

Statement on MNEA-PACE Council Mayoral Endorsement for 2019 Run-Off Election

The Metropolitan Nashville Education Association's Political Action Committee for Education (MNEA-PACE) has voted to endorse John Cooper for the office of Mayor in the 2019 Run-Off Election. The endorsement is based on Council Member Cooper's willingness to fight private school vouchers and provide more oversight to charter schools, which target two of the biggest threats to funding for public education.

Cooper has promised to join a lawsuit challenging the state voucher program, which unfairly targets Nashville and Memphis schools. In a statement provided to MNEA, he stated, "As your mayor, I won't stand on the sidelines while the General Assembly tries to privatize public education in Nashville. Instead, I will instruct my legal department to fight the voucher program and make sure it never takes effect. Then, we will actually engage the General Assembly to work in the interests of what will work best for Nashville students."

Cooper made an additional statement about charter schools, saying "Nashville has some high-performing charter schools, but accountability and oversight is needed. We will monitor charters as to make sure we only have the best public charters. If a school is doing well and educating our young people, we will support it. If it's not, then we will move to close it. It's about how we effectively educate our young people from every neighborhood."

Currently, charter schools account for more than \$150 million of the MNPS budget. This is nearly twice the amount that the MNPS Board of Education asked for in the spring in order to fund 10% raises for all employees, step increases, social and emotional supports, and new textbooks for students.

MNEA will continue to make the fight for fully funding MNPS a priority in the 2019-20 year.