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Nashville Public Education Foundation Enlists Local Leaders and Community to Identify and Dismantle City's Inequities

Public Schools Documentary Premieres at Historic Nashville Theater Ahead of Summer Release and Community Watch Events

NASHVILLE, TENN. – June 30, 2021– Nearly 200 city, state, school district, and community leaders came to Nashville's historic Belcourt Theatre June 29 for the premiere viewing of Nashville Public Education Foundation's (NPEF) documentary, [*By Design: The Shaping of Nashville's Public Schools*](#). The event served as a first step in setting a common foundation for conversations on how public policy has created and maintained inequities in public education and how Nashville is in danger of repeating its history.

Working to engage as many Nashvillians as possible, NPEF also announced the first of several champion partners to host community viewing events in July and August. Viewing champions are being supported with comprehensive watch guides, event toolkits, and promotional materials. Partners include the National Museum of African American Music, Conexión Américas, University School of Nashville, Warner Elementary School, and Belmont University.

Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) leadership attended the premiere, as did several members of the Metropolitan Nashville Board of Public Education. Also in attendance were dozens of elected officials, area non-profit organizations, educators, and interested citizens.

"As the proud product of MNPS and the daughter of parents who attended when court-ordered desegregation efforts were just underway, I recognize the power of the history told in 'By Design' and the impact the decisions of those in power had on generations of Nashville youth," said **Dr. Adrienne Battle, Director of Metro Nashville Public Schools**. "Identifying and eliminating inequities is not just the challenge of a previous generation, but is one of the four core tenets that guide the work here at MNPS as we look to close opportunity gaps and improve outcomes for all of our students."

Among the desired outcomes for this documentary project, NPEF would like to see policymakers set equity metrics and transparently report to the community on progress. The foundation is also hopeful to see stakeholders demand better funding from the state to support schools, students, and families. NPEF would like to see city leaders at the forefront of conversations about a vision for youth that incorporates policy areas like housing, economic opportunity, and transportation, in addition to education. And above all, NPEF wants to see community members identifying challenges and solutions and encouraging leaders to make the best decisions for all students.

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“The challenges that Metro Nashville Public Schools face today echo decades long struggles for resource equity and access to opportunity,” said **Katie Cour, President and CEO of NPEF**. “With this documentary, NPEF is aiming to create the space for community conversations and city-wide solutions to build schools where all children can thrive.”

The 60-minute film examines historical moments of public schooling in Nashville dating to the 1800s and the effects of city policies and community priorities on schools. *By Design: The Shaping of Nashville’s Public Schools* was produced by NPEF in collaboration with video production company Moving Picture Boys, education experts, leading historians, community and state leaders, and students from defining moments in the city’s public school history.

The final full-length documentary is expected to be released broadly in late August. NPEF is currently discussing distribution and airing options via various television networks. Interested stakeholders can sign up to receive project updates and watch the trailer at <https://nashvillepef.org/by-design>.

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About the Nashville Public Education Foundation

The Nashville Public Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works to remove barriers for students by promoting excellence, serving as a critical friend to Metro Nashville Public Schools, convening stakeholders, and advocating for change so all students can thrive in school. More information is available at nashvillepef.org.

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