

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY



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March 11, 2010

Mr. David Fox, Chairman
Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
2601 Bransford Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37204

Dear Chairman Fox:

These are indeed difficult economic times. The MNPS Budget Proposal of 2010-2011 (the "Budget") is reflective of this stark reality. You and the rest of the Board are faced with making decisions affecting the lives of many. However, this is some of the territory that comes with the job. I am sure you've anguished over the decision. You are not alone—many will have to try to manage an already strained personal budget with less.

The drafters of the Budget are to be commended for making cuts in the Central Office. Yet many have asked the members of the Metro Council whether this is adequate. This Budget comprises at or near 50% of the entire city's budget. The additional Budget cuts include outsourcing custodial and landscaping services while reducing our transportation providers' time by one hour. As you know, these are the men and women on the lower end of the pay scale in our school system.

Although they generally may be paid the least, they are undeniably the folks getting the job done. Our custodians and landscapers are responsible for the image of our schools. I have been in all the schools in East Nashville and they're all immaculate. An outsourced company will never have the same pride as our employees. We must continue to present our schools in the best possible light to parents and prospective parents.

Our bus drivers provide access to education for our students. They do much more than operate a bus. They are responsible for the lives of our children on at least a twice-daily basis. They have a thankless job and cutting their time is all the demonstration of this thanklessness one needs as proof. These cuts amount to 15% pay cuts for some.

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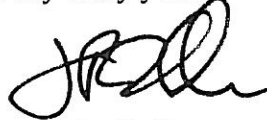
Collectively, this group of employees has been hurt the most during this Great Recession. They have had to make the most difficult decisions in their personal budgets. Many have told me they've been hanging on by their fingertips. And, the effects of this budget would yank the bar they're clinging to out of reach. Moreover, these men and women are consumers of our public education system.

According to the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce's *17th Annual Education Report Card*, which I'm sure you've read, anywhere from 66-76% of our students are economically disadvantaged. See p.15. Displacing more MNPS consuming families would only exacerbate this problem. We would simply be adding to our already enormous challenge.

I implore you to seek other cost cutting alternatives. As a Council Member, I pledge my support for finding all available sources of additional revenue, if necessary, to save these jobs. Too often our government's budget drafters find ways to cut the men and women on the front lines. This only delays the inevitable for the directors and department heads—the protected classes. If we consider ourselves leaders, we must fight for those who lack the leverage necessary to fight for themselves. We serve them, not the other way around.

Thank you for your consideration and for your selfless dedication to our city.

Very truly yours,



Jamie R. Hollin
Council Member, District 5
Education Committee, Member

cc: MNPS School Board
Dr. Jesse Register, Director of Schools