



PENCIL

Public Education Needs Community Involvement and Leadership

February 8, 2019

Ms. Talia Lomax-O'dneal,
Director of Finance
Metropolitan Government of Nashville
1 Public Square
Nashville, TN 37201

Dear Ms. Lomax-O'dneal:

Nashville is fortunate to have a nationally respected nonprofit, PENCIL, committed to the success of the Metro Nashville Public School district (MNPS). In its 37-year history, PENCIL has been a leader in working hand in hand with city officials, private industry, and nonprofits to link community resources to Nashville public schools to help young people achieve academic success and prepare for life.

With more than 458 PENCIL Partnerships impacting students and teachers every day, we believe that community involvement is the key to academic success. PENCIL Partnerships recorded 54,000 volunteer hours resulting in a \$4.1 Million community investment in our schools during the 2017-18 school year.

PENCIL appreciates the opportunity to submit a proposal for funding through Fiscal Year 2020 Direct Appropriations. We respectfully request \$150,000 in general operating support that enables us to leverage strong community partnerships and resources that expand opportunities for students, teachers, and families. Currently, 48% of MNPS students are classified as economically disadvantaged, though before Tennessee narrowed its definition in 2016-17, that estimate was more than 70 percent.

This generous financial support will increase academic outcomes and remove barriers to academic success for MNPS students through three PENCIL programs: LP PENCIL Box; Academy PENCIL Partnerships; and PENCIL Family Resource Centers. PENCIL will continue to have an enormous impact on the success of the students, teachers, and families in the Nashville community.

The public schools are the pathway to prosperity, and a great education for all children benefits all citizens of Nashville. We firmly believe that including PENCIL in the 2020 Direct Appropriations funding will yield exceptional, tangible results for Nashville residents and for the 85,000 MNPS students and their families.

Sincerely,

Angie Adams
President &CEO

Darin Matson
PENCIL Board Chair

Cc: Dennise Meyers, Office of the Finance Director
Vaughn Wilson, Division of Grants and Accountability

Linking community resources to Nashville Public Schools to help young people achieve academic success and prepare for life.

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PENCIL FY2020 Direct Appropriations Request for Funding

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

The mission of PENCIL (Public Education Needs Community Involvement and Leadership) is linking community resources to Nashville public schools to help young people achieve academic success and prepare for life. Making community connections that add resources to our school system is vital to the success of the public schools. That is where PENCIL comes in.

PENCIL Partners are businesses, universities, community organizations, professional associations, faith communities, government departments, and other groups and individuals who agree to partner with MNPS. PENCIL Partnerships recorded 54,000 volunteer hours resulting in a \$4.1 Million community investment in our schools during the 2017-18 school year.

PENCIL staff meet with individual public schools (traditional and charter) to determine the needs of their students and match them with PENCIL Partners based on experience, skills, and interest. The PENCIL staff maintain the relationships between the community and schools to ensure a positive experience for all students and volunteers involved.

Beginning of 2018-2019 school year

458 PENCIL Partnerships

410 PENCIL Partners

**Partners are businesses or organizations that are formally Partnered with a specific school(s). Partners often have partnerships at multiple schools.*

The funding requested through the Metro Fiscal Year 2020 Direct Appropriations will serve PENCIL Partners engagement with MNPS students through three distinct programs: LP PENCIL Box, Academy PENCIL Partnerships, and PENCIL Family Resource Centers.

LP PENCIL Box

This is one of our most successful and popular programs. PENCIL solicits and distributes donations of much-needed school and wellness supplies to teachers and students throughout the year.

The LP PENCIL Box is a brick-and-mortar school supply store that allows MNPS teachers to stock their classroom and equip their students at no cost to them. When students are worried about their lack of supplies, they are less able to participate in learning. The LP PENCIL Box exists to remove this barrier for students and spare classroom teachers the personal cost to purchase these supplies. Because many of our MNPS 85,629 students come from economically disadvantaged households, the LP PENCIL Box is the community's collective effort to ensure no student is hindered by lack of supplies. Donors, volunteers, teachers, and PENCIL work together so that every student in Nashville has what she or he needs for optimal success.

The LP PENCIL Box is stocked through generous donations from national brands, the Nashville community, and our PENCIL Partners, many of whom host school supply drives on our behalf. Teachers are able to shop twice each semester for supplies to take back to their classrooms. MNPS teachers can shop at **absolutely no cost to them.**

These free, high quality classroom supplies represent an in-kind donation of \$1.27 Million directly to our Nashville classroom teachers. Because school supplies cost families an average of \$1,050 per child annually, teachers are increasingly covering the costs of school supplies for their students. A teacher will spend, on the average, \$625 annually on school supplies for their students, if there is not a community resource such as LP PENCIL Box. Removing this basic burden on both students and teachers, as well as demonstrating that the community cares about them, enhances motivation and excitement to teach and learn.

With a school district that spans 526 miles, many schools are a great distance from the LP PENCIL Box and lack of access is the number one reason teachers are unable to shop. Additionally, traffic and varying school hours can make finding a time to shop at the LP PENCIL Box difficult. Thanks to the generosity of Nissan Motor Company, PENCIL and the LP PENCIL Box can now deliver products directly to MNPS schools in our PENCIL Van.

Resources Provided During the 2017-2018 school year

161	MNPS schools served
\$1.27 Million	School supplies distributed
4,081	Teacher touchpoints
2,935	Volunteer hours
\$1,500,00	Total donations
200,922	Pencils – more than 2 pencils for every student in the district
19,776	Packs of crayons
16,197	Packs of notebook paper
76,101	Glue sticks
3,494	Reams of copy paper

Academy PENCIL Partnerships

For the past 10 years, one of PENCIL’s most prolific and impactful programs has been with the Academies of Nashville high school students. Within the Academies of Nashville, students are encouraged to choose what they want to learn from 39 different Academies in the 12 zoned high schools.

The Academies of Nashville model provides more than 18,000 students with one of the best college and career prep experiences in the nation, creating opportunities for high school students to prepare to enter the work force by expanding career pathways that increase economic mobility and meet regional talent needs.

Success at the Academies is changing generational poverty for a demographic that never graduated from high school. When the Academies of Nashville began in 2006, the district’s graduation rate was 59%. Today the graduation rate is 80.2%.

Academy PENCIL Partners are recruited, vetted, and deployed through PENCIL. PENCIL Partners provide experiential learning opportunities such as mentoring, tutoring, curriculum development, field trips, job shadows, and even internship and employment to MNPS high school students in all 39 Career Academies across the district.

Engaged PENCIL Partnerships provide each Academy with hands-on learning across all curriculum components in five industry-related areas: Arts, Media & Communication; Engineering and Manufacturing; Hospitality and Tourism; Business, Marketing and IT; and Health and Public Services.

Academy PENCIL Partners work directly with teachers to develop industry-specific lesson plans that correlate with each focused learning pathway - even in core curriculum classes. Together, they show students how what they are learning in school relates to their future and gives them real-world exposure into what potential careers look like so they can make timely, informed decisions and discover their true passion.

Academy PENCIL Partners also mentor students in each pathway on industry-specific certification exams to further prepare them for college and career. Students are able to earn early college credit and nationally recognized industry certifications.

Nashville's Academies are an industry leader due in large part to strong involvement and support from the business community fostered by PENCIL. Academy PENCIL Partnerships aim to accomplish the following goals:

- Improve graduation rates by making school interesting and engaging to students
- Build relationships between students and positive adult role models through mentorship and regular interactions with industry professionals during the school day
- Support positive outcomes after high school graduation, including further education and entry into high-wage, high-demand careers

Resources Provided During the 2017-2018 school year

27,566	Documented Academy Volunteer Hours
\$1,745,785	Community Investment in the Academies
3,661	10 th Grade Industry Field Trips (75% of students)
3,254	11 th Grade Job Shadows (74% of students)
169	12 th Grade Internships
1,127	Students who sat for Certified Technical Education Exams (63% passed)

PENCIL Family Resource Centers

The school-based Family Resource Center (FRC) is an important model to leverage community partnerships that support and empower MNPS students and families. The overarching mission is to remove barriers to students being in school; reduce chronic absenteeism; provide basic supports for families to assure their children attend school regularly and the parent is more understanding of the importance of school attendance; and increase family knowledge of community resources by providing the wrap-around services, resources, and information.

Nearly half of MNPS students are economically disadvantaged; 20% are English Language Learners (ELL); chronic absenteeism is 18% - whereby students miss at least 10% of the available school days. In addition, the district struggles with a high mobility rate, likely tied to gentrification and the lack of safe and accessible housing. All these factors make school-based Family Resource Centers essential for the success of MNPS students and families. Addressing the needs of these families requires a coordinated effort among government and community.

PENCIL's 6 school-based Family Resource Centers act as a hub for community resources, helping families navigate outside agencies that can assist with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and physical needs. Through assistance from PENCIL Partners, community agencies, and other resources, FRCs are able to stock emergency food and clothing and develop services tailored to their school population, such as GED and English-language classes, parenting classes, eye exams and glasses, individual counseling, and student leadership groups.

Committee members of the Nashville Chamber Education Report Card 2018 determined that in order for a student to be successful, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is integral. “SEL is a process that allows children and adults to build the skills needed to function in school and in life. This includes managing emotions, creating positive relationships, and setting goals.” Metro Schools is considered a national model in SEL and it is vital for creating a positive school culture. It is imperative for SEL practices to be embedded in all aspects of teaching and learning and to be committed to taking care of the child first and then the student. SEL skills contribute to success in the workplace and Nashville’s overall productivity.

PENCIL Partners work directly with the MNPS district leadership to manage school-based resource centers. While there are many FRCs across Nashville, PENCIL is responsible for managing those located within the following schools: Ivanetta H. Davis Early Learning Center, Tusculum Elementary School, Madison Middle School, Antioch High School, Glenclyff High School, and Maplewood High School.

Family Resources Provided During the 2017-2018 school year

2,957	Families served
5,628	Students served (unduplicated)
112	PENCIL Partnerships involved
\$638,876	Community investment distributed

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

In 2018-19, MNPS district operates 167 schools with 85,629 students. In addition, their families and teachers are directly benefiting from the 458 PENCIL Partnerships serving the needs of the district.

Our MNPS teachers and administrators work tirelessly to meet the educational and social needs of a diverse group of students: 4% Asian, 42% African American, 26% Hispanic, 28% White, according to the 2018 Nashville Chamber Education Report Card.

LP PENCIL Box provides quality school supplies for students and teachers. PENCIL works to ensure all of the students in the Career Academies have access to culturally inclusive career pathways that lead to employment and family-sustaining wages.

PENCIL School-based Family Resource Centers remove barriers to school attendance for these students by providing food, clothing, housing assistance, English learning classes and more.

3. How much funding are you requesting from Metro?

PENCIL respectfully requests funding through Fiscal Year 2020 Direct Appropriations in the amount of \$150,000 for general operating support to leverage strong community partnerships and resources that in turn expand opportunities for students, teachers, and families.

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

Davidson County is growing at a near-record pace. We expect the population growth to translate into the need for additional resources for MNPS teachers, students, and families. We expect to see an increase in the following:

- 4,008 teachers used the LP Pencil BOX to provide school supplies for their students, representing a \$1.27M investment made directly to classrooms
- 18,000 students participated in the Academies of Nashville career prep experiences

These funds would also assure that PENCIL's 6 school-based Family Resource Centers continue to serve almost 3,000 families and more than 5,600 students during the 2019/2020 academic year since critical United Way funding will no longer support the centers after June 30, 2019.

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

Having funding for PENCIL's core work from Metro would be a powerful stamp of approval on the value and importance of engaging community resources for our public schools to assure our students are on the path to future economic prosperity.

We would welcome the opportunity to jointly celebrate the successes of MNPS students and to begin a positive change in the public narrative about the quality of education provided by our public school system.

The public schools are the pathway to prosperity for thousands of children impacting the entire population of Nashville. By linking community resources to the public schools, PENCIL is ensuring all students have access to resources and opportunities for building the necessary skills to provide for a living wage after graduation.

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?

Nashville is experiencing tremendous growth and prosperity while many families and longtime residents of the city struggle against the impacts of gentrification and the shortage of affordable homes. PENCIL is an essential community leader working with the Metro government to address the unique needs that are consequences of Nashville's growth and prosperity. The public schools are the pathway to prosperity, and a great education for all children benefits all citizens of Nashville.

PENCIL is committed to understanding and identifying the specific needs of families in each school and ensuring equitable distribution of resources across the district. By recruiting the perfect PENCIL partners to match the unique needs of each school, the schools become a hub of activity, providing information, opportunities, and resources for children and families in the neighborhood. This helps family stability which in turn helps encourage the students to attend school.

PENCIL diligently continues to provide elevated work force opportunities for MNPS students so they stay in school and ultimately find a prosperous path to live the life about which they dream. Students who

are mentored and trained by PENCIL partners are in an encouraging environment that values achievement and personal growth. Students along all generational and economic lines have opportunities for a clear path for a prosperous future in Nashville. This attitude of growth and success can have a ripple effect on the rest of the family. We have many stories of siblings being re-engaged in school due to the influence of older family members.

PENCIL is dedicated to being the leader to connect the community resources and address the myriad of needs that the school district cannot address on its own. As the challenges and opportunities of the Metro School system change along with the Nashville community, PENCIL is committed to ensuring that the basic needs of the students are being met and through the PENCIL Partnerships the entire Nashville community is being served. Poverty will not be an unsurmountable obstacle as we leverage the resources of the community of Nashville to ensure that success is extended to each and every child.

We agree with Mayor Briley that we must affirm our commitment to be a city where all individuals and families can belong and pursue their version of the American Dream.



PENCIL
Public Education Needs Community Involvement and Leadership

PENCIL Partners include many of Nashville's Top 50 employers, providing MNPS youth an unparalleled level of access to job shadowing, industry-specific skills building, mentorship, and leadership development. This career preparation and mentorship builds job and college readiness, contributing to the future economic success of MNPS students. Our Partners include:

Dollar General Corporation

HCA Foundation

US Community Credit Union

Vanderbilt University Center for Science Outreach

Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center

Deloitte

Creative Artists Agency

Gray Line Tennessee

Music City Center

Aegis Science Corporation

Comcast

LP Building Products

St. Thomas Health

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