



June 22, 2017

Mr. Dennis Queen
Executive Officer, Charter Schools
Metro Nashville Public Schools
2601 Bransford Ave.
Nashville, TN 37204

Dennis,

Carol Swann, Coordinator of Charter Schools, shared your recommendation reports with us via hand delivery on Tuesday afternoon. We understand your recommendation is to deny our applications for LEAD Academy North High School and LEAD Southeast Elementary School. We are carefully reviewing the documents to better understand your reasoning and to determine how we may be able to improve upon our applications. In the meantime, we want to bring to your attention two glaring errors about Priority Schools that warrant significant concern regarding the objectiveness and accuracy of the evaluation process.

Two schools that MNPS operates or operated that are Priority Schools are attributed incorrectly to LEAD. In the reasoning on page 11 of the report for our LEAD Academy North application, it is stated that the two "LEAD ASD schools ... are still listed on the TDOE website as Priority Schools, which does not give the review team confidence." This is wholly inaccurate and attributes outcomes at two MNPS schools to LEAD.

Please refer to the following link at the state Department of Education website:

<https://www.tn.gov/education/article/2015-school-accountability>

This link confirms that the Priority School Brick Church Middle is the school operated by MNPS (Davidson County) and not the ASD (LEAD Public Schools). To attribute this school and its performance to LEAD and to use it as a basis for evaluating our application is damaging to LEAD, our reputation, and harmful to our entire organization. Additionally, the Neely's Bend Middle School listed on this same website was at the time wholly operated by MNPS and had not been awarded to LEAD to turnaround. To hold LEAD accountable for schools it does not operate is not only incorrect, but calls into question the objectiveness of the evaluation process.

We take our partnership with both the ASD and MNPS to transform Priority Schools seriously, and when we are incorrectly portrayed while doing extremely difficult work that takes significant time we must correct the record.

This week, we sought additional confirmation from the ASD and the Department of Education and it is included below.

From: Sara Gast <sara.gast@tn.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 20, 2017 9:00 PM
Subject: Re: statement request tonight re: non-Priority status of Brick Church College Prep in Nashville
To: Malika Anderson <malika.anderson@tn-asd.org>
Cc: Nakia Towns <nakia.towns@tn.gov>, Robert White <robert.white@tn-asd.org>, Candice McQueen <candice.mcqueen@tn.gov>, Margo Roen <margo.roen@tn-asd.org>, Kristina Catani <kristina.catani@tn-asd.org>

Hi Malika,

Here is a statement from us — it can be attributed to me. Let us know if anything further is needed.

"It is not accurate that both of LEAD's ASD schools are on the Priority list. Brick Church College Prep, which is operated by LEAD, is a separate school from Brick Church Middle, which was operated by MNPS. While Brick Church Middle was included on the last Priority list as it was phasing out, Brick Church College Prep is not a Priority school and has not been since 2014.

"The last Priority list was published in 2015, the year LEAD began operations at Neely's Bend Middle. The department will publish a new Priority list in 2018."

Thanks,
Sara

Sara Gast
Tennessee Department of Education
615-483-1671
sara.gast@tn.gov
tn.gov/education

I ask you to please correct and re-issue the documents, re-evaluate your recommendation given the material nature of this inaccuracy, and publicly correct the record at Tuesday night's board meeting.

Thank you,



Chris Reynolds
CEO, LEAD Public Schools

CC: Malika Anderson, Superintendent, ASD
Dr. Shawn Joseph, Director of Schools, MNPS
Dr. Jana Carlisle, Chief of Staff, MNPS
Dwayne Tucker, Board Chair, LEAD Public Schools
Carol Swann, Coordinator of Charter Schools, MNPS