

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nashville Public Education Foundation Unveils New Documentary Showcasing a Day in the Life of Nashville’s Teachers

Educators, advocates, and community leaders attended the Lipscomb University sponsored screening and panel discussion of NPEF’s “Why I Teach” film and the sustainability of the teaching profession

NASHVILLE, TENN. – June 26, 2024 – The Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) premiered a new documentary film, *Why I Teach*, to aspiring and current teachers, education professionals, and public school advocates at the Lipscomb SPARK Center on June 25. The film and its screening are part of a multi-month campaign by NPEF dedicated to recognizing the hard work and vital role of teachers, sharing their personal stories and motivations and helping to reframe and advance public discourse about supporting educators in the most meaningful ways.

“Teachers everywhere – and certainly in Nashville – face increasing challenges in an ever-changing profession all while doing one of the most important jobs in our society,” said **Katie Cour, President and CEO of NPEF**. “This documentary is part of our effort to celebrate the expertise and passion of Nashville’s public school teachers while providing the community with an inside look into what it takes to do this work each day and what teachers need to be most successful.”

Why I Teach offers an intimate look into the daily lives of three Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) teachers: Celia Bowman-Jeffries from Thomas Edison Elementary School, Taylor Edens from Early College High School, and Graham Spencer from Goodlettsville Middle School. The film follows these educators from their homes to their classrooms, showcasing both the joys and challenges they face, as they deliver instruction, analyze data, collaborate with other educators, and create supportive classroom cultures that welcome all students.

“Many people have never followed a teacher in a day-in-the-life or may have never been in a public school to see what teachers go through on a daily basis,” said **Taylor Edens, one of the teachers featured in the *Why I Teach* documentary**. “It’s crazy that it’s not something that is talked about or appreciated more.”

Lipscomb University sponsored the screening and cohosted a panel discussion after the film that featured insights from MNPS educators and public education experts. The panelists discussed the realities of teaching in Nashville, advice for incoming teachers, and ongoing efforts to ensure teaching is a sustainable career amidst evolving demands. Panelists included:

- *Nikki Hendricks-Bolling, Educator, Shwab Elementary School*
- *Kathleen Shepherd, Educator, Haywood Elementary School*
- *Dr. Jeanne Fain, Professor, College of Education and Director of MLL/ELL Program, Lipscomb University*
- *Dr. Ricki Gibbs, Head of Schools - Elementary, LEAD Public Schools*
- *Jason Grissom, Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor of Public Policy and Education, Vanderbilt University; Faculty Director, Tennessee Education Research Alliance*

- *Stephanie Wyka, Director of Professional Learning and Growth, Metro Nashville Public Schools*

In addition to their work on the film, NPEF has asked teachers across the district to share their personal motivations for teaching via the foundation's dedicated webpage ([LINK](#)) for the campaign. Resulting social media content highlights teachers' reasons for remaining committed to their work in the classroom. Interested teachers are encouraged to share their passion and opinions at the [survey link](#).

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About the Nashville Public Education Foundation

The Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) is a nonprofit organization committed to ensuring every child can thrive in Nashville's public schools. NPEF works to improve student outcomes in Nashville's public schools by identifying challenges and advancing evidence-based solutions. Since 2002, NPEF's role as a catalyst for transformation has yielded tangible results in areas such as teacher professional development, teacher compensation, principal quality and college access. Learn more at nashvillepef.org.

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