, differentiation, student engagement, leadership development, etc. to advance practical solutions and strategies for addressing common challenges among educational leaders and teaching professionals, culminating in a public event celebrating innovation and best practices regardless of their source within Nashville's public schools.

**Charter Commitments:**

Serve the same cross-section of students in the city as the other public schools by actively recruiting, serving, and retaining comparable percentages of students as other district schools as allowed under state law in the following categories:

- a. Students with exceptional educational needs
- b. Students who are English Language Learners
- c. Students in other underserved or at-risk populations

Admit and serve all eligible students without regard to academic levels or ability by utilizing the unified admission lottery program and optional school assignment database.

Consult with the district to identify opportunities to add needed capacity or meet identified high priority needs.

Ensure transparency and publicly accessible reporting of student demographic, achievement, and mobility data, discipline, exceptional education, English language learners.

Actively share demonstrated best practices with all public charter schools to scale up what works and build capacity of public schools where appropriate, documenting and recording experiences through specific case studies of innovative reform strategies specific to a charter school (instructional, leadership, operational and management) that have the potential to make a more systemic impact on district strategies and by Sharing best practices within the schools' annual reports as well as each Shared Practices Summit including areas where collaboration with other District or charter schools occurred.

Develop and publicly disseminate professional development opportunities that can be accessed by all District (charter and non) personnel.

Commit to publicly developing and sharing resources such as, data templates, student tracking systems, lesson plan templates, long-term planning documents, etc.

**District Commitments:**

Include charter schools in the long-term strategic plans of the district including, but not limited to, student assignment planning and facility usage.

Extend quality offerings to larger numbers of students by encouraging the most effective schools expand and replicate, whether those schools are high performing charter schools or other high performing district schools.

Identify and actively share demonstrated best practices with other public schools, and support efforts to introduce and scale such practices as appropriate. Create formal venues and a process of exchange between and among a set of these public schools.

Continue to provide technical support, appropriate services, and available resources from central office departments to assist public charter schools in fulfilling their responsibilities to students with exceptional educational needs, English language learners, and students in other underserved or at-risk populations, whether delivered in the pre-opening period, as part of a regular annual cycle of technical support sessions, or provided on an ad hoc or "just in time" basis.

Continue to make available on a voluntary basis the benefits of school district economy of scale (purchasing contracts, etc.) in order to increase public charter school efficiency and effectiveness with students, including access to Chancery SMS, Gradespeed, the teacher recruitment database, surplus material for sale, and employee benefits.

Maintain a Charter School Office with a service provider function and, when possible, point persons in each Department or Office that interact with and serve public charter schools by continuing

to identify and address practices that hinder the success of individual public charter schools or that thwart their expansion or replication.

Hold monthly charter school principal meetings with district personnel in specific areas of the organization to discuss and resolve issues of coordination, compliance, and best practice as they relate to the role of public charter schools in the district's operations.

Undertake its responsibility for oversight in a way that protects the public investment in public charter schools, transparently communicates expectations for each school, and preserves the autonomy of each school while honoring state charter school laws, including assuring openness to all eligible students.

**High performing schools empower parents by offering meaningful choices for students and developing creative ways to engage families in the design and success of their school**

**Joint Commitments:**

Collaboratively establish a common high performing school indicator that provides a clear, credible, and intelligible measure, includes multiple variables, weights student growth highly, and strives for clarity of communication to all relevant stakeholders that can be used to improve communication and parent-friendly information regarding all public schools in Nashville.

Create an intra-district joint communication and marketing plan informing parents of the wide array of public school choices including charters, magnets, schools of zone, specialty schools, high school academies, and other public schools, intentionally sharing the message that the district is expanding and improving options for students and families in the effort to create as many high performing models as possible and helping families navigate the choices simply and effectively.

Hold joint parent nights including, Parent University, choice information sessions, and Family Resource Meetings.

**Charter Commitments:**

Remove barriers for all eligible students to attend public charter schools by offering information regarding school enrollment and pertinent data in all languages and forms (i.e. no barriers to entry)

Track and disseminate through the schools' annual reports, parent engagement practices including, but not limited to, parent hours, volunteer opportunities, surveys, and parent support as a vehicle to share best practices regarding parent engagement strategies with other schools.

**District Commitments:**

Develop long-term strategic plan for new schools to meet district needs and work with existing and future charter operators to meet those needs.

Continue to provide information about public charter schools on the district website, through the Charter Connections Newsletter, and in messages home informing families of the charter school application process and timeline.

Continue to include charter school parent representatives in cluster and district-wide Parents Advisory Council activities and meetings.

Continue to support parents in all public schools through programs like Parent University and personnel like the Family Liaisons, Cluster Support Teams, and Interpreter or Translation services.

**High performing schools collaborate as partners in the county-wide effort to provide an excellent education for all students and, as partners, work to share best practices between classrooms, schools, and leaders**

**Joint Commitments:**

Convene an annual policy forum no later than the end of each calendar year to conduct collaborative discussions regarding legislation of mutual interest to high performing schools regardless of governance to facilitate information sharing and deeper understanding of various legislative priorities whether or not areas of agreement are possible.

Extend the charter-compact advisory group process into an annual meeting to maintain the dialogue, continue the spirit of the compact and focus on specific issues of mutual concern and joint opportunities, and consider revisions and updates that will ensure the collaboration remains relevant, timely, and effective.

Continue to assess and revise language and practices that reinforce notions of “us and them” between charters and other district schools.

**Charter Commitments:**

Respond to parent demand and work with the district to locate schools in the highest need areas and striving to add capacity in the public education system by serving hard to educate or at-risk populations in alignment with District goals and connected to District feeder patterns

Continue to pursue grant funding in collaboration with the District where such opportunities are mutually beneficial.

**District Commitments:**

Continue to ensure complete transparency regarding calculation and distribution of 100% of the per pupil share of all eligible district expenditures including facility allocations administered by the State Department of Education according to the Tennessee Charter Law and devote one annual Charter School Principals’ meeting to ensuring full understanding and open discussion regarding financial and budgetary interactions between charters and the district that promote misunderstandings whether real or perceived.

Continue to ensure equitable participation for public charter schools in all federally funded District initiatives.

Maintain annual identification of surplus facilities available for charter school use according to the District’s facility disposition policy that give high performing charter operators first right of refusal for access to those facilities.

Continue to pursue grant funding in collaboration with charter schools where such opportunities are mutually beneficial.

Continue to provide full access to student data in the data warehouse, student management system, TVAAS database, electronic mail system, and other data and information related to the students served in public charter schools.

Continue to ensure full participation in district-wide interscholastic leagues and other extracurricular competitions.

Whereas, regular and honest communication is the central feature of all productive collaborations, and

Whereas, the open and honest sharing of information fosters understanding and trust, and

Whereas, the educational needs of students require responsive and effective systems to ensure that every student graduates college and career ready no matter what economic changes lie over the horizon, and

The parties further commit to:

Convene regular meetings of the Compact signatories, to monitor and validate district and charter performance in executing the Compact commitments, and publish annual reports regarding progress and challenges in implementation.

_____	<u>Director of Schools, Nashville</u>	_____
Name	Title	Date

_____	<u>MNPS Board of Public Education</u>	_____
Name	Title	Date

_____	<u>Mayor of Nashville</u>	_____
Name	Title	Date

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Name  
Nashville Chamber of Commerce  
Title  
Date

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LEAD Public Schools  
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Project Reflect/Smithson-Craighead  
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Smithson-Craighead Academy  
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Smithson Craighead Middle School  
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KIPP Academy East Nashville Prep  
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New Vision Academy  
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New Vision Academy  
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East End Preparatory  
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STEM Preparatory Academy  
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Nashville Preparatory Academy  
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Liberty Collegiate Academy  
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Drexel Preparatory Academy  
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Ctr. Charter School Excellence (TN)

Title

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Date

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TN Charter Schools Association

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