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February 7, 2019

Talia Lomax-O'dneal, Director of Finance
Metropolitan Government of Nashville/Davidson County
Department of Finance
700 2nd Avenue South, Suite 201
Nashville, TN 37201

Dear Ms. Lomax-O'dneal,

The prosperity of our community depends on the success of our public education system.

The issues surrounding public education in Nashville are incredibly complex. The Metro Nashville Public School (MNPS) district is experiencing perhaps the most dramatic demographic shift of any school district in the nation, bringing a wave of new students with increasing needs. Along with the changing population, we have seen an increase in the number of priority schools in our district, and there is a real sense of urgency among Alignment Nashville and its 200+ partners to ensure all of our students have what they need to succeed.

The role of Alignment Nashville is to ***align our community's existing resources*** to support the strategic priorities of MNPS. Especially in times like these, we have to be sure we are maximizing the impact of these precious but limited resources. In 2018 alone, Alignment Nashville's Alignment Teams ("A-Teams") leveraged and secured ***resources valued at nearly \$2.6 million*** to support MNPS. Here are a few examples of how we're aligning existing resources to support MNPS students, teachers, and families:

- rallying existing summer camps across the city to provide high-quality literacy activities for their students;
- hosting an annual Social-Emotional Learning Conference for educators and youth development workers;
- training business volunteers to help increase the number of high school students earning early postsecondary credits or industry certifications.

Because of the unique nature of our work, we do not engage in direct fundraising. In 2008, our Board of Directors requested that Mayor Purcell provide partial funding for our work as a direct appropriation so that we would not compete with direct service providers for funding. Since that time, the Mayor's Office has continued to provide that support for our work.

As you know, complex problems don't solve themselves; with the continued

support of Mayor Briley and Metro Nashville government, Alignment Nashville will be able to continue aligning our community's resources to address these complex problems and ensure that all of our students find and follow their own pathways to prosperity!

1. *What services does your organization provide to the residents of Davidson County?*

When schools thrive, communities thrive. Alignment Nashville works to help our public schools thrive by making sure that we as a community are supporting the schools in the most effective ways possible. Nonprofit organizations, businesses, government agencies, faith communities, post-secondary institutions, and schools work together to plan and implement initiatives that align existing resources to support MNPS students, teachers, and families.

Last year, Alignment Nashville facilitated collaboration with more than 234 partner organizations for the benefit of MNPS, leveraging and securing **resources valued at nearly \$2.6 million** to support our shared goals of advancing literacy, increasing college and career readiness, improving school culture and climate, and reducing chronic absenteeism across Nashville.

2. *How many residents are you currently serving and how do they benefit?*

The goal of Alignment Nashville is to influence broad systemic change that has potential to positively impact each household and business in Davidson County by ensuring that our schools thrive and children succeed. In 2018, more than 2,200 students, educators, and families directly engaged with one of the services or resources developed through Alignment Nashville's A-Teams and fueled by more than 234 community partners. However, the influence of these engagements has potential to reach 86,000 students in Metro Nashville Public Schools as well as the nearly 7,500 teachers, administrators, and staff of MNPS. For example, each of the 923 educators attending the 2018 Music City Social Emotional Learning Conference returned to their school with new tools, resources, and knowledge to change the day-to-day practices of the environment and influence each of the students in the school.

Moreover, all residents of Davidson County benefit when our schools are thriving! As an example of how our work benefits all residents of Davidson County, since 2006 our work has contributed to an increase of the graduation rate from 58% to 80%; each of the young people that have graduated now have the opportunity to earn \$7,762 more per year, potentially contributing more than \$100 million to the Nashville economy that otherwise would likely have been lost had graduation rates remained stagnant.

3. How much funding are you requesting from Metro?

Alignment Nashville requests \$150,000 to continue to engage community partners and align services and resources for the benefit of MNPS students and families. This investment yields a significant return for MNPS and the community as a whole; in 2018 alone, we leveraged and/or secured resources valued at nearly \$2.6 million.

4. If funding is awarded, how many additional residents will be served and how will they benefit?

Since AN supports every MNPS student, this funding will increase the service and resources we are able to align for MNPS students and families.

5. In addition to serving more residents, are there other community benefits Metro funding would help you achieve?

Here are a few examples of critical initiatives that Metro funding will allow us to continue:

- **Literacy** - Alignment Nashville is an integral part of the Blueprint for Early Childhood Success, which has an ambitious but necessary goal of doubling the number of 3rd graders reading on grade level by 2025. We convene the Summer Reading workgroup for the Blueprint, which is working to expand and improve summer reading programs for Nashville's preK-3rd graders.
- **ACT scores** - Alignment Nashville is an integral part of the MNPS ACT Taskforce, which has also set an ambitious but necessary goal of increasing the number of students who score a 21 or higher on the ACT. Students who score 21 or higher qualify for the state-funded HOPE scholarship, and they are also much more likely to enroll in college and complete a degree.
- **EPSOs/Industry Certifications** - Our High School A-Team is working to expand the number of high school students that earn early postsecondary opportunities and/or industry certifications. Both of these opportunities dramatically increase a student's likelihood of enrolling in college and completing a degree after high school; they also give students skills that they can use to obtain a high-wage, high-demand job after high school.
- **Chronic Absenteeism** - Last school year, nearly 18% of MNPS students missed 18 or more days of school. These students have a dramatically higher likelihood of falling behind in school and eventually dropping out. Students miss school for a myriad of reasons; no single program or intervention will turn this troubling statistic around. Alignment

Nashville is working on creative, innovative ways to address this issue through uncovering root problems and supporting improvements in everything from school culture and climate to school nutrition.

6. How would you use this funding to help create a more equitable Nashville, where all residents have an opportunity to participate in the city's success?

Alignment Nashville is committed to equity and inclusion; we believe that when **every** young person finds his or her own path to thrive and prosper, the entire community will thrive and prosper in ways we can't begin to imagine. However, we know that too many of our young people are blocked from finding their path to prosperity, and we are committed to identifying and removing those roadblocks to ensure all of our residents a part of our great city's success.

To translate that commitment into action, we have developed a new set of tools to guide our Alignment Teams as they plan and work together. These tools will ensure that all of our work focuses on closing the persistent, pernicious achievement gaps by addressing underlying issues and context, rather than surface-level symptoms.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and for your dedication to the prosperity and wellbeing of our community!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Jagers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa Jagers

President & CEO