

## METRO SCHOOLS AND PEABODY COLLEGE LAUNCH PEER

# Metro Schools and Peabody College launch partnership to strengthen education equity

Producing actionable, innovative and scalable research to address racial and social inequities in Pre-K-12 schools is the goal of a new partnership between Vanderbilt University's Peabody College of education and human development and Metro Nashville Public Schools.

"The roots of educational inequities in our city are complex and multi-faceted. Enduring challenges have only been compounded by COVID-19, and our city's recent growth. These are issues that defy easy answers. But together, we can start to address them through rigorous research and collaboration. Drawing on data and history, we can find new ways to improve access and belonging and to reduce disparities in educational outcomes. And we can create new pathways and opportunities for the students of today, who are also Nashville's future citizens and leaders," Chancellor Daniel Diermeier said.

Diermeier, Vanderbilt Provost Cybele Raver and MNPS Director of Schools [Adrienne Battle](#) announced the new Nashville Partnership for Educational Equity Research, or PEER, at the Sept. 28 Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools board meeting,

Identifying and eliminating inequities is one of the [four core tenets](#) established by Battle to guide the work of the district; PEER is one of 14 MNPS signature initiatives tied to those core tenets.

"We are all aware of the issues faced by public schools in Nashville and throughout the country relating to disproportionality and inequities for academic and social-emotional learning outcomes," Battle said. "Identifying the most effective solutions to eliminate those inequities represents the most difficult challenge we face—but also the biggest reward if we're successful. This partnership with Vanderbilt will help us to ensure that we are moving along the right path and improving the focused outcomes for all students so that they are prepared for success here at Metro Schools and in life beyond graduation."

Peabody College shares a long history of cooperation and a deep commitment to addressing educational inequity with Metro Nashville Public Schools, with a conviction that diversity of perspectives is a core strength.

"By combining Vanderbilt's research expertise with deep local knowledge, we look forward to strengthening outcomes for all of Nashville's learners," said [Camilla P. Benbow](#), Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development at Peabody College. "We are delighted to launch this new initiative in full partnership with leaders and practitioners in MNPS."

Partnerships between universities and their local school systems offer effective ways to find sustainable solutions to complex challenges affecting students and their families while helping academic researchers gain real-world insights to inform future scholarship.

"I've seen firsthand how powerful this type of partnership can be in my past experiences as an academic researcher and higher education leader working with Chicago and New York City Public Schools at the district level. I'm eager to apply these experiences to MNPS in order to support school leaders' vision in lasting and sustainable ways," Raver said.

With input from students, teachers, families and community members, researchers and educators, a PEER steering committee will outline broad areas of research focused on school, district and community practices and policies to address educational inequity.

"We are excited by this new partnership because both researchers and practitioners benefit from truly collaborative research," said Dr. Changas. "In my more than 20 years at MNPS, I've come to value our relationship with Vanderbilt University. I'm looking forward to deepening our partnership even further by bringing together researchers and administrators from both institutions together to tackle systemic equity issues by building our capacity to make evidence-informed decisions based on high-quality, rigorous research."

[Katie Cour](#), president and CEO of the [Nashville Public Education Foundation](#), will help facilitate the work of the steering committee.

Steering committee members include:

- Adrienne Battle, MNPS director
- Camilla Benbow, dean, Peabody College
- Paul Changas, MNPS executive officer of research, assessment and evaluation
- Ellen Goldring, executive associate dean, Peabody College
- Jason Grissom, Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair and professor of leadership, policy and organizations, Peabody College
- Ashford Hughes Sr., MNPS executive officer for equity, diversity and inclusion
- Maury Nation, Bob Innes Chair and professor of human and organizational development, Peabody College
- Keri Randolph, MNPS chief strategy officer
- Marcy Singer-Gabella, PEER Faculty Director and professor of the practice of education, Peabody College (ex-officio)
- TBD, MNPS manager of research-practice partnerships (ex-officio)

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