

# The Limitations of Desegregation in Nashville's Public Schools

*A Project of By Design: The Shaping of Nashville's Public Schools*

## WATCH GUIDE

### About the Short Film

In June 2021, the Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) released *By Design: The Shaping of Nashville's Public Schools* to examine historical moments of public schooling in Nashville and the effects of city policies and community priorities. **This condensed 22-minute version focuses on eyewitness accounts of the desegregation era and examines the lasting effects of city decisions during the Civil Rights movement on today's public schools.**

The goal of both films is to **educate city leaders and the community** about how public policy formed the basis for the education system we know in Nashville today in order to **stimulate community-wide conversations about collective solutions** for a better system where all students thrive.

### How to Use this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide support for viewers to have a reflective and solutions-driven discussion after watching *The Limitations of Desegregation in Nashville's Schools*. We encourage you to **host a viewing event** with your friends, families, coworkers, and others in your community and **use the questions on the next page as a starting point** to guide your conversation.

### Set the tone

*We encourage you and your audience to engage in a robust conversation about how public schools were designed through the lens of historic government policies and struggles for resource equity and access to opportunity. Screening the documentary in an intimate setting allows your colleagues and friends to **grapple with hard conversations** about race, class, and politics. While there may be sticking points in post-screening discussions, we encourage you to **provide a safe space for diverse perspectives** to be heard and acknowledge these challenges are not easily resolved.*

### What to do next

1

**Share your opinion!**  
Take our brief survey here:



2

**Ready for the next step?**  
Download our Action Guide here:



Nashville  
Public Education  
FOUNDATION



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1

What were your aha's from the film?

2

What moments in the film could you relate to based on your own experiences?

3

Prior to viewing 'By Design: The Shaping of Nashville's Public Schools,' what was your opinion of Nashville's public schools? What influenced your opinion?

4

Why do you think the film was named 'By Design: The Shaping of Nashville's Public Schools'?

5

The role of urban renewal in our city's history is complex. Discuss the tension between a city growing its economy and supporting the needs of all its residents.

6

In the film, Dr. Ansley Erickson states,

"Americans have been really interested in putting huge agendas on schools, saying schools will fix social problems. They'll fix segregation...fix health crises...create economic mobility. And we should notice that our investments in schools to achieve these goals has almost been smaller than the investments in these big systems that generate the inequality around us."

Do you agree or disagree?

7

Who shares in the responsibility for ensuring all of our children are thriving in schools?

8

What lessons from the desegregation era should we be using as we think about improving our public schools?