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Nashville Public Education Foundation Releases Policy Brief on Nashville's Role in Creating and Sustaining Inequities in our Schools

One year after release of [By Design: The Shaping of Nashville's Public Schools](#), NPEF shares shortened version to continue to drive citywide conversations about equity for city's children and youth

NASHVILLE, TENN. – June 29, 2022 – One year after the release of the documentary *By Design: The Shaping of Nashville's Public Schools*, [the Nashville Public Education Foundation \(NPEF\)](#) has developed a 22-minute version focusing on the failings of desegregation-era policies in Nashville. The short film, entitled [The Limitations of Desegregation in Nashville's Public Schools](#), is accompanied by the release of a [policy brief](#) that further explores the effects of key housing and zoning decisions on today's students as well as a corresponding [watch guide](#). The full-length film was released one year ago to educate Nashville's community members and policymakers about the city's role in creating inequities in public education to stimulate conversations about collective solutions for a public school system that works for ALL students.

"We believe it's critically important that our community understands and discusses the failings of the past and the impacts past policies have had on present-day students and families," said **Katie Cour, president and CEO of the Nashville Public Education Foundation**. "We hope to continue to drive these conversations with this new, shortened version of *By Design* and its associated policy brief."

The policy brief, "[By Design: How Nashville Created and Sustains Inequities in our Schools](#)", examines the ways in which policies like federal housing assistance, urban development, redlining, and "intelligent zoning" have segregated the city by race and income, and have placed the onus on schools to overcome deep, racially rooted inequities. The watch guide provides discussion questions for groups wanting to have solutions-driven conversations after watching the film.

Over the last year, NPEF has hosted approximately 50 public and private screenings of *By Design: The Shaping of Nashville's Public Schools*, convening more than 1,500 people to engage with the film. Online, the film generated approximately 4,000 views. Earlier this year, the documentary earned national recognition when it was selected for screening at SXSW Edu in Austin, Texas.

In survey data from community screenings of the documentary, nearly all respondents (+95%) said the film was not only a fair representation of Nashville's history, but that it taught them something new and inspired them to learn more and have related conversations with family and friends. Open comments and encouragement from the community suggest the conversations started by the film can have far-reaching impacts for Nashville's community.

The full documentary examines defining moments in the history of public schooling in Nashville dating back to the 1800s and the effects of community priorities and city policies on education. The film features interviews with three historians: the Tennessee Historical Commission's Linda Wynn, Columbia University professor Dr. Ansley Erickson, and Nashville's unofficial historian David Ewing. The documentary also highlights first-hand witnesses of pivotal moments in history, including five of the original 16 Black students who integrated Nashville schools in 1957, former School Board and Metro Council Member Ed Kindall, Governor Phil Bredesen, Rev. Becca Stevens, Metro Nashville Public Schools graduate and community advocate Kasar Abdulla, and others.

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About the Nashville Public Education Foundation

The Nashville Public Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works to remove the barriers to educational experiences by highlighting success, serving as a strategic thought partner to Metro Nashville Public Schools, convening stakeholders, and advocating for change so all students can thrive in school. Since its founding in 2002, NPEF has fostered data-driven solutions that have led to tangible results in professional learning for teachers, teacher pay, principal quality, college access and success, and more. To learn about NPEF's support of Metro Nashville Public Schools and its students, visit nashvillepef.org.

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