

Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: August 24, 2022 5:18 pm  
Browser: Chrome 104.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 38.53.180.126  
Unique ID: 1001634433  
Location: 35.9314, -86.6867

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<b>Name</b>	JOHN STERN
<b>Email</b>	John.Stern@CaneRidgeTrust.Org
<b>Phone</b>	(615) 889-3100
<b>Organization</b>	Cane Ridge Community Trust
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

We have been following the evolution of the Tennessee Nature Academy here in Cane Ridge, TN. The idea for this new way of engaging our children in their usual and customary subjects by using Nature as a catalyst is highly desirable.

While many Davidson County politicians wish to cover all of the community's beautiful rural character with concrete and asphalt, this helps to make our most important residents aware of the need to respect and embrace the natural elements in our community.

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: August 29, 2022 1:49 pm  
Browser: Chrome 104.0.0.0 / OS X  
IP Address: 24.248.12.66  
Unique ID: 1003316541  
Location: 29.9813, -90.1663

<b>Name</b>	Ashley Heard
<b>Email</b>	aheard@diversecharters.org
<b>Phone</b>	(312) 520-8122
<b>Organization</b>	Diverse Charter Schools Coalition
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy

**Please provide your written comments below**

I write to share Diverse Charter Schools Coalition's (DCSC) support of Roy Renfro's application to open a new, diverse-by-design charter school in Nashville, TN. DCSC's mission is to catalyze and support the creation and expansion of high-quality diverse public charter schools through strategic research, advocacy, membership activities, and outreach.

Last year, through a competitive application process, Roy was awarded a fellowship in DCSC's School Launch Fellowship Program, UnifiED. UnifiED, in collaboration with host school site leaders, member schools, and local partners, recruits and prepares future school leaders for new, excellent diverse-by-design charter schools. Successful Fellows of UnifiED are entrepreneurial leaders with a deep understanding of the diverse-by-design model. They establish a clear vision and lead people toward it by creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive school community. They use data to inform decisions and measure outcomes. Ultimately, they launch diverse-by-design charter schools that lead students to strong academic results for all students and are closing the gaps in student performance, family satisfaction, and staff retention across relevant subgroups.

Over the course of the year-long program:

The Fellowship arms Fellows with broad access to experts and resources. Experts from across the Coalition lead all content sessions at Workshops, Kickoff, and Capstone. Workshops are held in conjunction with Coalition-wide events, such as Regional meetings and the Annual National Convening, so that Fellows expand their network of experts in diverse-by-design schools. Finally, outside presenters with expertise in diversity, equity, and inclusion work with Fellows over the course of the year.

During the Fellowship, Fellows are exposed to exemplary diverse-by-design models from across the Coalition. Fellows tour 12 schools during three Excellent School Visits, participate in three in-person Workshops, attend Kickoff, and present at Capstone over the course of the Fellowship.

We coordinate across and among stakeholders to ensure all learning is individualized, relevant, and actionable. Fellows develop their own strategic plans to guide their learning throughout the Fellowship. The individual goals within Fellows' strategic plan inform the schools they tour on Excellent School Visits, the professional development they participate in during Workshops, their work at Kickoff and Capstone, and their ongoing coaching.

As alumni, Fellows will continue to receive individualized support, a Coalition member mentor, and participate in Excellent School Visits.

We are excited by Roy's leadership and development as a Fellow and about the charter school application for Tennessee Nature Academy. We support their application to open an excellent diverse-by-design charter

school for the students and families of Nashville.

Sincerely,

Ashley Heard, Diverse Charter Schools Coalition

Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: August 29, 2022 9:36 pm  
Browser: Chrome Mobile 104.0.0.0 / Android  
IP Address: 76.235.199.108  
Unique ID: 1003494723  
Location: 36.0711, -86.7196

**Name** Shelby Slowey

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**Email** shelbylu01@gmail.com

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**Phone** (817) 578-1440

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**Organization** Rev. (Mrs.)

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

My daughter attended the TNA Wild Discovery Art and Nature Camp this past summer. Jay and the staff are professional, knowledgeable, caring, and gifted to work with children of all ages from diverse backgrounds. I have the upmost confidence that TNA will be well organized and a rich learning experience for students. I deeply believe education is the foundation from which our society can thrive. While I absolutely support our mnps public schools, I recognize that new and evidence based models like TNA can address the needs of students for whom traditional public education might not be the best fit. All children deserve to thrive, and nature based learning can and will make for more peaceful societies if only embraced and funded now.

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: August 30, 2022 1:30 pm  
Browser: Safari 15.1 / OS X  
IP Address: 174.212.111.109  
Unique ID: 1003764650  
Location: 36.1187, -86.2626

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**Name** Darrell Hawks

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**Email** darrellhawks01@gmail.com

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**Phone** (919) 889-8679

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**Organization** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

I serve as a Board Director for the Tennessee Nature Academy (TNA) and request your support for the TNA school model that will provide students in our community the option to learn and play outside; take AP classes and earn industry certifications; while participating in agriculture and conservation projects that are not available in public schools.

I recently had the opportunity to see a diversity of more than 70 kids participate in the nature camp program facilitated by TNA at Mill Ridge Park in Antioch. The hands-on learning and recreation led by a diverse group of faculty was progressive, interactive, and engaging for all students. I envision a future for our community where this type of high-quality learning and engagement in an outdoor classroom is available to parents for their learners, especially in southeast Davidson County where access to outdoor services and nature programming is scarce.

As a leader of a community nonprofit in southeast Davidson County that serves kids and grownups in the outdoors, I observe firsthand the many health benefits of learning and playing outside. These benefits positively impact mental health, physical health, social development, and emotional development for the individual and the collective. Please support the TNA in operating this education model for our community.

Thanks kindly for your consideration.

Respectfully,  
Darrell Hawks  
Board Director  
Tennessee Nature Academy

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Form Name:	Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written
Submission Time:	August 31, 2022 12:52 pm
Browser:	Chrome 104.0.0.0 / OS X
IP Address:	38.53.180.52
Unique ID:	1004241443
Location:	35.9314, -86.6867

<b>Name</b>	Alisha Keig
<b>Email</b>	alishakeig@gmail.com
<b>Phone</b>	(619) 838-2958
<b>Organization</b>	Beloved Community
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Metro Nashville Public Schools

**Please provide your written comments below** Please authorize TNA! This school will be built between my neighborhood and Cane Ridge Park and it is really exciting for me as a former educator and a future parent!

I am a board member for the Tennessee Nature Academy (TNA)., and I've known Jay Renfro, the Founder and Executive Director, for almost 10 years. He is a native Nashvillian and a beloved educator who strives to give his students opportunities and entry points into worlds they may have never seen before. He's worked in both public and charter schools at MNPS and led nature-based learning in both areas which has led him to build this school model.

NA is a diverse-by-design school with a focus on recruiting and retaining Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) educators). They are also opening the door (literally) to creating inclusion in the outdoors, a space that is traditionally focused on white males. I love the idea of students of color (hopefully my own children!) learning about and reconnecting with land like their BIPOC ancestors did. Also, in light of the ongoing pandemic, having a school model focused on getting students and staff outside will be good for their health and good for their future career paths (Agriculture and natural resource management is the number one industry in Tennessee).

Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 1, 2022 2:02 pm  
Browser: Chrome 104.0.0.0 / OS X  
IP Address: 71.81.216.185  
Unique ID: 1004740815  
Location: 35.5397, -82.5151

**Name** Justine Katzenbach

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**Email** justine@diverselearnerscoop.com

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**Phone** (413) 883-4498

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**Organization** Diverse Learners Cooperative

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

The Tennessee Nature Academy founders have been intentional and deliberate in planning a school that will be inclusive of all learners, with a focus on ensuring accessibility for students with disabilities and those who are multilingual learners. Observing their commitment of efforts, resources, and time to the thoughtful development of space, staff, schedules, and learning materials, it is clear that the school will be an option for all learners and families to be successful.

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 2, 2022 10:31 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.6.1 / iOS  
IP Address: 68.53.1.91  
Unique ID: 1005333985  
Location: 36.0571, -86.6729

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**Name** Stanley Phanthavong

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**Email** sjphan11@gmail.com

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**Phone** (615) 498-0138

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**Organization** Community member

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

I've been a supporter of Tennessee nature academy for a long time now, and my experience so far has been amazing. My little sister was signed up for the week long summer camp that Tennessee nature academy hosted and the first thing I noticed were the friendly smiles and the willingness to help! I've gone to schools where diversity was always a big staple point, and seeing the camp and all the kids and the staff, everyone was so diverse and showed a friendly happy community. My little sister would come home everyday excited for the next day and when camp ended she asked if she would be able to go to the middle school. I know that many parents and students would love to have a unique and fun school experience that other schools wouldn't be able to offer. An experience that I wish I could have had.

So please, support Tennessee nature academy and the great things they do for our community!

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 2, 2022 10:45 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.6.1 / iOS  
IP Address: 104.28.33.133  
Unique ID: 1005335587  
Location: 36.1671, -86.7861

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**Name** Franpaul Lobo

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**Email** franpaul321@gmail.com

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**Phone** (615) 727-4454

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**Organization** Community member

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

Hey I'm Franpaul Lobo and I am a senior in high school in the Antioch cluster and I jus wanted to share my thoughts on Tennessee Nature Academy. I have participated in Tennessee Nature Academy's earlier programs before and it was really fun and it also opened my else to more things that I didn't know of. I was also able to create strong bonds with people in the community who I have known for 8 years know and I'm only 17! I want to say that you guys should accept Tennessee Nature Academy because I would love for my younger nieces, nephews, and other kids to experience what I did so they can have fun and to also discover new things that can be fun and to help build survive skills.

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 3, 2022 4:11 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.6.1 / iOS  
IP Address: 174.212.175.151  
Unique ID: 1005482082  
Location: 36.1671, -86.7861

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**Name** Joseph Arriaga

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**Email** Josepharriaga11@icloud.com

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**Phone** (615) 967-8179

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**Organization** Tennessee nature academy

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below** Good afternoon, My name is Joseph Arriaga I live in the Antioch community and I lived here my whole life and have attended both public and charter schools in the area Spanish is my household language and I'm writing in my behalf of my whole family. The school options in our community is not high quality for our community and we desperately need Tennessee Nature Academy and I want my nieces and nephews to attend this school!

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 3, 2022 4:17 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.6.1 / iOS  
IP Address: 172.225.24.226  
Unique ID: 1005483172  
Location: 36.1671, -86.7861

**Name** Mia Munoz

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**Email** mia.mun0802@gmail.com

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**Phone** (615) 684-7549

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**Organization** Community member

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

Hello my name is Mia Munoz , I am a resident in the Antioch community. My family is one of the many family's that went to homeschooling during the pandemic. Tennessee Nature Academy provides the types of educational experiences that families like mine are looking for in a school. Soon I will start working towards becoming a teacher and TNA is the sort of school I see myself working at. Please approve TNA for families in the Antioch community like mine that are looking for a school for our children , Thank you !

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 3, 2022 8:02 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.6.1 / iOS  
IP Address: 67.172.99.198  
Unique ID: 1005516398  
Location: 36.0571, -86.6729

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**Name** Daniel Muleta

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**Email** dbenti2003@yahoo.com

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**Phone** (713) 459-2685

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**Organization** Tennessee Department of Health

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

I know the founder of this school , Mr Renfro, as a a teacher of my son, Amanuel Benti while he was in middle. Mr Renfro was a great mento to my son and his friends. He did extraordinary efforts to motivate them to work to their best ability, help them be persons of good character respecting each other and other people. He devoted his extra time to take them to field where they can explore nature while enjoying being together. He is born to help students succeed and cherish life. My son and most of his friends are third year in college but has contact with Mr Renfro as a mentor. I have no words to express his kindness and commitment to help his students. I support his organization in all terms and wish him all the success.

Thanks

Dr Daniel Benti Muleta

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 3, 2022 10:00 pm  
Browser: Chrome 104.0.5112.102 / Windows  
IP Address: 129.59.122.76  
Unique ID: 1005529859  
Location: 36.1315, -86.8019

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**Name** Amanuel Benti

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**Email** bentiamanuel@gmail.com

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**Phone** (615) 955-2322

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**Organization** Student

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Other

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**Please provide your written comments below**

Tennessee Nature Academy tackles the real and very present issue that plagues our young adolescents: the suffocating learning environment that so often defines the classroom. Not only is there a plethora of research evincing a positive correlation between enhanced academic performance and time allocated outside in the natural world, but there is also a basic demand from our communities yearning for a more enriched and holistic experience beyond the confines of the classroom. Tennessee Nature Academy does exactly that with its nature-based projects that focuses on connecting subjects they learn and applying it to the tangible world around them. TNA is not another run-of-the-mill charter school making its rounds in the cycle. It is a framework grounded in research and truth with a simple yet necessary aim of enriching the students of the 37013-of enriching the future of our community.

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 6, 2022 11:08 am  
Browser: Chrome 104.0.0.0 / OS X  
IP Address: 70.178.85.47  
Unique ID: 1006250524  
Location: 35.1949, -94.25

**Name** Sherrill Stratford

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**Email** sherrill.stratford@gmail.com

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**Phone** (615) 714-8506

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**Organization** n/a

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

I am in support of TNA, a nature-based learning program. I support the innovations and dedication to continue to make learning adaptable and engaging for our children. I am excited about this nature-based learning and play that support students' academic success, build students' social and community connections, and promote students' well-being.

I am hopefully that our community will get this opportunity!

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Form Name:	Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written
Submission Time:	September 8, 2022 12:54 pm
Browser:	Chrome 105.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address:	136.58.92.122
Unique ID:	1007243913
Location:	36.1579, -86.8608

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<b>Name</b>	Jenna Henderson
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<b>Email</b>	jghenderson@bellsouth.net
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<b>Phone</b>	(615) 887-1833
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<b>Organization</b>	Community member and parent
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<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy
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**Please provide your written comments below**

As a parent of school-age children in Nashville, I believe the education model of Tennessee Nature Academy is a much-needed addition to the educational offerings of MNPS. The combination of strong academics with experience-based outdoor education is an exciting prospect for the city and for our kids. "Nature deficit" has been widely-documented as a phenomenon that is detrimental for children, yet our schools so often seem to only contribute to this deficit. Nashville needs educational models that allow children to get outside to learn, know, and enjoy the place they call home. We need curriculum that gets children away from screens and integrates "head" knowledge with tactile experiences and the joy and confidence that can come from outdoors. I believe the model proposed by TNA also holds critically important mental health benefits for students, in addition to learning enhancement. I sincerely hope that Tennessee Nature Academy can become a reality - our children and our community need this school!

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 12, 2022 10:13 am  
Browser: Chrome 105.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 70.90.152.249  
Unique ID: 1008587075  
Location: 36.2437, -86.6114

<b>Name</b>	Samuel Miller
<b>Email</b>	sam.miller912@gmail.com
<b>Phone</b>	(228) 627-4621
<b>Organization</b>	N/A
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy

**Please provide your written comments below**

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Samuel Miller and the purpose of this email is to both express my support for Tennessee Nature Academy and emphasize the importance of outdoor education recreation- especially at such a developmentally crucial age.

My background includes two years of recent service as a Conservation Crew Leader with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC), whereby during this time I managed groups of up to ten high schoolers and young adults. During this time I was able to see firsthand how spending extended periods of time outdoors (our "Spikes" were four weeks at a time, living and working out of tents) contributes greatly to personal and ethical development, positive trends in mental and physical health, and fosters an adolescent's ability to form deeper interpersonal relationships with the land as their medium.

I see Tennessee Nature Academy's vision as a direct answer to some of the societal issues that our youth are facing. As technology advances rapidly and people spend an increasingly growing amount of time indoors and sitting, mental and physical health suffer - exacerbated by the isolation from peers with whom you share a team, physically engaged with the outdoors.

TNA's vision provides the opportunity for members of the community to discover new skills and potentials they may not have noticed in a traditional school environment. These skills lead to newfound confidence and proficiencies, while fostering leadership potential that will be used to serve the community in the future. Personally, I spent ninth grade at a nature academy for one year as a boarding student: a life-changing year that I wouldn't trade to sit in a classroom with concrete blacktops in every direction. This year was the impetus to my personal military leadership in the future, as well as my love for the outdoors and conserving its beauty, how to effectively survive in the outdoors, and the importance of the environment.

With this I kindly urge your support of the Tennessee Nature Academy.

Best wishes and kind regards,

Samuel Miller  
228-627-4621  
sam.miller912@gmail.com

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 12, 2022 3:24 pm  
Browser: Chrome 105.0.0.0 / Windows  
IP Address: 170.190.198.190  
Unique ID: 1008746058  
Location: 36.0711, -86.7196

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<b>Name</b>	Laurel Creech
<b>Email</b>	laurelcreech@gmail.com
<b>Phone</b>	(615) 788-2511
<b>Organization</b>	Sustainability Director for Metro Nashville
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

First thank you for your continued service to our community and to our children. In large part because of your heartfelt dedication, our future leaders will have the opportunity to excel and learn in a healthy, supportive environment.

I am reaching out on behalf of the Tennessee Nature Conservancy charter school. Having been a local civic leader in our community for nearly 25 years, I am thrilled about this academy which if approved will provide an environment of learning that also flourishes students' well-being and success. There are numerous benefits to learning in an outdoor environment, some of which include positive impact on mental health, physical health, social development, and emotional development. As I consider a positive future for all our citizens, I envision educational models that strengthen and evolve our students' education and Tennessee Nature Academy's school model certainly embodies making this hope a reality.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and appreciate your vote for approval.

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 12, 2022 9:26 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.6 / iOS  
IP Address: 172.58.147.32  
Unique ID: 1008885459  
Location: 36.1671, -86.7861

<b>Name</b>	Jose Amaya
<b>Email</b>	Jrthegorilla@gmail.com
<b>Phone</b>	(615) 243-9554
<b>Organization</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy
<b>Please provide your written comments below</b>	Being part of this organization(Tennessee Nature Academy) was the BEST. I learned so much about being outside and learning the real world, I wish I could go back . My brother Jason Amaya would lovely like to attend here so he can experience it all .

Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 12, 2022 9:45 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.6.1 / iOS  
IP Address: 172.58.160.147  
Unique ID: 1008890288  
Location: 41.8502, -87.6736

<b>Name</b>	Isaac Delgadillo
<b>Email</b>	eduardo.247@icloud.com
<b>Phone</b>	(615) 720-0785
<b>Organization</b>	tennessee nature academy
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy
<b>Please provide your written comments below</b>	Me and my family would love my little brother to attend tennessee nature academy. Coming from a Spanish speaking house hood we always want our kids to have the best future and we know Tennessee nature academy is it .

Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 12, 2022 9:47 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.6.1 / iOS  
IP Address: 99.46.255.109  
Unique ID: 1008890814  
Location: 41.5344, -81.5319

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<b>Name</b>	Kristina Spoto
<b>Email</b>	kspoto11@jcu.edu
<b>Phone</b>	(216) 650-0873
<b>Organization</b>	N/a
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

I am an educator that worked and taught in Antioch from 2016-2020. I relocated to Ohio in 2020, otherwise I would like to think I would still be working in the Antioch community. I am writing in support of Tennessee Nature Academy. During my time in Antioch I worked with Mr. Renfro and witnessed firsthand the positive affects that nature learning had on our students and student community. This hands-on approach not only supported student learning, but it helped students thrive both academically and social-emotionally. Our nature-based learning trips and activities were always the highlight of the school year for both students and staff. One of the cornerstones of education is building relationships, and I have never seen stronger relationships built than I have with nature learning. I believe that Tennessee Nature Academy will be a tremendous asset to the Antioch community as well as MNPS as a whole.

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 12, 2022 10:15 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.4 / iOS  
IP Address: 98.240.10.6  
Unique ID: 1008897402  
Location: 36.0571, -86.6729

**Name** Brayan Hernandez

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**Email** xxxhernandez9@gmail.com

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**Phone** (615) 602-5824

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**Organization** Community member

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below** Good afternoon,

my name is Brayan Hernandez and I am a resident living in south Nashville. I am asking the board of education to please support the Tennessee nature academy charter school. My parents don't speak English, so I'm sending this message for them.

They signed up my little sibling Charlie to the nature summer camp jugar TNA made for the little kids of all ages and all different ethnicities. Charlie said he loved the camp and he had so much fun making friends and learning in a different way. I would've loved to be in this school as a young kid that would love to play outside and do things that weren't in my comfort zone. I think Tennessee nature academy would be a great addition to kids lives because nowadays kids just wanna stay on their phones and play inside this school gives kids a little glimpse of how people use to learn and take a break from technology.

We want to send him to Tennessee Nature Academy as soon as it opens and have other Hispanic families in the neighborhood who will as well.

Please approve TNA. Thank you!

-The Hernandez family

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 13, 2022 8:15 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.6.1 / iOS  
IP Address: 68.52.215.92  
Unique ID: 1009322794  
Location: 36.0048, -86.7886

<b>Name</b>	Madison Miller
<b>Email</b>	madisonmiller3390@gmail.com
<b>Phone</b>	(260) 715-5799
<b>Organization</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy/Community Member
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy



**Please provide your written comments below**

Dear Members of the Charter Commission,

As a local teacher in the Antioch community for the past 6 years, I am writing to you today to ask you to please consider recommending the approval of Tennessee Nature Academy.

Full disclosure-I am the wife of Jay Renfro, TNA's founding executive director. What that means is I've gotten a behind-the-scenes look at what all has gone into trying to make this school become a reality, and there are a few things I'd like to share with you:

-Jay and I have previously worked in both charter schools and MNPS schools. We saw first-hand how mismanagement of a charter school can disrupt children's education and development, and it was devastating to watch that happen. We know how important it is that we do right by our families and our community. This isn't Hillsdale. This isn't a "non-profit" charter school with a corporate agenda. We are active members of the Antioch community who have lived and taught here for years. This school isn't for us, it's for the kids and families in our community.

-The kids that you've seen at the MNPS board meetings are part of the MNPS school system, yet they have repeatedly come out to support their former middle school teacher's proposed school. Why? Because they have experienced first-hand what nature-based education can look like and they loved it. While we haven't officially taught these students in years, we see them on a regular basis because they want to be involved with the outdoors. I've seen nature-based education at work right here in Antioch and I've seen the joy it has brought so many of these kids.

-One of the critiques you heard from MNPS is that we have recruited families, but we haven't partnered with families while developing our school model. I want to mention a few of the ways we've partnered with families throughout this process, as well as some things I've seen on a personal level over the years. Most recently we hosted two week-long sessions of free summer camp where we sought feedback and input from families of what they would like to see in a school for their community. We have also set up booths at various community events as well as the Cosecha farmers market where we've done the same. However, this school isn't something that's been developed in the past year. This school is an accumulation of ideas that have been developed over the past 6 years while working directly with the families of our students on a personal level. I can't even begin to tell you how I have seen Jay partner with families over the years, but I can tell you it is one of the reasons I fell in love with him. I've seen Jay host birthday parties for students when their parents were worried they didn't have the space. I've seen Jay deliver food to families' houses when they didn't have enough to eat. I've seen the texts he gets on Father's Day from students who view him as their father-figure. I've seen the goofballs that pop by our house just to visit. I've seen the mother who just lost her son cry out for Jay at her son's funeral, leaning on him for support...I say all

of this not to brag about what a great guy Jay is, but to show that Jay's connection with families goes beyond asking them to fill out a survey. They have been an integral part in the making of this school.

I would like for you ask yourself the following question: "Would this school benefit the Antioch community?" If that answer is yes, then I ask that you please recommend the approval of Tennessee Nature Academy.

Thank you for your time and your dedication to our schools.

Sincerely,  
Maddie Renfro

Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 13, 2022 9:00 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari / iOS  
IP Address: 76.123.214.104  
Unique ID: 1009335310  
Location: 35.9104, -86.762

**Name** Mitzi Renfro

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**Email** mjofro@comcast.net

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**Phone** (615) 400-4292

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**Organization** N/a

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

I am writing to ask that you vote to APPROVE the charter for Tennessee Nature Academy. The school has the enthusiastic support of prospective families, students, and the community. The benefits of nature based learning are well documented. This is an opportunity to provide an innovative educational opportunity for the students of Nashville. Thank you for your consideration.

Warmest regards,

Mitzi Renfro

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Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 13, 2022 9:32 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari 15.6.1 / iOS  
IP Address: 76.147.63.2  
Unique ID: 1009343405  
Location: 37.751, -97.822

<b>Name</b>	Kate Schwartz
<b>Email</b>	katemschwartz3@gmail.com
<b>Phone</b>	(503) 888-9637
<b>Organization</b>	Mercer Island Public Schools
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy
<b>Please provide your written comments below</b>	I formerly taught in Antioch and left the state to pursue more outdoor oriented career with youth.

Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 13, 2022 9:49 pm  
Browser: Mobile Safari / iOS  
IP Address: 76.235.199.68  
Unique ID: 1009347484  
Location: 36.0711, -86.7196

<b>Name</b>	Mariah Ragland
<b>Email</b>	mariah.ragland1994@yahoo.com
<b>Phone</b>	(865) 405-3139
<b>Organization</b>	N/a
<b>I wish to comment on behalf of</b>	Tennessee Nature Academy
<b>Please provide your written comments below</b>	This needs to happen in Nashville now! I love the idea and would love to have my vegan kiddo attend.

Form Name: Tennessee Nature Academy Public Hearing Form- Written  
Submission Time: September 14, 2022 12:32 pm  
Browser: Chrome Mobile 105.0.0.0 / Android  
IP Address: 50.200.142.186  
Unique ID: 1009589615  
Location: 40.0111, -75.3029

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**Name** Kissie Gutierrez

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**Email** kmgrkiki@gmail.com

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**Phone** (615) 755-9577

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**Organization** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**I wish to comment on behalf of** Tennessee Nature Academy

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**Please provide your written comments below**

I really believe that Tennessee Nature Academy is a wonderful project that combines excellent academic education and the well-being of the students. For me as a mom, it is very important that my children learn in a natural environment and learn how to enjoy and connect with nature, because from our conception we are part of it. As a teacher and professional I know of the importance in cognitive, emotional, social and motor development that nature has in the learning of human beings. For these reasons I fully support the opening of the Tennessee Nature Academy.

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