



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

May 6, 2020

Dr. Marty Pollio  
Superintendent  
Jefferson County Public Schools  
VanHoose Education Center  
3332 Newburg Road  
Louisville KY 40218

Dear Dr. Pollio:

It is very exciting for me to offer this letter to the Kentucky Board of Education reflecting the strong support of the YMCA of Greater Louisville, myself, and the YMCA Board of Directors, for a collaborative project that would include a modern new public elementary school adjacent and connected to a recently opened YMCA Community Integrated Health facility. Opened in December, 2019, it represents the largest investment into one of Louisville's most disinvested neighborhoods in nearly five decades. It is an award winning and highly celebrated facility that was over ten years in the planning. The Y's Board of Directors faced many challenges in bringing this to fruition, but never lost sight of the simple goal of providing integrated health services to this neighborhood.

The YMCA of Greater Louisville has a 167 year history of service in the Greater Louisville region. The Y is also no stranger to bold collaborations with the Jefferson County Public Schools which have existed for some five decades. These include School-Age Child Care programs, Black Achievers, Safe Place Services, Summer Learning Loss Prevention Programs, Aquatics, and one other location that includes a YMCA and public elementary school in a single building. The YMCA at Norton Commons/Norton Commons Elementary School was the pioneer in collaborating at this level and has been a big success by all measures. Together, we will learn and expand this as we bring an urban model to this work.

As we look at our community through the lens of Health Equity, we recognize the critical role of the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). The SDOH account for 80% of health outcomes and include social and environmental aspects of neighborhoods and the places and services that surround people's access to healthy choices. Two of the absolutely most significant SDOHs are health and education. Bringing these two factors together within a broad health continuum reduces barriers and increases access to healthier choices.

The value-add for the families served at Norton Commons are well-known by way of sharing facilities, joining together program leadership, and serving families in ways that would otherwise simply not be available. Bringing that to a more disinvested, vulnerable population will magnify the benefits. And note, the objective is for people to go beyond simply being "not sick", but offer avenues to seek a thriving quality of life. Consider the partners that have already joined with the YMCA – a Norton Healthcare pediatric and family medicine clinic; ProRehab Physical Therapy Center, Gilda's Club satellite office, Family and Children's Place Behavioral and Mental Health Counseling Center, Best Buy Teen Tech Center, and even a Republic Bank Branch Banking Center.

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The historic YMCA Mission suggests that the organization exists to help "Build Healthy Spirit, Mind and Body for all." This calls us to go far beyond just physical activity to promote wholistic health. Today's YMCA is much more than a fitness center; it broadly supports Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility.

The YMCA could not be more excited and enthusiastic about the potential of this project. It is our privilege to work with the Jefferson County Public Schools in this bold endeavor. Each partner is deeply committed to the students and families that will be served and we encourage the support of the Kentucky Board of Education.

Naturally, any member of the Board would be welcome and encouraged to visit the new YMCA. Should any additional information be needed, it would be my pleasure to respond. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



R. Stephen Tarver  
President/CEO

RST/cln

cc: Susan Biaisolli, Director, Facility Planning, Jefferson County Public Schools  
Gregory C. Dunbar, AIA, MBA, Manager, Kentucky Department of Education  
Howard L. Holloman Jr., Board Chairman, YMCA of Greater Louisville