

EOA is thrilled to share our JEDI newsletter! May's JEDI Ambassador is Josh Gruner.

### JEDI AMBASSADOR

Hello! I'm excited to be our JEDI Ambassador for this month and bring these resources centered around the topic of public education. I recognize this is not an easy subject for everyone to talk about. If you're like me, it's a conversation you've long avoided, perhaps sensing the weight of it as you watch other families enter into the choice of where to send their children and start to ask what a good education really means. In the last few years that's changed for me as our daughter will start kindergarden in the fall and I've found myself learning about (and sometimes being slightly overwhelmed by) the breadth of options and the complicated history of education in our city. I've also explored a variety of preconceived ideas about public education and asked myself what is the desired end result of education and why? Where to send your child to school is a deeply personal decision. This journey certainly looks different for every family, but whatever your place in life may be, I hope you find these resources informative, helpful, and challenging in a hopeful way.



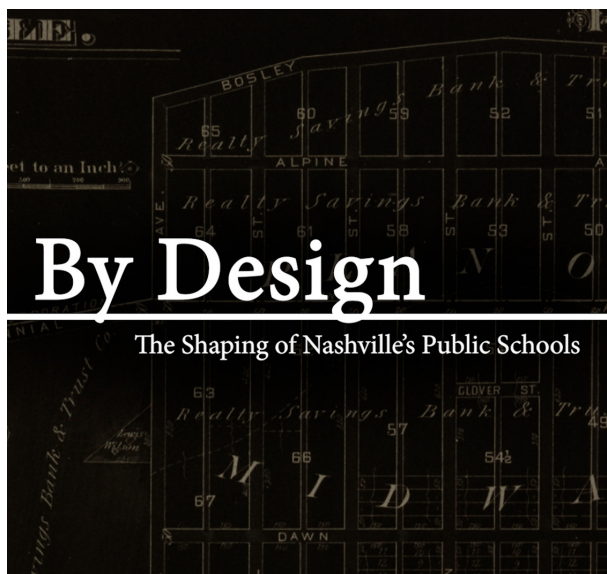
- Josh Gruner



[to learn more MNPS statistics.](#)

#### MNPS School Locator

I found it helpful to start with some understanding of the numbers in the public school system. Currently, MNPS serves a little more than 86,000 students in 157 different schools. Overall, the K-12 public school population is 44% Black, 28% White, 23% Hispanic/Latino, and 4% Asian (compared to Nashville-Davidson county which is 66% White, 27% Black, 10% Hispanic/Latino, and 4% Asian). 75% of all MNPS students qualify as economically disadvantaged. The linked photo to the left provides an extensive list of all schools and also interactive maps to better understand how the district is divided. I'd encourage everyone to research what local schools are around you, and if possible, get involved in some capacity. [Click the picture](#)



#### By Design: The Shaping of Nashville's Public Schools

EOA hosted a screening and discussion of this eye-opening documentary produced by the Nashville Public Education Foundation that sheds a light on Nashville's history with public education and how public policy and urban renewal have impacted a system intended to create a level playing field for all children. Starting in the 1820s and bringing the story to current day, this film exposes some of the hard truths about our city's struggle to integrate public schools. A true history lesson and a great starting point for anyone hoping to learn more

about Nashville. We invite anyone reading this to watch the film and join in the discussion on how learning this history can help us engage with the story and strive for an equitable system where all students thrive in school. [Click the picture to access a "Watch Guide" and "Action Guide".](#)



#### The Promise Podcast

By: Nashville Public Radio

Meribah Knight of WPLN took on the challenging topic of reporting on one racially divided neighborhood school system in the second season of the Podcast, "The Promise". (Note that Season 1 addresses a different, but neighboring topic of public housing). After promises of public education serving as the "great equalizer", this podcast exposes the conflicting truth that it has often become more and more the "great divider". You'll hear about how two East Nashville public schools located just over a mile apart have very different demographics, histories, and futures. As a white parent, I found this podcast exposing some of

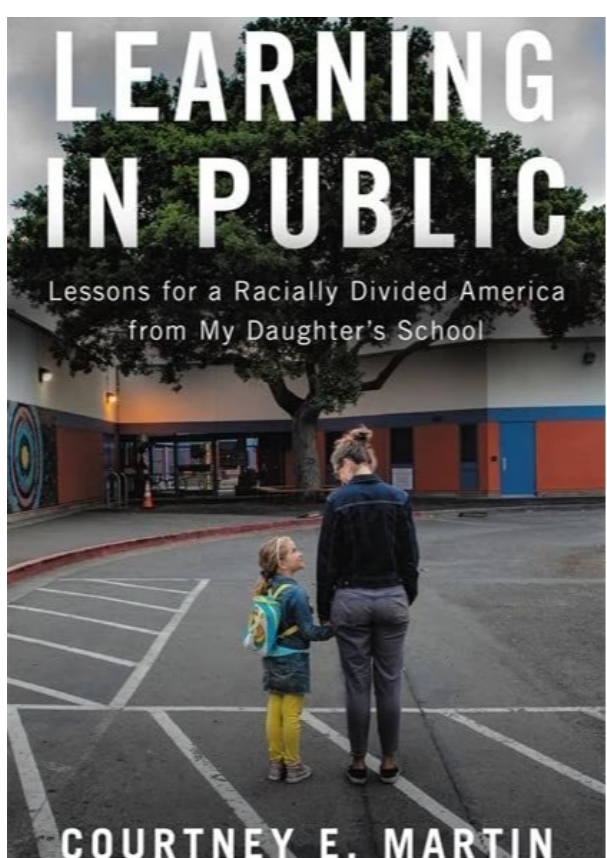
the piercing truths that often go overlooked or unspoken about how some schools have ended up as segregated as they are. I'd like to think this podcast helps us engage in that conversation. [Click the picture to listen to The Promise Podcast.](#)



#### Nice White Parents Podcast

By: Serial Productions and the New York Times

A not so local, but still incredibly relevant podcast by Serial Productions and the New York Times about how much influence white families have on schools, whether they know it or not. Another convicting but helpful story I'd recommend to any family interested in supporting a public school in a healthy way. [Click the picture to listen to the Nice White Parents Podcast.](#)



#### Learning in Public

By: Courtney E. Martin

I'll be the first to admit I am not an avid reader and feel a little strange recommending a book that took me months to read, but I found this story of a journalist mom in Oakland going through this process of decision making to be an encouragement. She doesn't cover the parts that were hard (both for her and her child), she talks candidly about conversations with friends and other parents, and she owns up to the mistakes she makes along the way. I was encouraged by the reminder that we don't have to have everything figured out and that there's great value in being vulnerable with other people. Perhaps my favorite piece of advice from this book is directed towards motivated white parents wanting to get involved in a diverse school environment... "Show up, and Shut up". [Click the picture to read a Washington Post article about Learning in Public.](#)

\*\*\* If you would like to be a JEDI Ambassador in the future, please email Tracey to reserve a month \*\*\*

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