

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Wednesday, January 30, 2019 4:39:49 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, January 30, 2019 5:39:34 PM
Time Spent: 00:59:45
Email: buggsforschools@gmail.com
IP Address: 12.230.236.146

Page 2: Board Member Information

Q1 Please provide your first and last name.

Christiane Buggs

Page 3: Section One: Our Students

Q2 1.1 Academics: The Director is ...

Ensuring that all students are achieving academic growth in reading and math. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that MNPS is closing achievement gaps among African-American students and other students of color. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that a higher percentage of third-graders are reading at grade level. **Meets Expectations**

Q3 1.2 School Climate and Culture: The Director is ...

Ensuring that classroom attendance is improving and truancy is decreasing. **Meets Expectations**

Ensuring that MNPS is demonstrating overall positive gains in school climate and culture. **Meets Expectations**

Ensuring that student suspensions and expulsions are decreasing. **Exceeds Expectations**

Q4 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section One (Our Students)?

Although there is room for improvement in each area, gains are being made.

Page 4: Section Two: Our People

Q5 2.1 Employee Relations and Development: The Director is ...

Ensuring that employee morale and satisfaction are increasing. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that MNPS is recruiting and retaining effective teachers. **Meets Expectations**

Q6 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Two (Our People)?

Lack of adequate teacher compensation is the largest reason for educator dissatisfaction. The state, city council and mayor left us without funding to adequately pay educators, but the different decisions to offer supports in other ways is helpful. Dr. Joseph being accessible to teachers as well as including them in decision making task force meetings is positive. Increasing consistency in hiring practices will also help, though.

Page 5: Section Three: Our Organization

Q7 3.1 Planning and Administration: The Director is ...

Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements. **Meets Expectations**

Q8 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Three (Our Organization)?

The decision to cut central office positions instead of teacher positions was the right one to make, but left the district with a less than adequate infrastructure. Still, compliance is maintained even if communication behind the reasoning is rocky.

Page 6: Section Four: Our Community

Q9 4.1 Communications and Family Engagement: The Director is ...

Ensuring effective public relations with the media and other external stakeholders. **Needs Improvement**

Q10 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Four (Our Community)?

We can work to be a bit more proactive when communicating to the public and with media outlets. Many relationships have been built and are thriving, but the negative narratives put out by the few sometimes are deafening.

Page 7: Section Five: Accomplishments and Challenges

Q11 5.1 Assessing the Past: What have been the most significant accomplishments of the Director during the first half of the school year?

- ~ Being proactive in securing private funding for mNPS needs is extremely beneficial for our schools.
 - ~ Dr. Joseph has also taken the disparity issue around behavioral consequences head on with his directive to elementary schools around suspension practices.
 - ~ Managing the district with SIGNIFICANT resource concerns.
-

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

Q12 What have been the most significant challenges MNPS faced during the first half of the school year, and how did the Director address them?

~ Proactive communication continues to be an area of growth. Adding to the communications dept has certainly been helpful, but there are still opportunities to grow community relationships with better communication.

#2

COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Tuesday, February 05, 2019 11:42:29 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, February 05, 2019 12:31:19 PM
Time Spent: 00:48:50
Email: Musicmomma@comcast.net
IP Address: 71.203.246.204

Page 2: Board Member Information

Q1 Please provide your first and last name.

Anna Shepherd

Page 3: Section One: Our Students

Q2 1.1 Academics: The Director is ...

Ensuring that all students are achieving academic growth in reading and math. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that MNPS is closing achievement gaps among African-American students and other students of color. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that a higher percentage of third-graders are reading at grade level. **Meets Expectations**

Q3 1.2 School Climate and Culture: The Director is ...

Ensuring that classroom attendance is improving and truancy is decreasing. **Meets Expectations**

Ensuring that MNPS is demonstrating overall positive gains in school climate and culture. **Meets Expectations**

Ensuring that student suspensions and expulsions are decreasing. **Exceeds Expectations**

Q4 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section One (Our Students)?

I do appreciate the fact that Dr. Joseph is visible through school visits and in the community as a whole.

Page 4: Section Two: Our People

Q5 2.1 Employee Relations and Development:The Director is ...

Ensuring that employee morale and satisfaction are increasing. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that MNPS is recruiting and retaining effective teachers. **Needs Improvement**

Q6 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Two (Our People)?

As noted in the supporting document, low teacher morale was, in part, due to the fact that we could not increase compensation this past year. Dr. Joseph did lobby for that but the Mayor and Council did not include that in the limited monies that we received.

Page 5: Section Three: Our Organization

Q7 3.1 Planning and Administration: The Director is ...

Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements. **Needs Improvement**

Q8 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Three (Our Organization)? **Respondent skipped this question**

Page 6: Section Four: Our Community

Q9 4.1 Communications and Family Engagement: The Director is ...

Ensuring effective public relations with the media and other external stakeholders. **Meets Expectations**

Q10 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Four (Our Community)?

As it relates to the media and public relations, I think he and his staff need to be more proactive in situations like we had last week and the inclement weather that we had. MNPS must be out there quickly to answer about whether or not we are going to have school.

Page 7: Section Five: Accomplishments and Challenges

Q11 5.1 Assessing the Past: What have been the most significant accomplishments of the Director during the first half of the school year?

Working with NOAH and Judge Callaway to reduce suspensions and increase school attendance has been important work. He has also been intentional in seeking what board members are prioritizing in the next budget cycle.

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

Q12 What have been the most significant challenges MNPS faced during the first half of the school year, and how did the Director address them?

We are facing several budget issues with this budget that we have but Dr. Joseph has not focused on these budget woes and continues to focus on our students.

#3

COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Friday, February 01, 2019 7:17:59 PM
Last Modified: Friday, February 08, 2019 4:47:57 PM
Time Spent: Over a day
Email: jill.speering@comcast.net
IP Address: 68.32.111.214

Page 2: Board Member Information

Q1 Please provide your first and last name.

Jill Speering

Page 3: Section One: Our Students

Q2 1.1 Academics: The Director is ...

Ensuring that all students are achieving academic growth in reading and math. **Unsatisfactory**

Ensuring that MNPS is closing achievement gaps among African-American students and other students of color. **Unsatisfactory**

Ensuring that a higher percentage of third-graders are reading at grade level. **Unsatisfactory**

Q3 1.2 School Climate and Culture: The Director is ...

Ensuring that classroom attendance is improving and truancy is decreasing. **Unsatisfactory**

Ensuring that MNPS is demonstrating overall positive gains in school climate and culture. **Unsatisfactory**

Ensuring that student suspensions and expulsions are decreasing. **Unsatisfactory**

Q4 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section One (Our Students)?

Academics

Since Shawn Joseph came to MNPS with full board support, the number of schools on the priority school list has more than doubled.

According to the state report card, TVAAS literacy scores decreased from a four to a two. (out of five) According to the state report card, TVAAS scores for overall growth in 2018 was a one (out of five), as well as ones across the board in numeracy, science, and social studies.

Achievement test scores are flat; achievement gaps are widening between student subgroups; drop-out rates are rising, and graduation

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

rates are falling.

The district growth score last year was a one on TNReady.

The percentage of students who scored proficient on the state assessment test has decreased since Dr. Joseph's arrival in 2016. Although the test changed in 2017, scores have been mostly flat. Math scores dramatically dropped in 2018. Two percentage points increase or decrease marks a significant difference.

ELA (English Language Arts): Grades 3-8	Grades 9-12 EOC Exams English
2013: 40.0%	2013: 45.2%
2014: 40.8%	2014: 49.6%
2015: 39.3%	2015: 52.1%
2016: no data	2016: 22.7%
2017: 25.3%	2017: 24.5%
2018: 26.7%	2018: 18.2% Sharp decline from 2017-2018.

Math scores actually dropped across the district grades 3-12

2017: 26.5%	2017: 26.5%
2018: 25.2%	2018: 25.2%

The MAP assessment is nationally normed and can be used to compare academic growth to other districts. I find the use of this assessment less meaningful because MNPS does not administer the assessment according to the recommendations of NWEA. Districts are encouraged to administer the test during three different time frames: fall, winter, spring. Although generic NWEA documentation uses 4, 20, and 32 weeks of instruction for fall, winter, and spring testing respectively and 36 instructional weeks for the following academic year, MNPS administers the tests at different times. Rightly so, the fall test is administered in August; however, the winter test is administered in November, which is still fall. And the spring test is administered in February which is winter. Therefore, rather than administering the assessment in fall, winter and spring, MNPS administers two fall administrations and one winter. Spring testing is not mandated. During the last four months of school, curricula as well as reading and math skills become more rigorous, learning is possibly more difficult but this important learning time is not captured by the current administration of the MAP assessment. If the spring test is administered in early February, four months of learning or failure to learn is not measured. This negates MAP as an instrument that truly gives feedback to teachers and parents and does not serve us well as we attempt to compare MNPS data to other districts.

As a career educator and TEA Exemplary Educator for all of Middle Tennessee in 2005, I am opposed to scripted curricula for experienced teachers. Although the district produced a "dog and pony show" about CKLA, teachers shared with me how much they disliked the program but reportedly were told by administrators they were not to speak publicly about the truth of their experiences and observations. Dr. Joseph can't have it both ways. Either he wants to hear the truth from teachers or he doesn't. Communicating to teachers they are not to speak to board members about curricula unless they agree with him, affects culture.

As noted in the director's self evaluation, "One factor that may have positively impacted growth scores was the change in district policy that allowed text-to-speech and human reader accommodations on the November Reading test administration. That accommodation was not allowed on the August administration." Per Paul Changus's report earlier in the year, 13K students were impacted. The fact that literacy scores either rose slightly or dropped is a concern. Where scores rose, they did so by an average of 3.6 points; where they dropped it was an average of 4.4 points. Math scores are equally concerning. They dropped at an average rate of 2.83 points with no growth in any grade and flat in two grades.

To measure student progress and performance, more than one data point is necessary. Triangulation means using more than one method to collect data on the same topic. This is a way of assuring validity of research through the use of a variety of methods to collect data on the same topic, which involves different types of samples as well as methods of data collection.

MNPS teachers and coaches have been trained to administer real-time reading assessments such as Text Level Assessments (TLA) where students demonstrate reading skills on unseen, whole texts as opposed to short, small segments/paragraphs of texts. When the

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

district first began utilizing this assessment district-wide, results produced an eye-opening revelation about the "actual" growth students were making in reading. This, in turn, gave the district a view of how to supply meaningful professional development and support various schools and classrooms across the district. The district no longer collects TLA data system-wide. The cost was minimal. Teachers received training by district personnel. During a survey within the last year, teachers rated TLAs as the "most effective" assessment they used to provide differentiated instruction for student learning.

I would like to see sub-groups broken out to reflect student poverty. Data is more useful when it can be tied to specific actions/strategies. I would like to see significantly more explanation of actions/strategy that leadership feels are contributing to any positive results. As is, data supplied through Dr. Joseph's self evaluation produced numbers that have little context.

Truancy rate at this time of year is actually higher (.6%) than it was last year at this time. Reading the narrative, it appears the contributing factors are merely maintaining the status quo from last year, not improving like the charts attempt to demonstrate.

The climate surveys speak more to climate in individual schools and less to climate throughout the district. This is another area where I need to see all results and not just the ones that tell the desired story.

The Central Office School Immersions Learning Experience – Outward Mindset in Action” is a positive step which I applaud; however, the true value is in implementation. Based on constituency feedback, administrators felt the district preached one mindset yet practiced an opposite mindset. Actions speak much louder than words.

An independent survey is needed which measures culture as it pertains to central office and district personnel.

In July a central office survey indicated that less than 3% of staff felt they worked in a trusting environment. How do those current numbers look? In order to make an informed judgment I need teacher and central office attrition numbers from the beginning of the year. Based on student-attrition information provided by David Sevier, the district lost 458 students from 10/3/18-1/15/19 (3 months). Is this a result of culture or something else? In this year's budget, administration expected a gain of 500 students; however, as of January 15, 2019, MNPS has lost 2,085 students so far this school year. How will the loss of over two thousand students affect our budget? Why are students leaving? Is there any follow up to attempt to answer this concern?

Likewise, in 2017-18 enrollment was anticipated to grow by 1,500 students while in actuality MNPS lost 500 students which resulted in a loss of 2,000 anticipated students. This loss of enrollment equated to a \$7.5 million dollar shortfall in budget revenue. During budget season a year ago, I asked why administration projected an increased enrollment for 2018-19 when we suffered such a large shortfall from '17-'18. My understanding was that enrollment specialists based their decision on the fact that enrollment had been progressively increasing over many previous years, before Dr. Joseph and team came to Nashville, so administration expected the '17-18' loss of student enrollment was a fluke. As it turns out, this loss of enrollment is becoming a trend. Given the fact that for several years 100 people have been moving to Nashville a day, why have we consistently lost students for the past two years? Perhaps it's all the negative news referencing Dr. Joseph's leadership.

While appreciative of the Listen and Learns, I question their authenticity based on constituent feedback. Teachers prefer sessions to be less structured and attendees made to feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and requests. In their previous format, teachers and families were expected to provide positive feedback before being allowed to share concerns. I'm not sure this format fosters the desired level of honesty. Expectations that teachers sign their names as they enter is also problematic, if the director truly wants teachers' honest feedback. Most often teachers are afforded no opportunity to offer feedback on the way the district conducted the sessions or offer suggestions how to improve the sessions in order to make teachers feel more comfortable to offer authentic, truthful feedback. Getting this type feedback would go a long way in learning from our professional teaching staff.

When Dr. Joseph makes statements at Principal's meetings like "Teachers want blood and meat.", this inhibits prospects of improving culture. The director needs to be more cognizant of his message which will surely get back to teachers.

Decreasing suspensions is a laudable goal but it should come hand-in-hand with a decrease in discipline issues. Based on the data provided, there is no way to determine if the number of incidents has been reduced as well as the number of punitive actions. If the

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

number of incidents is increasing, while the number of suspensions and expulsions is decreasing, there is an impact on the classroom that appears to be going unaddressed. Thereby teachers and students suffer. The primary focus of the district must always be keeping ALL students safe. Based on the data provided, there is no way to determine if the district is meeting that charge.

Based on constituent feedback in District 3, there is growing frustration among teachers and families concerning the levels of student safety ensured by the district. Almost daily, I hear from families affected by the suspension/expulsion policy. Of grave concern is that 458 students have left the district during the last three months--from 10/3/18 to 1/15/19.

It must be noted that in drafting a new policy in regards to suspensions and expulsions for elementary students, a teacher focus group was convened, but their recommendations were not incorporated into the final policy. This also affects culture and morale. Teachers continue to ask, "Does Dr. Joseph really want my feedback?" Many teachers conclude Dr. Joseph does not want honest feedback from teachers.

The change in policy was announced on the Monday before Thanksgiving with little or no instruction to principals. It was done without a communication piece or timeline. Principals were left to interpret policy for themselves. This is not a recipe for success.

The policy seems to overly focus on race while not sufficiently addressing poverty. We need to provide necessary supports for teachers and unruly students who disrupt instruction. I'm interested in investigating the employment of trauma specialists.

We continue to implement policy without necessary supports in place. This concerns me because successful implementation is dependent on stakeholder buy-in. If implemented poorly, results reflect the haphazard approach while stakeholders lose confidence in policy before it has a chance to take root. This hinders maximum benefit. I would like more details in a timely manner, about what plans leadership envisions to secure necessary supports for students and teachers.

Page 4: Section Two: Our People

Q5 2.1 Employee Relations and Development: The Director is ...

Ensuring that employee morale and satisfaction are increasing. **Unsatisfactory**

Ensuring that MNPS is recruiting and retaining effective teachers. **Unsatisfactory**

Q6 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section Two (Our People)?

Dr. Joseph became the DOS with "full" board support indicated by a unanimous vote. We were so proud to elect the first African-American DOS. I personally was one of his most avid supporters, yet Dr. Joseph attempts to paint me and other board members as "racist" when we disagree with some of his unprofessional and possibly unethical procedures. Dr. Joseph has caused a vast racial separation on the board and throughout the community!

Dr. Joseph has been leading the district for 2.5 years and unfortunately, the district is making poor progress under his leadership. Some of MNPS top educators and administrators have left the district. The state Teacher of the Year left this year. Since Dr. Joseph took the reins, morale has consistently deteriorated. Human Resources department has been problematic. MNPS enrollment is consistently decreasing even though 100 people move to Nashville each day. Historically, this decrease in enrollment comes after years of consistent increased enrollment. I have to ask if this a result of Dr. Joseph's poor leadership, as well as his limited experience and skill.

Page 5: Section Three: Our Organization

Q7 3.1 Planning and Administration: The Director is ...

Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.

Unsatisfactory

Q8 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section Three (Our Organization)?

Even though Corey Harkey vouched for Dr. Joseph, lawsuits have mushroomed as well as negative news stories indicating Dr. Joseph broke the law. The Metro audit also revealed procurement practice problems which I hope will be rectified in the future. Student enrollment has steadily decreased. Piggyback contracts have multiplied. Unauthorized Purchase Requests have increased significantly.

The board felt the need to hire an internal auditor to monitor spending as well as ensure compliance with state and federal regulations even as we decreased the amount of consent agenda spending from \$100,000 to only \$25,000. Trust has been severely shattered.

The district is facing several lawsuits based on its handling of sexual harassment and retaliation incidents. It has already been established, by the districts own admission, that MNPS failed to provide a safe working environment for several of its female employees.

As reported on Channel 5 this week, sexual harassment scandals may cost MNPS at least \$350,000. Yet previously the board was informed by attorney, Corey Harkey, that the director handled Sam Braden complaints according to policy.

It was interesting to read all the emails from Channel 5 News relating to the contract for Performance Matters. The emails demonstrated staff's desire to follow proper protocols and procedures but Dr. Joseph apparently attempted to rush contracts through, resulting in possibly breaking state law and circumventing board approval in many instances. Additionally, the piggyback contracts appear to cost the district more money rather than better pricing as Dr. Joseph indicated on the board floor.

It needs to be noted that Dr. Joseph's teacher's license is under review by the Tennessee State Board of Education while it investigates charges that the director failed to report teacher misconduct cases. The director has repeatedly found the state's licensure laws challenging and just this summer promoted an administrator who did not have the proper license to a director position.

Several employees who have friendships with the the director, have been paid at levels incongruent with payroll schedules.

We are waiting for the completion of the Bone, McAllister report but on the surface there seems to be a lack of consistency in how employee complaints are handled. Without that report, once again I do not feel a complete evaluation can be given in this area.

The pay for the top two employees in HR is over \$350,000 a year. Their work has been problematic and resulted in many lawsuits which have resulted in millions of dollars in lawsuits. Due to this, the board is paying \$100,000 to Bone, McAllester, Norton to investigate HR practices. Therefore, the costs amount to almost a half million dollars for HR to pay the top two executives and evaluate the top two leaders. How can we ask for more money from Metro City Council when Dr. Joseph does such a poor job of choosing leaders he refers to as "Best in the Country"?

Even though new board policies were enacted during 2018 that were vetted by administration, placed on the website for weeks in order for the community to offer feedback and then approved during board meetings, Dr. Joseph did not follow many policies passed by the board. I requested an emergency governance meeting in April 2018 to discuss the following violations.

1. It's imperative that the RFP process is followed without exception. Revisit policy 2.800. Expenditure of Funds, "No expenditures shall be made except on an approved purchase order or contract. "

2. In policy 2.805 "Purchases made by anyone not authorized by the appropriate officials shall become the personal responsibility of the persons making the purchase agreement. The board will not, under any circumstances, be responsible for payment for any materials, supplies or services purchased by unauthorized individuals or in an un-prescribed manner. "

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

3. Revisit policy 2.805 “The school system will purchase competitively and seek maximum educational value for every dollar expended. Authorization to purchase shall be provided by the board.”
4. Policy 2.808 states” All purchases made by the school system shall be by purchase order or formal contract, and no purchase shall be made nor payment approved unless covered by an approved purchase order.
5. Vendor Relations 2.809: “Each order will be placed on the basis of quality, price and delivery. Past services will be a factor, if all other considerations are equal. No person officially connected with or employed by the school system will be an agent for or have any financial compensation or reward of any kind from any vendor for the sale of supplies, materials, equipment or service.”
6. TSBA recommends board approval for contracts and expenditures over \$25,000. I recommend we reconsider TSBA’s recommendation rather than the \$100,000 cap currently in practice. (This was accomplished.)
7. Revisit 2.806 “The lowest and or best bid shall be accepted, provided the purchaser reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part of any bid. “
8. Revisit Comparability of Services 2.300 “A system wide salary schedule is adopted annually.” I recommend any salaries not in alignment with salary schedule be rectified immediately.
9. Additional support from TSBA is requested for discussion at committee meeting.

I asked the Chair to convene an Ethics Committee according to policy 1.106 to discuss possible violation of policies. Anna Shepherd, then-Chair, refused to convene the committee.

The Governance committee met but Dr. Joseph did not attend nor did he even respond to any of my comments or assertions that he consistently broke policies enacted by the board. Not only did Dr. Joseph not attend the emergency Governance meeting, he offered no reason for his absence, nor did he send a representative to respond to allegations. As a consequence, Dr. Joseph's unethical behaviors have continued and the board has remained silent, failing to take action.

Page 6: Section Four: Our Community

Q9 4.1 Communications and Family Engagement: The Director is ...

Ensuring effective public relations with the media and other external stakeholders.

Unsatisfactory

Q10 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Four (Our Community)?

Running away from cameras at the Nashville Public Library is difficult to explain to taxpayers. Even when Dr. Joseph recently sat down with Phil Williams, he got up and walked out of the room when Phil asked about the Performance Matters contract. This behavior made Joseph look guilty and it bodes poorly during budget season. Although I can’t speak to his guilt or innocence, there is growing evidence from Channel 5 that Dr. Joseph appears to skip necessary steps to ensure compliance with the law. It’s clear he has broken state law regarding failure to report teacher misconduct cases. Presently his license is under review by the State Board of Education.

Dr. Joseph must follow state law! He must plan more efficiently and effectively and hire personnel who will help keep him out of the newspapers and nightly news. Excellent personnel were in place when Dr. Joseph arrived in Nashville but many have left or been replaced. I hear from staff that when they explain the correct procedures and policies MNPS has abided by in the past such as adhering to the salary scale, Dr. Joseph demands the change and threatens to fire them. I have to wonder how many administrators have left because they refused to break the law or engage in unethical behaviors. From reading the emails posted on Channel5.com, many employees tried to steer Dr. Joseph along the right path regarding contracts and RFP requirements and processes; however, Joseph apparently pushed ahead to get his way and award contracts to his friends and acquaintances rather than listen to advice from long-term employees who knew and advised him and his staff on correct procedures.

On a recent snow day, the district failed to communicate the strategy for the day to teachers and parents until well past the start of school. This is the third year in a row that execution of inclement weather policy has failed to meet acceptable standards. A recent posting on MNPS’s Facebook page in regard to an inclement weather day generated over 800 responses; the vast majority were negative. How is MNPS assuaging those stakeholders concerns?

The stories focusing on district employees are a welcome addition. I appreciate the light being shone on these hard-working and dedicated individuals.

The district’s communication strategy continues to be one of reaction vs proaction. Even at this point of the year, the communications department appears to be in a continual running battle with the media. The majority of negative stories have come from Channel 5, but all major stations have aired negative stories on MNPS with regularity. Clearly there is much more negative press than positive since Dr. Joseph’s arrival. Rather than learning from his mistakes, he paints Phil Williams as a racist. Evidence continues to mount that Dr. Joseph hides his incompetence with the race card. This is most unfortunate, harmful to our city and school district! Previously, I’ve spent hours on the phone talking with Dr. Joseph about such issues but nothing changed.

Page 7: Section Five: Accomplishments and Challenges

Q11 5.1 Assessing the Past: What have been the most significant accomplishments of the Director during the first half of the school year?

The director reduced the number of negative discipline responses, not the number of incidents. That is an important distinction.

In fact, none of the director’s cited “greatest accomplishments” are completed works with measurable success rates. Is narrowing the focus beneficial? Will the communication department improve because of a hiring? It should be noted that this is the fourth hire for that position in two years.

I will offer one success story the director does deserve credit: paying for test associated with advanced academics. The district has increased access for more students. For this he deserves commendation if it is not the first thing he cuts during budget season.

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

Q12 What have been the most significant challenges MNPS faced during the first half of the school year, and how did the Director address them?

CHALLENGE: The ability to implement meaningful policy. I believe the director often has good ideas but fails to execute implementation thoughtfully. Examples include: changes in grading policy for middle school, teacher compensation, discipline policy, inclement weather days, DonorsChoose policy, suspensions and expulsions policy, etc. Part of the problems come from failure to thoroughly plan, effectively evaluate and adequately adjust, based on new information and stakeholder feedback "before" implemented. Once a policy is rolled out, district personnel lose faith when it becomes obvious, administration has failed to evaluate implementation of the policy in a professional and thorough manner.

CHALLENGE: Lack of trust throughout the district. There needs to be a renewed commitment to transparency and communication. Conducting retreats and committee meetings in front of camera's will aid in this endeavor.

CHALLENGE: Address the impacts of poverty on students. The districts needs to make sure all schools employ trauma specialists. We must counter the negative effects of ACES as aggressively as possible.

CHALLENGE: Ensuring MNPS is staffed with the highest caliber professionals possible. We cannot continue to lose talent at the present rate. We must focus on recruiting and retaining professional educators. The director must present himself in schools, in public and at principals' meetings in a professional manner in order to attract and retain high level employees.

CHALLENGE: The director needs to learn how to conduct himself professionally. Playing snippet of songs like, "Blow the Whistle" at principals' meeting, making negative remarks about board members publicly, on radio stations and at principals' meetings (insubordination) or remarks about teachers such as:"Teachers want blood and meat." These comments and actions are completely inappropriate and have made me begin to understand why there are so many more sexual harassment cases and lawsuits in MNPS. The director must set the tone and tenor of professionalism and BECOME a leader. He has failed miserably in this manner! Rather than addressing issues, he continues to make the same mistakes.

CHALLENGE: Salaries for the top two employees in HR is over \$350,000 a year not including benefits. Their work has been problematic and resulted in many million-dollar lawsuits. Additionally the board hired Bone, McAllester, Norton to investigate HR practices. Therefore, the cost amounts to almost a half million dollars for HR's top two executives and also to investigate and evaluate their work. How can we ask for more money from Metro City Council when Dr. Joseph does such a poor job of choosing leaders he refers to as the "Best in the Country"? This needs immediate attention; however, things remain the same.

CHALLENGE: Because of lack of trust in the director, the board unanimously voted to lower the threshold for board review by 75%. (From \$100K to \$25K) The board is now exploring hiring permanent internal auditors to monitor future spending in the district. This necessary expenditure will likely cost the district another \$200K a year, at a time when teachers are underpaid and overworked. Additionally it has become evident that a no-bid \$1.8 million dollar contract was pushed through central office and the board while staff may not even be utilizing the program that resulted in this enormous expenditure. If we can't count on Dr. Joseph to get his house in order, the board must move expediently to choose his replacement. Our students deserve better. Taxpayers, council members, teachers and principals demand accountability.

#4

COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Saturday, February 09, 2019 1:16:45 PM
Last Modified: Saturday, February 09, 2019 1:23:59 PM
Time Spent: 00:07:13
Email: gini@giniforschools.com
IP Address: 172.8.111.12

Page 2: Board Member Information

Q1 Please provide your first and last name.

Gini Pupo-Walker

Page 3: Section One: Our Students

Q2 1.1 Academics: The Director is ...

Ensuring that all students are achieving academic growth in reading and math. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that MNPS is closing achievement gaps among African-American students and other students of color. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that a higher percentage of third-graders are reading at grade level. **Meets Expectations**

Q3 1.2 School Climate and Culture: The Director is ...

Ensuring that classroom attendance is improving and truancy is decreasing. **Meets Expectations**

Ensuring that MNPS is demonstrating overall positive gains in school climate and culture. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that student suspensions and expulsions are decreasing. **Meets Expectations**

Q4 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section One (Our Students)?

1.1a

MNPS has now had MAP as a formative assessment tool for two years, and there is data to show the state of student progress year to year, quarter to quarter. Student proficiency rates are low, but there is some evidence of growth, in particular in the elementary tier. In the cycle of MAP testing in Reading from Aug 2018 – Nov 2018, we saw growth in the elementary grades, but declines in grades in every middle school grade as well as 9th grade, and overall lower rates of growth compared to their national peers. The MAP results in Mathematics for fall semester show no change or growth in relative achievement, and as with Reading, middle school students are losing ground between assessments. Alarming, only 24% of students are considered proficient (in the 4th or 5th quintile) in math and 31% are proficient in Reading in grades 2-9. We were not provided with data on MAP performance in Aug and Nov of 2017, but that

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

comparison would be beneficial as well.

Our early reading and math assessments for K and 1 we have mixed results on the percentage of students who have risk levels and needs for intervention in reading or math.

According to analysis conducted by NWEA (the company that provides MAP testing) and MNPS, there is a high correlation or alignment between MAP scores and TNReady scores. TNReady results for 2017-2018 were released in the fall of 2018, with MNPS receiving an overall growth score of Level 1 out of 5 as a district, and a 1 in Social Studies, Science, and Math and a Level 2 in growth in English. Level 1 is considered the lowest level of growth possible on TNReady. While acknowledging that there were challenges with the online administration of TNReady in the high schools, the assessment was strictly pencil and paper in grades 3-8, eliminating the possibility that testing issues were a factor in our performance.

In 2018 the number of Priority Schools in MNPS doubled, and nearly half of our Priority Schools are middle schools. Additionally, the schools that have been on the Priority School list the longest, and that are in jeopardy of state takeover, are all middle schools.

Our levels of proficiency, as well as our middle school rates of growth are cause for concern. The information provided for this interim evaluation did include any analysis of the decline in middle school growth, nor the plan for using the MAP data to isolate root causes and implementing plans for improvement. I am concerned that we will continue to lose families after elementary schools, and that we are not equipping our students to enter high school and be successful.

The single most important work of our district leadership is to address and improve academic achievement. We must find a way to leverage the expertise of teachers and staff and to empower them use our MAP data to differentiate and support students in order to grow.

1.1b

MNPS has considerable gaps in achievement between racial or ethnic student groups. While the overall levels of achievement are low, we see striking gaps, particularly for African-American and Latino students in comparison to their White or Asian peers. Gaps in rates of growth between these groups are pronounced, but not as striking as the gaps in achievement in both reading and math. These gaps require a sustained effort at every level of the district, and we know that these student groups actually make up the majority of the district. These are not isolated groups but rather a plurality of our students.

I am disappointed that we were not offered similar data on Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged or English Learners. I feel that we will have an incomplete picture or conversation about improvement without also examining their rates of achievement and growth. I would also like to have seen longitudinal data on these groups in order to see if we are reducing these gaps over time.

Dr. Joseph has spoken at length about addressing inequities in opportunity and outcomes in our district, and has challenged us to think of equity as a central lever to improving achievement. The root causes of some of these gaps are related to poverty, and require a cross-sector approach in our city, but the fact remains that we have far too many students who enter and remain behind for their time in our schools.

1.1c Reading Levels

MNPS students in third grade did show an increase in the median national percentile by two points. The packet did not include reading performance by quintile for third graders. While it is important to note how our students are performing compared to other test takers, norm-referenced scores don't tell us much about whether a student has achieved a particular degree of proficiency. Last year's second graders, (this year's third graders) had the same growth in terms of national percentile, and 28% of them were in the 4th and 5th percentile.

The Nashville Literacy Collaborative and their Blueprint for Early Childhood Success is an important effort that has the potential to yield

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

results for our students. Dr. Joseph's support for the Blueprint and the Collaborative have been strong, and I would love to see more about how that Blueprint is playing out in schools now, as well as what other strategies might be yielding success in some of our schools.

1.2a Attendance and Truancy

We have seen an improvement in the number of students with satisfactory attendance, which is a number that is hard to move. The percentage of students with chronic absences that are categorized as moderate and severe has remained flat, and our overall chronic absenteeism rates are the same as last year so far. Our truancy rates are slightly higher than they were last year at this time, with 22% truant, or about 18,000 students. It is a concern that we cut in half our truancy staff last year, while our numbers remain high and the need for staff remains as urgent as ever.

Addressing absenteeism requires a district-wide effort, and I have been pleased to see a concerted PR campaign by MNPS, Attendance Matters, to talk about attendance and the importance of coming to school every day. This campaign and toolkit must be embedded in day-to-day practices in the schools in order to really change our culture on attendance.

1.2b School Climate and Culture

The school climate and culture surveys are helpful, but I would have liked to see the actual questions and how they are framed. I would also have liked to see year over year comparisons for teachers as well as students. I am also disappointed that there is no survey data from parents for this section, nor a clear plan to gather input from parents in the district.

In terms of the student responses, I am encouraged that the highest ratings went to academic press and student-teacher relationships, and hopeful that we can find ways to address issues of culture related to student to belonging, student relationships, student voice, and school engagement. These are important measures that a more intense focus on SEL and student supports can address. I commend Dr. Joseph for highlighting the need for more SEL funding and partnerships for our schools.

The breakdown of surveys by tier is helpful, and it is not surprising that elementary school students reported higher levels of satisfaction than middle and high, but alarming nonetheless to see the drop off by tier. I would like to know if MNPS is looking at these surveys at the school level to see who might be getting higher rates of satisfaction, in order to find out what they are doing and how we can replicate practices. There are clear areas here where professional learning and teacher and administrator supports can make a difference. I would like to know what actions have been taken based on these survey results from students.

The teacher climate survey is helpful information. I would like to know what percentage of teachers participated, and would have liked to see the actual questions that were posed. I'm encouraged that teachers feel that they can reach many types of students and incorporate cultures into instruction, and by the higher ratings on school climate. I am worried about the fact that the questions on leadership, professional learning and feedback and coaching were the lowest rated areas. This is something that is completely within our control, and teacher support from school leadership is an important lever for improvement in instruction and achievement. I'm also concerned about staff reporting that they have low levels of confidence in their relationships with families, especially in middle and high. This is an area where the district has abdicated responsibility to a large degree, with no single person or department responsible for a family engagement strategy in the district, and it shows in the teacher responses.

Ultimately, my question with any of these surveys remains the same. What strategies have been identified to address some of the issues highlighted in the surveys?

The inclusion of findings from the Tribal study that was conducted in 2012 is interesting. I'm curious if any of these learnings were incorporated into planning and professional development from the outset of this administration, especially if there was a consistent theme about MNPS central office culture and its impact on school success dating from 2012. The themes remain the same today, and history appears to be repeating itself.

I would be curious to know if staff and administrators feel that the quadrant model with Community Superintendents and EDSSIs has improved the relationship with and accessibility of central office staff. I would also like to know what the outcomes were of the 1.28.19

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

Immersion Learning experience – what did you learn from schools and how will central office adjust supports or practices based on those visits?

1.2c Suspensions and Expulsions

According to the data provided in the packet, we are on track to exceed discipline numbers in nearly every category this year in comparison to last year, with the number of unique students disciplined increasing year over year. Our rates of suspension and expulsion are up year over year as well. One of our three KPI areas of focus this year is decreasing the disproportionality of African-American suspensions and expulsions, but the attendance data is not broken out by race in our packet, so it is hard to assess movement on this number.

I commend the Dr. Joseph on his decision to address elementary discipline practices, but there is important work to be done to make sure that schools and staff have the supports in place to implement this policy successfully. I was pleased to see the formation of a task force to help inform practices and identify potential challenges to the elementary policy. I believe staff want to have alternatives to suspension, but they need the tools and the training to do so, and a commitment to fidelity to the implementation of practices across schools. I recognize that funding is a barrier in many ways, so I am glad to hear we are seeking the support of external partners for PD and potential partnerships for housing staff in buildings.

Page 4: Section Two: Our People

Q5 2.1 Employee Relations and Development: The Director is ...

Ensuring that employee morale and satisfaction are increasing.

Needs Improvement

Ensuring that MNPS is recruiting and retaining effective teachers.

Exceeds Expectations

Q6 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section Two (Our People)?

2.1a Employee Relations

Dr. Joseph acknowledges morale is low in his packet, and all qualitative and quantitative evidence points in that direction. The dysfunction at the board level, and the conflict between Dr. Joseph and board members has had a direct impact on culture and climate throughout the district. This sense of instability is detrimental to our ability to create positive conditions for learning, and fosters a climate of distrust and fear of taking positions or speaking out. This is highlighted in teacher climate surveys, with teachers expressing low levels of confidence in the leadership and professional learning and support that they are getting.

The single most important in-school factor for student success is teacher quality, which requires focused attention on providing support for school leaders, identifying PD and providing opportunities for teachers to lead and develop strategies that best serve their students. There is a constant battle in education between providing autonomy to schools and teachers on instruction, while making sure that we are using high quality instructional curriculum, materials and strategies. The instability created by changes in curriculum, or the sense that there is too much top down control on what is being taught, has also led to low morale. Much of this can be addressed through strong collaboration, communication and partnership with educators in schools. I am pleased that Dr. Joseph has started meeting with a teacher cabinet, and getting input on substantive issues and solutions from them.

There have been significant challenges shared with me on HR practices, ease (or lack of) in hiring new teachers, and the processes in place to fill open positions. The HR shop's role is to remove barriers to staffing schools, and to address issues with employees. The sexual harassment scandals have created an impression that rules are not applied fairly or appropriately, and there is work to be done to rebuild trust with teachers and staff on this matter. I am glad to see that there have been trainings on compliance and reporting in this area. This should not be an area for growth for us. There have been policies and procedures in place on addressing employee discipline for many years, but the public scandals have created a sense of distrust in the system, and the fairness in which policies are applied.

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

I love the emphasis on physical and mental health for our staff, and think that is an important accomplishment for this administration. This work is stressful, and providing access to supports in this area can be of benefit to the entire system.

I would like to know more about the customer service survey, and the 93% that scored satisfied. I don't understand what this is in reference to – or if this is simply a score for the effectiveness of our Employee Resource Center.

2.1b Recruiting and retaining teachers

According to data that has been provided in the packet and at board meetings on hiring and staff, there does not appear to be a statistically significant difference in numbers of teachers staying or leaving, according to the last four years of data. We are slightly above the national average of 84% of teacher retention as a district, and our numbers have stayed within a percentage point (85-87% retention) for the past four years.

Despite a public narrative to the contrary, it does not appear that teachers are leaving in greater numbers overall than in previous years, but we have seen 134 resignations from August to December, and 22 school administrator resignations. Those are hard positions to fill mid-year and I know for a fact that some of them have not been filled to date. Most alarming is the high number of vacancies in our Priority Schools. I would like to see a more concerted effort to recruit and compensate teachers more for serving in those schools. I would also like to see the distribution of level 4-5 teachers in these schools and know more about how we are maximizing our most effective teachers.

Any classroom without a teacher is one classroom too many. I would like to know why there are such low rates of participation in exit surveys, and what is being done with the information that is being gathered in those surveys.

We also had fewer vacancies on Day 1 one of school in 2018 than we did in 2017. I am glad to see that we are moving up our timeline for offering early agreements to students in educator preparation programs, and being more aggressive in visiting them and sponsoring recruiting events.

I am particularly excited to hear about the work being done to have MNPS become an alternative certification provider, and also that we have high rates of participation in the New Teacher Academy. I would like to see a more concerted approach to hiring teachers of color, in particular Latino teachers or bilingual teachers, where there is significant underrepresentation of those populations in our schools. There is a plethora of evidence to show that teachers of color improve the likelihood of student success on a range of metrics – and that their voice and presence in buildings are important. Our school personnel should reflect the students we serve, and we must be more thoughtful about how to address that.

I would like to see higher participation rates in the MNPS Mentorship program. 45 district mentors for 483 new teachers is not sufficient, and we know that first year teachers need special supports and opportunities to learn with peers.

Page 5: Section Three: Our Organization

Q7 3.1 Planning and Administration: The Director is ...

Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.

Needs Improvement

Q8 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Three (Our Organization)?

While I am glad to see that MNPS has provided trainings on “Leadership Obligations”, “Progressive Corrective Action” and “Legal and Investigative Responsibilities” training to staff, the fact remains that Dr. Joseph’s administrator license is under review at this time due the lack of reporting of several dozen misconduct cases to the educator licensing authority, or the State Board of Education. Regardless of whether an employee was at fault in terms of collecting and reporting misconduct cases, the ultimate responsibility lies with the Director of Schools. The legislation that was passed last year upped the ante on the consequences for reporting, and the fact that his administrator license is under review contributes to the sense of instability and lack of confidence in his leadership.

The continued controversy surrounding contracts, such as with Performance Matters, also has a destabilizing effect on confidence in our ability to follow the processes we have in place for public scrutiny of proposals and contracts.

I am glad to see Corey Harkey has a regular and informed role in board meetings, and participates in leadership meetings as well. She has been of help to me as chair of the Governance Committee.

Page 6: Section Four: Our Community

Q9 4.1 Communications and Family Engagement: The Director is ...

Ensuring effective public relations with the media and other external stakeholders.

Needs Improvement

Q10 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Four (Our Community)?

Dr. Joseph has had challenges with the media and public relations throughout the course of his tenure as Director. The current media narrative is overwhelmingly negative, and there is a seemingly endless list of negative stories to be told, with the constant trickle of news on sexual harassment lawsuits, Priority Schools, the ongoing driver conversations, contracts issues, conflict with board members, or of Dr. Joseph’s administrative license. While the sensationalism and slant of the reporting coming from the media often appears personal, overzealous and out of proportion at times, the end result is continued instability and chaos. My wish is that the media had the same sort of intensity in reporting on issues of achievement, and how our students are performing. Perhaps most frustrating for me is that this news cycle distracts us from the amazing things happening in our schools every day, including many significant achievements and success, and heroic efforts by staff, which are the stories that are not heard above the din of controversy.

I agree that hiring Rob Johnson has been an accomplishment, but it took far too long to do so, and in the meantime we had seemingly perpetual challenges with getting ahead of news stories or creating our own narrative on what we are trying to accomplish as a district. We have not been able to recruit and retain a communications teams over time, losing key members of the team who had relationships with the media or had a strong working knowledge of how to manage internal communications. While Dr. Joseph is not singularly responsible for telling the story of our district, he is the face of our school system, and must be able to articulate a vision for education in Nashville, and to line up all elements of his communications team to support that vision. A prime example was his inability to tie the budget cycle last year, or the preliminary budget conversations this year to a larger vision for our schools. There were multiple communication missteps last year in the budget process that are a continual and current source of concern from my constituents.

Additionally, Dr. Joseph’s decision to write a public letter to Commissioner McQueen in August of 2018 declaring his lack of confidence in TNReady and a call for a pause in testing was a mistake. In doing so, he unilaterally discounted not only the low levels of achievement and growth we saw this year, but also simultaneously negated the bright spots where we saw tremendous growth and success. This letter was sent one week before the State announced we were getting a 1 out of 5 on growth in our 2018 testing, making the statement appear to be a complete abdication of any responsibility for the results.

Similarly, we have seen low levels of public communication on Priority Schools, with little to no public conversations with parents and partners in those schools, or a sense of urgency around the doubling size of the number of schools. The families whose children attend those schools expect a strong and bold plan, and want to have confidence in our ability to turn the schools around. If there has been a concerted effort to reach out to those communities I have not been aware of it. This leaves us on unsure footing as the debate over vouchers begins now in our legislature, and exposes us to alternative narratives about our ability to manage the improvement ourselves. Also, our relationship with the State Department of Education should be one of collaboration and partnership, with the mutual goal of doing all we can to improve outcomes for students in our Priority Schools. They have tremendous power to decide what happens to our schools on the priority school list, and we should do all we can to give them confidence that we can manage the improvement process.

I also believe that we have not been effective in reaching out to families and we do not have a clear communication and partnership strategy with our parents. Part of this stems from the fact that we do not have a family engagement department in this district (which speaks to the value we place on parents) and have not made efforts to hire someone for this role. This is a source of concern for me, and speaks to our belief, or lack of, that parents bring value to the educational process.

Q11 5.1 Assessing the Past: What have been the most significant accomplishments of the Director during the first half of the school year?

Dr. Joseph hired a strong Chief of Staff in Marcy Singer-Gabella, and she has supported creating a coherent vision and set of processes for moving the district forward, including launching MNPSNext. She has been accessible and provided a connection between research and practice that has been valuable to me as a board member. Hiring Rob Johnson was also an important accomplishment, and my hope is that he will be able to help reframe the narrative about our district soon.

Dr. Joseph's emphasis on literacy and partnering with agencies across the city in that effort has been helpful as well. I am pleased that Dr. Joseph was able to retain funding for fees for exams that bear college credit, like AP and IB. This reinforces the message that we want to remove barriers to access and opportunity. Likewise, his efforts to expand our partnerships with post-secondary institutions like Nashville State Community College have a direct benefit on our students.

I'm pleased to see that Dr. Joseph has tapped Dr. Sonia Stewart to lead the Principal pipeline development. Her work in MNPS is exemplary and I believe she will help build a strong pipeline of principals.

I am glad that MNPS decided to provide additional funding for our Community Achieves and Communities in Schools programs, and believe that these models are making a tangible difference in our schools and for our students and families.

I am also glad that Dr. Joseph has been bold in trying to address discipline disparities, and it is not a small feat to challenge the status quo on long-held practices and beliefs about the role and purpose of discipline in our schools. We have also seen pockets of excellence in student achievement, with English Learners showing important gains and levels of achievement once they exit the program. We have also leveraged STEM grants to support schools in increasing rigor and student engagement. Finally, our Pre-k programs have been recognized nationally for their quality and access, and my hope is that we can expand our pre-k seats year to year to equip our students for kindergarten and beyond.

Q12 What have been the most significant challenges MNPS faced during the first half of the school year, and how did the Director address them?

The single most important challenge facing MNPS is our limited funding, and our ability to get the funding we need to do the work at hand. The continued dysfunction of our board is alarming to me, and will make it impossible to garner confidence from our Metro Council or state leaders in order to get the funding we need to be successful. Dr. Joseph bears some responsibility for the combative nature of board and Director relations, and our inability to get on the same page is taking a serious toll on staff, students and the community. This climate is not sustainable.

Dr. Joseph has experienced significant challenges in managing the seemingly endless negative press on his performance and the district's practices. It has been hard for me to understand the foundational elements of his vision for excellence for our schools and students, and to get past they why, and into the how. We have anemic to no growth in student achievement, and chronically low levels of achievement, most particularly for students of color. While this is something that he inherited, he and his team have not laid out a framework that is compelling, nor is it getting results as of yet. I am deeply concerned about the trajectory of our middle schools and high schools, and hope to see more substantive solutions for those tiers.

#5

COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Saturday, February 09, 2019 10:05:55 AM
Last Modified: Sunday, February 10, 2019 10:13:39 AM
Time Spent: Over a day
Email: amymfrogge@yahoo.com
IP Address: 69.139.117.49

Page 2: Board Member Information

Q1 Please provide your first and last name.

Amy Frogge

Page 3: Section One: Our Students

Q2 1.1 Academics: The Director is ...

Ensuring that all students are achieving academic growth in reading and math.	Unsatisfactory
Ensuring that MNPS is closing achievement gaps among African-American students and other students of color.	Unsatisfactory
Ensuring that a higher percentage of third-graders are reading at grade level.	Unsatisfactory

Q3 1.2 School Climate and Culture: The Director is ...

Ensuring that classroom attendance is improving and truancy is decreasing.	Unsatisfactory
Ensuring that MNPS is demonstrating overall positive gains in school climate and culture.	Unsatisfactory
Ensuring that student suspensions and expulsions are decreasing.	Needs Improvement

Q4 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section One (Our Students)?

According to the State Report Card, MNPS has an overall student growth level of one out of five (the lowest possible growth level) for the 2017-18 school year. MNPS earned the lowest possible growth score (one) in every subject area (math, science and social studies), except English Language Arts, in which we earned a two out of five. The State Report Card also indicates that academic achievement (which is correlated with socioeconomics) is also poor. Only 27.4% of students are performing on grade level, and our achievement levels have decreased in math, ELA and science since 2017. (Our performance in social studies has increased.)

Because of problems with state testing, the district has attempted to implement MAP testing as a more reliable measure. However, the MAP testing schedule has not been followed with fidelity. Regardless of problems with testing, it is safe to say that test scores are flat, at best.

According to the State Report Card, our chronic absenteeism rate has increased, our dropout rate has increased, and our graduation rate has decreased. Furthermore, under Dr. Joseph’s leadership, the number of priority schools (those performing in the bottom 5% of the state) has ballooned to 21. Achievement gaps remain substantial and are not closing.

It appears that suspension and expulsion numbers are down this year. However, this has come at the expense of classroom management and student needs. In order to comply with district mandates, principals and teachers have tried to keep their suspension and expulsion numbers down, but little is being done to address student behaviors and needs. Teachers and school administrators are frustrated that they do not have the support they need to manage their classrooms, and many report that classrooms are completely out of control. In our effort to decrease suspensions and expulsions, it’s critical that we provide support for students (trauma-informed specialists, fully implemented restorative justice practices, extra staffing, etc.) and alternatives for teachers. Chronic and escalating discipline problems are upsetting teachers and driving families away from our schools.

Page 4: Section Two: Our People

Q5 2.1 Employee Relations and Development: The Director is ...

Ensuring that employee morale and satisfaction are increasing. **Unsatisfactory**

Ensuring that MNPS is recruiting and retaining effective teachers. **Unsatisfactory**

Q6 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Two (Our People)?

Employee morale continues to plummet. Large numbers of teachers are leaving the district, and many classrooms across the city lack teachers at this point. Teachers are terrified to speak up about problems because of the Director’s vindictive practices. They (as well as other staff members) have been reaching out by the hundreds to a few board members whom they trust, because they feel that there is no other way to express concerns. I wrote the following in my summative evaluation approximately six months ago, and none of these issues appear to have been resolved (except as noted):

“Plummeting employee morale appears to be related primarily to the lack of experienced, competent leadership at top levels, as well as vindictive and arbitrary HR practices, including unfair pay practices. The district is hemorrhaging qualified, experienced administrators, principals, and teachers at a startling rate. Large numbers of highly qualified district leaders and teachers, many of whom were highly commended for their work, have left the district in the past two years. Well over 700 job openings are currently advertised on the MNPS website. Even our most recent Teacher of the Year is leaving for a job in a neighboring county.

There is an appearance of cronyism within the district that benefits a few, but that does not benefit our students. Staff report that new hires are often unqualified and ill-equipped for their work. The administration has failed to properly advertise all positions so as to draw from a pool of the most qualified candidates. Many promotions, new hires, and salary rates seem to be based on friendships or

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

relationships with top administrators, rather than on ability, training, or expertise. For example, someone with no classroom experience whatsoever was hired to lead professional development for the district; her lack of expertise and understanding of the subject matter left teachers appalled. Another employee with only a half a year of experience as a principal was hired to supervise and advise more qualified and experienced principals.

Other employees with terrible reviews in their current positions are being promoted. More specifically, principals with prior relationships with top administrators have been allowed to stay in their positions and are sometimes promoted even when they garner terrible reviews and results. One principal who is friends with a Chief is being paid more than any other principal at her level, even though this principal has less experience and less education than many other principals in the district. MNPS is also paying half the cost for this principal to receive her doctorate.

There is a great deal of mistrust in hiring processes, which appear to be manipulated in favor of certain candidates. This is happening at all levels of hiring, but one specific example involves the process for hiring principals. This process involves a panel of community members who are tasked with selecting the top candidates for the Director to interview. Many who have been involved in the process have complained that the principals who are ultimately hired were not selected by the panel. The underlying problem is that the process is not transparent, and this flawed process has created mistrust.

Many new leaders are viewed as incompetent by experienced staff members and the school administrators and teachers who must work under them. To make up for the deficit in leadership, the district is now spending large sums on consultants to head up work that should be led by our own highly paid district leaders, who are earning much more than previous district leaders. Although the Director has repeatedly stated that the district does not have the capacity to undertake certain initiatives, staff report that many consultants are less informed than existing employees. Some consultants have questioned why they are here. One consultant even commented that those already employed within MNPS know more about the subject matter on which he was advising.

Arbitrary pay practices for employees are also causing major culture problems within the district. Employee raises and salaries have no basis with regard to market demand, and there seems to be no consistency with pay for employees of similar classification. Some employees who are friends or relations to top level administrators and who have less qualifications than other employees are being unfairly paid more than other employees. For example, the spouse of one Chief was paid a unexplained \$24,000 stipend, and when board members asked about the stipend, the Director misinformed the board: First, board members were told there was no stipend. Then, when board members pointed out a salary schedule that included the stipend, Dr. Joseph's team admitted that this employee was paid a stipend, explaining that several similarly situated employees were earning the same stipend. However, when board members verified this wasn't true, the story changed yet again. Board members were then informed that the stipend was for extra duties taken on by this employee; yet the employee's duties actually decreased during the time she was granted the stipend. These sorts of dishonest representations to board members have obviously caused major problems with trust.

In general, salaries for many MNPS employees are inordinately high for government salaries and inconsistent with salaries for similar Metro positions. For example, Dr. Joseph has created three leadership positions with similar titles in Human Resources: the Executive Officer, who earns \$170,000 per year, and two Chief Officers, each earning \$150,000 per year. In contrast, the Human Resources Director for Metro government is paid only \$130,000 annually. Salaries for Executive Officers range from \$130,000 to approximately \$155,000 for similar scope and responsibilities. Inexplicable discrepancies in salaries (not based on the number of staff members, work load, experience, or expertise) cause resentments among employees.

Also, under the previous administration, top administrators earned annual salaries of \$155,000 each. Dr. Joseph has added top level administrators to his staff and now pays four Chiefs \$185,000 per year and another other Chief \$170,000 annually. Former Chief Academic Officer Jay Steele, who earned \$155,000, was alone performing the same job that now is fulfilled by two Chiefs, each earning \$185,000. The Mayor of Nashville earns \$180,000, which means that several second-tier MNPS employees are paid in excess of the mayor's salary. Furthermore, Dr. Joseph's contract calls for an annual salary of \$337,000 (per our yearly budget documents, with a base salary of \$285,000), which is, by far, the highest of any superintendent in the state. (The board, of course, is responsible for approving this salary, per contract.) Dr. Register, Dr. Joseph's predecessor, earned an annual salary of \$266,000. For comparison, the Shelby County Schools superintendent earns \$277,000, the Knox County superintendent earns \$180,000, and the Hamilton County superintendent earns \$170,200. Although the need for raises at top levels was pitched to the board as necessary to attract the most

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

qualified leaders, it does not seem that MNPS is conducting competitive searches to recruit the most competent employees. Rather, it seems that cronyism lies behind pay increases.

Staff members, particularly those working in Central Office, describe the new culture as a 'hostile work environment.' One top administrator has been heard yelling at employees from down the hall. Another administrator has run into an employee's office, snatched papers from the employee's hand, and torn them up in front of the employee. There have been complaints of sexual harassment which were not properly addressed. Sexual harassment is being investigated differently depending upon the accuser and who is being accused. These sorts of unprofessional behaviors should never be tolerated.

Retaliatory behavior by district leaders is causing ongoing dysfunction within the district. Staff members report that new leaders are vindictive toward anyone who questions their practices. Many competent staff members have opted to leave to avoid being forced to comply with what they describe as 'shady' and concerning practices. Employees are expected by the Director and his Chiefs to be 'yes men,' rather than collaborators on the work of the district, and those who are willing to openly question problematic practices are sometimes punished. Some employees report that district leaders have threatened to damage their future job prospects for sharing information about what is happening in the district. This has resulted in a culture of fear and silence at leadership levels.

One problematic issue involved the suspension of a high school coach, which was strangely brought before the board unlike any other previous employee suspension. In this case, the Director had the option of giving the employee a three-day suspension, but instead unnecessarily involved the board in a suspension hearing matter without attempting to terminate the employee. (The normal practice would have been to give a three-day suspension; more serious infractions typically result in terminating the employee.) Rather than resolving an issue within his full control, the Director opted to require the board to publicly vote on a ten-day suspension, which brought an internal HR matter to public attention. The ten-day suspension will now require a public hearing at substantial cost to the district. The way in which the matter was handled seems peculiar punishment for this employee, outside other norms, and it appears to be no coincidence that the employee is related to a Central Office official.

Furthermore, the sudden termination of the Reading Recovery program caused major issues with regard to both employee and board relations. In a move that appeared to be clearly retaliatory toward one board member, the Director waited until the very last day of the budget season to cut 87.5 Reading Recovery teachers, who are the district's most highly trained, elementary level reading teachers. It is unprecedented for a Director to insert a major new change in the budget on the day of the final (and third) vote for the budget. In this case, the Director opted to cut a program he had highly lauded both during his initial interviews with the board and during last year's budget hearings before the Council. In fact, he had chosen to include Reading Recovery in the budget only weeks before calling to dismantle it. The program, however, was a favorite of one board member, and after this board member called for an audit of the district, the Director suddenly decided to pull the program.

During the thirty minutes immediately prior to the board meeting at which the board voted to cut the Reading Recovery program, the Director was actually firing Reading Recovery leaders. He obviously knew he already had the votes to kill the program. The board has never before been asked to make a substantial change like this at the eleventh hour, on the very day of our final vote, after we have reviewed two other budget drafts, and the timing of this change was particularly poor. Although the Director promised that schools could still opt to utilize the Reading Recovery program, school budgets had already been set, so there was no money for extra programming. This meant that none of teachers could remain in their areas of certification, and many of the teachers worry that they will be unable to maintain their certification, in which the district has invested \$1.5 million for training over the last five years. Because of the timing of the decision, there were also limited positions open for the teachers, which meant many were not able to work within their areas of expertise and training. At this point, no schools will be able to fund the Reading Recovery program next year.

The Director also promised that there was a plan to 'repurpose' the Reading Recovery teachers and promised them a signing bonus to work in priority schools, apparently not realizing that all of them were already working in high-needs schools and some were already working in priority schools. However, there was no plan in place for these teachers, and even after hours of meeting with administrators, the teachers still had no idea where they were to be rehired.

After the program was cut, political pressure mounted to place the teachers, and the district began to scramble to place them. In response to questions from Metro Council members, MNPS shared a list of Reading Recovery teacher placements showing that over

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

half of the teachers were either not placed, leaving the district, or working in areas outside their expertise (e.g., teaching EL, special needs, middle school, high school, art). The very next day, however, the district suddenly announced that all teachers had been placed. As it turns out, not all teachers had been notified of the placements, and many teachers were assigned to any open positions the district could find. The teachers were surprised by this announcement because they were not consulted on where they might want to teach, and some were assigned to schools at extreme distances from their homes. Some had already accepted positions, but because these teachers were not consulted, they were unnecessarily placed in other positions. Many were placed in positions outside their areas of expertise. When some teachers reached out to the schools to which they were assigned, they learned that the positions there didn't actually exist; the assignment was a mistake. In at least one case, two teachers were assigned to the same position.

I share this extended story because it illustrates several points. First, while it is certainly appropriate to engage the board in a larger discussion about the efficacy of literacy programming, the way in which this was handled was very unprofessional, and it has eroded confidence in top MNPS leadership. (Many of the Reading Recovery teachers report that they have lost trust in the administration and no longer want to work for MNPS, and other respected staff members have said they are actually 'embarrassed' by how the Director has treated one board member over this affair.) It demonstrates the Director's willingness to prioritize petty, personal politics over professionalism and retaining/supporting excellent teachers, as well as vindictiveness by the Director toward his own employers. It also demonstrates disorganization and a lack of planning on the part of the administration, which has directly impacted some of our best teachers. Most importantly, however, this change will have a negative impact on students because there is still not structured literacy plan in place to make up for the deficit caused by removal of the Reading Recovery program. We cannot cut programs without a clear plan in place to ensure that students will receive the instruction and interventions they need to succeed."

Page 5: Section Three: Our Organization

Q7 3.1 Planning and Administration: The Director is ...

Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements. **Unsatisfactory**

Q8 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section Three (Our Organization)?

The Director has violated state law by failing to report teacher misconduct cases. He has also violated state law (1) by "piggybacking" out-of-state contracts (state law allows "piggybacking" only on in-state contracts) and (2) by "piggybacking" a contract and then changing the terms of the contract. (When the terms are changed, the contract should be open to competitive bidding.) One set of the no-bid contracts was given to his friends. Furthermore, he has violated board policy by failing to engage in competitive bidding as per policy and by failing to bring contracts before the board as per policy. There have been numerous instances of legal and ethical lapses by the Director, many of which appear to be fully intentional.

Page 6: Section Four: Our Community

Q9 4.1 Communications and Family Engagement: The Director is ...

Ensuring effective public relations with the media and other external stakeholders. **Unsatisfactory**

Q10 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section Four (Our Community)?

The Director has placed himself at odds with the media, as well as with parents, teachers, and school leaders.

Page 7: Section Five: Accomplishments and Challenges

Q11 5.1 Assessing the Past: What have been the most significant accomplishments of the Director during the first half of the school year?

The first half of the school year has been a disaster. The Director has tried to spin his "accomplishments" as part of a PR push, but his statement is misleading.

Q12 What have been the most significant challenges MNPS faced during the first half of the school year, and how did the Director address them?

This year has brought increasing challenges:

1. Sexual harassment cases have been mishandled and swept under the rug. The Director has failed to conduct proper investigations and to place accused offenders on administrative leave as required by policy. The Director informed the board that there was no merit to one series of sexual harassment allegations only weeks before our attorneys admitted many of the allegations in court documents. I had to review the case myself and send an email to the board and staff to address the fact that the board had been misled. Only after media coverage and board push-back about the handling of the case was the Director willing to place the alleged offender on leave and conduct a proper investigation. Not long afterwards, the district quickly settled this case.
2. The Director has engaged in unethical and illegal practices, as detailed previously. He has violated both state law and board policy.
3. The Director has continued to stir division on the board and in the community. He has helped stage events to attack and marginalize board members who question his practices. (He is particularly fixated on one board member.) The Director sends out fliers to encourage protests and brings in his fraternity brothers to meetings to verbally attack some board members. He tries to pit board members against one another and even attacks board members in his "Weekly Memo" (which he sends out to a large number of people), on radio interviews, and in conversations with stakeholders. This summer, he played a misogynistic song at a principals meeting with these lyrics: "Bitch! You know they can't play on my court. Can't hang with the big dogs. Stay on the porch." After he sampled the song, he laughed and told principals that this is what he thinks about during our board meetings. Finally, numerous staff members complain about the Director's inappropriate relationships with some board members.
4. Employee morale is the lowest I have ever seen, and teachers are leaving in mass. Many classrooms no longer have teachers, and many teachers plan to leave by the end of the year. Teachers routinely complain about toxic micromanagement and mismanagement by the administration.

Teachers feel devalued. At a principals meeting, Dr. Joseph likened teachers to the spectators at the stadium in the movie, "Gladiators." He said, "They [the teachers] want blood. They want blood, and they want you to feed them. . . . [They want] raw meat." He continued, "If you don't feed teachers, they eat children, and some folks have been snacking." (When challenged on these remarks, the Director said that the latter statement was in reference to a book called, "If You don't Feed the Teachers, They Eat the Students." There was no explanation for the Gladiator comments.)

5. District performance is poor. The number of priority schools has ballooned to 21, and test scores are flat, at best.

This is just a sampling of the problems we have faced this school year. It's all become so outrageous and bizarre, I'm not sure where to start.

The Director is extremely manipulative, dishonest, and lacking in professionalism.

When problems have arisen, the Director has chosen to hide information, to manipulate, to race bait, to stir division in order to divert attention from incompetence, and to make bizarre public accusations against board members. Not only will he not address problems; he will not even acknowledge mistakes.

#6

COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Sunday, February 10, 2019 6:03:54 PM
Last Modified: Sunday, February 10, 2019 6:29:17 PM
Time Spent: 00:25:23
Email: dbush5@comcast.net
IP Address: 104.183.8.205

Page 2: Board Member Information

Q1 Please provide your first and last name.

Fran Bush

Page 3: Section One: Our Students

Q2 1.1 Academics: The Director is ...

Ensuring that all students are achieving academic growth in reading and math. **Unsatisfactory**

Ensuring that MNPS is closing achievement gaps among African-American students and other students of color. **Unsatisfactory**

Ensuring that a higher percentage of third-graders are reading at grade level. **Unsatisfactory**

Q3 1.2 School Climate and Culture: The Director is ...

Ensuring that classroom attendance is improving and truancy is decreasing. **Unsatisfactory**

Ensuring that MNPS is demonstrating overall positive gains in school climate and culture. **Unsatisfactory**

Ensuring that student suspensions and expulsions are decreasing. **Unsatisfactory**

Q4 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section One (Our Students)?

Our achievement gaps have widen while Shawn Joseph has been the Superintendent. He has made promising goals to approve achievement gaps and yet there has been no improvement. Since Shawn Joseph retaliated against a Board member to lay off 87 reading recovery teachers who helped bridge the gap on reading and comprehension for our 1st through 3rd graders, literacy has gone down and those kids have greatly suffered. Classroom attendance is down due to late intervention and lack of the administration being so slow to acting on the problem. School culture and climate is suffering a great deal! We have had over 150 certified teachers to leave our district within the first 4 months of school starting. Teachers are dissatisfied with this administration and moreso the Director of Schools. Shawn Joseph is a bully and goes into principal meetings demanding them to turn off their cell phones, play insulting rap music and insult their intelligence by not taking their concerns seriously and address the issues. When it comes to suspensions and expulsions, it has been poorly rolled out to fix this problem by not providing the support services the administration promised to protect teachers and students.

Page 4: Section Two: Our People

Q5 2.1 Employee Relations and Development: The Director is ...

Ensuring that employee morale and satisfaction are increasing.	Unsatisfactory
Ensuring that MNPS is recruiting and retaining effective teachers.	Unsatisfactory

Q6 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Two (Our People)?

Negative! Employee Morale is at its all time low!! We are losing certified teachers everyday and the administration has done a poor job on recruiting and retaining effective and certified teachers. Instead, the administration has focused on longterm uncertified substitute teachers to fill the gap of certified teachers. In other words, students are not gaining the academic knowledge from certified teachers which leaves them to not being a high school graduate and being college ready.

Page 5: Section Three: Our Organization

Q7 3.1 Planning and Administration: The Director is ...

Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.	Unsatisfactory
---	-----------------------

Q8 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Three (Our Organization)?

Dr. Joseph license is currently under state review for not following the law to report several teacher misconduct and infractions. Dr. Joseph is a repeat offender and intentionally violates laws and awards no bid contracts to his buddies which can result in a criminal investigation against him.

Page 6: Section Four: Our Community

Q9 4.1 Communications and Family Engagement: The Director is ...

Ensuring effective public relations with the media and other external stakeholders.	Unsatisfactory
---	-----------------------

Q10 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Four (Our Community)?

Dr. Joseph fails to have ongoing community engagement. Under his leadership, parents feel their voices are not heard and teachers are silenced with his insults while attending professional development meetings. Dr

Joseph is known for retaliating against teachers and principals when they try to encourage positive district changes.

Page 7: Section Five: Accomplishments and Challenges

Q11 5.1 Assessing the Past: What have been the most significant accomplishments of the Director during the first half of the school year?

Nothing! Shawn Joseph has caused more problems during the first half of the school year. He has been charged with breaking the law with piggy backing contracts and loosing the morale of our district and in our city. MNPS is in serious trouble and it is in crisis under the leadership of Shawn Joseph. Our kids are academically suffering, our teachers are leaving and the climate is terrible!

Q12 What have been the most significant challenges MNPS faced during the first half of the school year, and how did the Director address them?

Shawn Joseph has done Nothing to address any of our challenges since he has been the Director of Schools! Shawn Joseph has caused more problems during the first half of the school year. He has been charged with breaking the law with piggy backing contracts and loosing the morale of our district and in our city. MNPS is in serious trouble and it is in crisis under the leadership of Shawn Joseph. Our kids are academically suffering, our teachers are leaving and the climate is terrible!

#7

COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Sunday, February 10, 2019 6:36:21 PM
Last Modified: Sunday, February 10, 2019 6:53:01 PM
Time Spent: 00:16:40
Email: Gentryfordistrict1@outlook.com
IP Address: 24.11.228.191

Page 2: Board Member Information

Q1 Please provide your first and last name.

Sharon Gentry

Page 3: Section One: Our Students

Q2 1.1 Academics: The Director is ...

Ensuring that all students are achieving academic growth in reading and math. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that MNPS is closing achievement gaps among African-American students and other students of color. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that a higher percentage of third-graders are reading at grade level. **Meets Expectations**

Q3 1.2 School Climate and Culture: The Director is ...

Ensuring that classroom attendance is improving and truancy is decreasing. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that MNPS is demonstrating overall positive gains in school climate and culture. **Needs Improvement**

Ensuring that student suspensions and expulsions are decreasing. **Exceeds Expectations**

Q4 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section One (Our Students)?

The improvement in literacy has been greater than has been experienced by MNPS EVER. The investment in literacy has realized gains. We have not made a similar investment in mathematics and the results bear that out. We will need to increase our investment in mathematics.

Page 4: Section Two: Our People

Q5 2.1 Employee Relations and Development: The Director is ...

Ensuring that employee morale and satisfaction are increasing. **Meets Expectations**

Ensuring that MNPS is recruiting and retaining effective teachers. **Needs Improvement**

Q6 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section Two (Our People)?

We need to focus greatly on getting the best teachers and building level leaders into the schools that have high concentrations of low performing students. We also need to improve the number of males and teachers of color in our system.

Page 5: Section Three: Our Organization

Q7 3.1 Planning and Administration: The Director is ...

Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements. **Meets Expectations**

Q8 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section Three (Our Organization)?

There have been challenges. However the director has responded to the concerns that have raised in a timely and effective manner. Many of the challenges being faced are a resulted of bad practices that have been in place through prior administrations

Page 6: Section Four: Our Community

Q9 4.1 Communications and Family Engagement: The Director is ...

Ensuring effective public relations with the media and other external stakeholders. **Meets Expectations**

Q10 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section Four (Our Community)?

Great investment and time has been placed into higher a head of communications as well as training staff on media relations

Page 7: Section Five: Accomplishments and Challenges

Q11 5.1 Assessing the Past: What have been the most significant accomplishments of the Director during the first half of the school year?

the 21 listed in his document as well as brining leadership into the district that is more reflective of the population that we are charged to serve.

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

Q12 What have been the most significant challenges MNPS faced during the first half of the school year, and how did the Director address them?

The most significant challenge has been extremely strained board/director relations. We have become intentional in looking for and highlighting evidence that we believe will malign the Director's reputation and undermine his ability to successfully lead his team. We have not been advocates in trying to find successful resolution to the very real challenges that have arisen over the past year and a half. While we will admit that he is our employee, we do not accept that we have a role to play in his success - just as any other "manager" in any other industry.

#8

COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Friday, February 01, 2019 9:51:50 PM
Last Modified: Monday, February 11, 2019 2:15:55 PM
Time Spent: Over a week
Email: elrodforschools@gmail.com
IP Address: 98.193.151.7

Page 2: Board Member Information

Q1 Please provide your first and last name.

Rachael Anne Elrod

Page 3: Section One: Our Students

Q2 1.1 Academics: The Director is ...

Ensuring that all students are achieving academic growth in reading and math.	Needs Improvement
Ensuring that MNPS is closing achievement gaps among African-American students and other students of color.	Needs Improvement
Ensuring that a higher percentage of third-graders are reading at grade level.	Meets Expectations

Q3 1.2 School Climate and Culture: The Director is ...

Ensuring that classroom attendance is improving and truancy is decreasing.	Exceeds Expectations
Ensuring that MNPS is demonstrating overall positive gains in school climate and culture.	Needs Improvement
Ensuring that student suspensions and expulsions are decreasing.	Needs Improvement

Q4 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section One (Our Students)?

1.1a

In Reading, we are showing academic growth for grades 2, 3, and 4 between our August and November MAP Reading assessments. However, when we reach grade 5, we lose that academic growth. Grades 5-9 all show a decline in academic growth in Reading. In Mathematics, we have flat growth in grades 2 and 3 and then lose ground beginning in grade 4. In both our Mathematics and Reading MAP scores, we are a point lower in November when averaged among grades 2-9. We must address why we are losing this growth in middle school. MNPS had "a few weeks less" of instructional time between the August and November assessments, than students nationally. However, a few weeks of instructional time should not result in only half of our students (grades 2, 3, 4, and 8) meeting or exceeded their growth projections in Reading nor should it result in only grades 3 and 8 meeting or exceeding projections in Mathematics.

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

Creating easily interpreted reports on our students is essential to communicating with parents. Parents should receive these after all assessments, including the optional May assessment. Guaranteeing that teachers and school administrators can utilize MAP data to inform classroom instruction is key and I want to see continued focus on MAP being routinely discussed and referenced. With our middle school scores in both reading and math, we need a targeted approach to these grades.

When you compare kindergarten FAST Early Reading August 2017 scores to their 1st grade August 2018 scores, we have a 9% decrease in the numbers of students with some or high-risk level. FAST Early Math scores go up a percentage point between entering kindergartners in August 2017 and those students entering 1st grade in August 2018. Once again, our flat to declining Mathematics scores are concerning and a district focus on increasing Mathematics scores across K-9 is necessary.

According to the State Report Card, we had a 1.3% decrease in our English Language Art (ELA) scores from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 in grades 3-8 with a final ELA score of 32.8%. This year's Reading MAP scores from August and November show a better averaged score of 39%. In Mathematics, we held at a score of 33% in grades 3-8 which is alignment with our Math MAP results.

1.1b

We continue to see small differences in achievement. Both our Black and Hispanic students are scoring the lowest, below the 25% percentile in both Reading and Mathematics achievement. According to the State Report Card, our Black students got a 16.9% and Hispanic students got a 24.5% achievement rate in Mathematics in comparison to our district average of 33%. Black students got an 18% and Hispanic students got a 22.1% achievement rate in English Language Arts in comparison to our district average of 32.8%.

1.1c

As mentioned in 1.1a, we are showing academic growth in our grade 3 Reading scores. We do have an increase in the median national percental between August and November of two points. Therefore, I gave this a "Meets Expectations" with the limited scope of addressing only our grade 3 scores. However, we need to be vigilant with the fact that we lose those gains after fourth grade. This is shown in our MAP scores and in the State Report Card data, as referenced in 1.1a.

1.2a

There is much better communication and collaboration among our district about the importance of attendance, which should be continued. From November 2017 to November 2018, we had a .1% increase in our average daily attendance which correlates to an additional 86 students in attendance. There are strong links between attendance and learning, especially regarding graduation rates in high school students. Therefore, our Cluster Support Teams need to be supported in this work and the work within our partnerships with Juvenile Court and the Metro Student Attendance Center (MSAC).

1.2b

In reviewing the results of the MNPS Teacher Climate Survey in Fall 2019, it is evident that teachers do not feel like they have enough support. Our lowest scores among all tiers of teachers (elementary, middle and high school) were in Professional Learning and Feedback and Coaching. School Leadership, an essential part of teacher support, was the third lowest rated item.

Scores for the lowest three indicators on the Fall 2019 MNPS Teacher Climate Surveys:

- Feedback and Coaching: Elementary 53%, Middle 47% and High 46%
- Professional Learning: Elementary 62%, Middle 54% and High 52%
- School Leadership: Elementary 63%, Middle 55% and High 52%

These three indicators were also the lowest scored items in Fall 2017/Spring 2018. However, we have made small gains in all three when comparing those scores. The only indicator that we lost ratings on was School Climate in Fall 2019 with those favorable scores being Elementary 84%, Middle 79% and High 79%. Therefore, I graded this as "needs improvement."

These surveys are encouraging and I'm glad they were launched during the 2017-2018 school year. I would like to see more information and surveyed responses regarding the district. District climate and district leadership should be included within these surveys. There is a difference between enjoying the school you work within and working for our district – both should be surveyed.

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

1.2c Ensuring that student suspensions and expulsions are decreasing. – Needs Improvement

Our year to date numbers of out of school suspensions lead me to believe we are going to have a higher number of suspensions in the 2018-2019 school year. For 2017-2018, we had 13,464 suspensions in total and we're already at 7,372 this year.

We need to prioritize funding of social emotional learning, Social Workers and School Psychologists. Our current employees dedicated to this work have work-loads that are too large to manage reasonably. This is especially true with our new disciplinary measures to eliminate arrests, expulsions, and the use of out-of-school suspensions for pre-kindergarten through fourth grade students.

Page 4: Section Two: Our People

Q5 2.1 Employee Relations and Development: The Director is ...

Ensuring that employee morale and satisfaction are increasing. **Meets Expectations**

Ensuring that MNPS is recruiting and retaining effective teachers. **Needs Improvement**

Formative Evaluation – Director, Metro Nashville Public Schools

Q6 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section Two (Our People)?

2.1a

Employee morale and satisfaction will continue to decrease with their decline in pay. Step increases and COLA raises need continued focus. Dr. Joseph, and our board, need to continue to prioritize these dollars and this budget request with the Mayor and Metro Council. Last year was especially difficult for employee moral without Step increases, COLA and the decrease in take home pay due to the certified teacher pension increase and insurance cost increase. Per the Compensation Committee Recommendations, we should provide a set of tools to the committee for them to better advocate and to have a consistent message. Additionally, I support their recommendations of a workgroup to develop recommendations to reduce out of pocket expenses and a workgroup to provide culture consistency among our schools.

We have had a lot of district success with our wellness initiatives including the American Heart Association's Gold recognition, ComPsych's Silver winner and double participation in Cigna's Healthy Pregnancy/Healthy Baby program. I'm encouraged that we are launching a Diabetes Prevention Program and continue to have increased usage of the Wellness Center.

According to our Fall 2017/Spring 2018 and Fall 2019 Teacher Climate Surveys, 80.6% of teachers are "favorable" with their school climate. Again, we need teacher feedback on district climate and these surveys showed a lack of felt teacher support in professional learning and in feedback and coaching. I graded this as "Meets Expectations" in response to our Teacher Climate Surveys as referenced in 1.2b and exit interview information referenced in 2.1b. Additionally, it should be noted that according to employee associations and unions there is not a surge of decreased employee morale or satisfaction.

I'm glad to see that we had improvements on filling necessary positions. We started the school year with 92.4 vacancies in comparison to 2017-2018's 124 vacancies and increased our substitute pool with an additional 345 substitute teachers. Additionally, I'm encouraged that we are applying to become an Education Preparation Provider (EPP). I continue to encourage us to have a workforce agreement when providing our alternative certification.

2.1b

We should continue to provide focus on the New Teacher Academy with 88.2% of invited educators attending one or more days. We need more district mentors. We should reach out to community partners to see what can be offered to these educators that are helping our new teachers. Having mentors that are involved in not only communication and gatherings, but encouraging engagement with their employee benefits, should increase our retention rates.

As shown through the MNPS Teacher Climate Surveys, we need to review our professional learning and feedback/coaching offerings. The differentiated learning plans for school-based leaders was recently developed. Is this process working as intended?

From 2018-2019 resignation data sent on December 6, we had 19 certified staff out of 6,185 leave or .3% and we had 124 teachers/librarians out of 5,156 leave or 2.4%. The exit interview summary (7/1/18 to 12/11/18) received on December 23, states that 36% of those staff stated "School Culture/Principal" as their reason for leaving. It is the highest ranked reason with "Personal Reasons" being next at 18%. This correlates with what I've been told by employee associations and unions, that issues within schools and with principal leadership are the most pressing concern for our teachers. We need to do a better job at capturing exit interviews and understanding how these exit numbers compare to comparable sized school systems.

It does not appear that MNPS is having an exodus of employees, but any loss of our teachers should be of concern. Our district must consider all options to protect itself against the national problem of teacher shortages and salary stagnation. It is unlikely that MNPS will, suddenly, be fully funded. Therefore, we need to market a proactive plan to recruit and retain teachers and staff. Consistent exit interviews, thorough climate surveys, dedication to regulatory requirements, creative benefits like new teacher housing, professional development opportunities, SEL advancement, additional mentors along with workgroups on the reduction of out of pocket expenses and climate consistency among schools all need to be addressed.

Page 5: Section Three: Our Organization

Q7 3.1 Planning and Administration: The Director is ...

Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements. **Needs Improvement**

Q8 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Three (Our Organization)?

3.1

Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements is of essential importance. It is concerning that Dr. Shawn Joseph’s educational licensure is under review by the State Board of Education due to delayed reporting of cases of teacher misconduct. The State’s investigation and decision will be important in consideration of his contract.

I am anxious to receive the findings and recommendations from the HR practices review by Bone McAllester Norton. Complying with state law should be the baseline of our practices. Insuring the safety of our employees and students should be the baseline of our district’s climate. It is vital for our city to know that our district leadership puts compliance and safety as a top concern or priority.

Page 6: Section Four: Our Community

Q9 4.1 Communications and Family Engagement: The Director is ...

Ensuring effective public relations with the media and other external stakeholders. **Needs Improvement**

Q10 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Four (Our Community)?

MNPS continues to have a reactionary relationship with the media. The hiring of an Executive Officer of Communications and Community Engagement is a good step in being proactive and better handling requests. The negative press that MNPS receives must be considered when discussing our district’s climate and potential effect on employee morale. We must work harder to highlight the multitudes of good happening within our schools, the district work that goes unnoticed and to clarify reports or provide additional information, when needed. An example of where we failed to provide clear communication with the media and external stakeholders, is the recent confusion surrounding the suspension of DonorsChoose.

Page 7: Section Five: Accomplishments and Challenges

Q11 5.1 Assessing the Past: What have been the most significant accomplishments of the Director during the first half of the school year?

- There has been an increase in daily attendance and clear messaging on importance of attendance across the district. We agreed that attendance was one of our three main focuses as a district, and there has been success there.
 - Changing the suspension procedures of Pre-K through grade 4 students without the approval of a community superintendent, unless a 500-level offense, was an important step.
 - The hiring Executive Officer of Communications and Community Engagement should help the narrative surrounding MNPS.
-

Q12 What have been the most significant challenges MNPS faced during the first half of the school year, and how did the Director address them?

- We continue to be on the defensive as a school district regarding media and news reports. I'm glad to see Dr. Joseph handling and participating in more media requests. Additionally, Dr. Joseph worked with Cigna to provide media training to district leaders and hired the key role in Communications and Community Engagement. However, we have a lot of work to do to repair and build media relationships and prove trust in our district.
 - There has been confusion on district's focus or targets. The initiation of the employee Friday message is to highlight and provide focus on district-wide work. Additionally, a narrowed focus on literacy, attendance and reducing out of school suspensions helped provide clarity on our priorities. Still, we need to do better at promoting our district-wide work towards these priorities.
 - We need more focused resources on SEL support. Dr. Joseph has spoken to, or is in the process of speaking to, community stakeholders to see what their commitment to this work may be. Additional SEL measures and trainings is key to the implementation of the pre-k to grade 4 suspension procedures, along with additional School Psychologists.
-

#9

COMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Wednesday, February 13, 2019 4:33:27 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, February 13, 2019 4:42:21 PM
Time Spent: 00:08:53
Email: will@pinkstonforschools.com
IP Address: 73.58.161.159

Page 2: Board Member Information

Q1 Please provide your first and last name.

Will Pinkston

Page 3: Section One: Our Students

Q2 1.1 Academics: The Director is ...

Ensuring that all students are achieving academic growth in reading and math.	Needs Improvement
Ensuring that MNPS is closing achievement gaps among African-American students and other students of color.	Needs Improvement
Ensuring that a higher percentage of third-graders are reading at grade level.	Meets Expectations

Q3 1.2 School Climate and Culture: The Director is ...

Ensuring that classroom attendance is improving and truancy is decreasing.	Exceeds Expectations
Ensuring that MNPS is demonstrating overall positive gains in school climate and culture.	Meets Expectations
Ensuring that student suspensions and expulsions are decreasing.	Meets Expectations

Q4 Do you have specific comments about the Director's performance relative to Section One (Our Students)?

Dr. Joseph's commitments to equity and fully implementing student-based budgeting have exhibited real courage. As a board member, I feel guilty about the fact that we did not set him up to succeed sooner. The chronically underfunded nature of MNPS is shameful. No superintendent would be able to move these stubborn academic indicators without significant new resources in the classroom. I appreciate Dr. Joseph's intellectually honest approach to self-evaluation on these academic KPIs and I'm grateful for his commitment to restorative justice practices as supported by NOAH and other stakeholders.

Page 4: Section Two: Our People

Q5 2.1 Employee Relations and Development: The Director is ...

Ensuring that employee morale and satisfaction are increasing.	Meets Expectations
Ensuring that MNPS is recruiting and retaining effective teachers.	Exceeds Expectations

Q6 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Two (Our People)?

I’m not convinced that we’ve got the right diagnostic tools in place to adequately measure and track employee satisfaction. This warrants further discussion in future Director Evaluation Committee meetings. Meanwhile, I appreciate the input by employee groups including MNEA and SEIU, which have repeatedly confirmed that there is no systemic dissatisfaction but rather there are isolated problems that need to be dealt with. I fully believe that much of the current discontent is entangled with understandable employee unhappiness and concern about economic pressures stemming from historically low compensation and the rapidly rising cost of living in Nashville. I appreciate Dr. Joseph’s willingness to bring our support employees back to the table after the previous superintendent exiled them. As we’ve seen in other urban school systems, from Los Angeles to Denver to West Virginia, teacher discontent is rising over compensation, poor working conditions, class sizes, privatization, and other concerns. We must be mindful of the demands placed on these employees and strive to fix problems that have been decades in the making. In my conversations with Dr. Joseph, he has made it clear that employee satisfaction is a top priority.

Page 5: Section Three: Our Organization

Q7 3.1 Planning and Administration: The Director is ...

Ensuring compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.	Meets Expectations
---	---------------------------

Q8 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Three (Our Organization)?

For this section of the evaluation, I defer to our lead attorney at Metro Legal, who provided the following statement: “As with any large organization, achieving compliance with an ever-changing array of federal and state laws and regulations requires a concerted effort and a willingness to take corrective action as necessary. To the extent of my knowledge, Dr. Joseph has undertaken steps to remedy legal or regulatory concerns that have arisen during his tenure. Additionally, although meetings do not always occur due to scheduling conflicts, Dr. Joseph has scheduled a weekly meeting with Legal to ensure he has an opportunity to ask questions and follow possible or open legal matters. When he deems appropriate, Dr. Joseph seeks input from Legal and will follow-up as needed on legal analysis. His staff seeks Legal input regularly. And Legal regularly attends the ELT meetings.”

Page 6: Section Four: Our Community

Q9 4.1 Communications and Family Engagement: The Director is ...

Ensuring effective public relations with the media and other external stakeholders.	Meets Expectations
---	---------------------------

Q10 Do you have specific comments about the Director’s performance relative to Section Four (Our Community)?

Like many of the problems that Dr. Joseph inherited, deficiencies in PR and media relations cannot be cured overnight. But I’m heartened by the steps he has taken to reorganize the communications office. This will continue to be a work in progress, but I’m convinced that he understands the challenges and opportunities in improving communications with external stakeholders in the community.

Page 7: Section Five: Accomplishments and Challenges

Q11 5.1 Assessing the Past: What have been the most significant accomplishments of the Director during the first half of the school year?

Without question, the most significant accomplishment during the first half of the school year was Dr. Joseph’s continued push toward equity vis a vis the student-based budget. Through this process, he has been subjected to untold and unfair slings and arrows from self-centered West Nashville parents and principals who have no appreciation or understanding of the problems facing our inner-city schools in East and North Nashville or our high-concentration EL schools in South and Southeast Nashville. Everyone wants the best for their own students and schools, but very few people — except Dr. Joseph and his team — are willing to acknowledge the deep and long-standing inequities that exist in this school system. I applaud his willingness to confront the elephant in the room.

Q12 What have been the most significant challenges MNPS faced during the first half of the school year, and how did the Director address them?

Dr. Joseph’s most significant challenge during the first half of the school year unquestionably was dealing with patently false attacks by one-third of the school board. In my own interactions with these board members over the past few weeks and months during this evaluation process, it is clear they are operating based on a combination of false information, conspiracy theories, resentment over the demise of Reading Recovery, and residual anger over the 2018 school board elections. In these kinds of arguments, no side is without blame. But I take some solace in the fact that these board members have marginalized themselves in the community (and, in one case, demonstrated an inability to multiply 3 x 5).
