



PENCIL

2030 Strategic Plan

North Star: Building the bridge to a stronger, more equitable public education ecosystem.



facilitated by

**WOMEN OF COLOR
COLLABORATIVE**

Strategic Pillars

Financial Wellbeing & Strategic Growth

Long-term sustainability will require a strategic approach to facility needs, donor engagement, board activation, and revenue diversification — grounded in PENCIL’s mission and values.

Operational Alignment & Organizational Health

PENCIL’s internal systems, culture, infrastructure, and communications must model the excellence, clarity, and care it aims to deliver externally. Alignment here is essential not just for efficiency, but for impact, morale, and trust — inside and out.

Transformational Partnerships & Collaborations

PENCIL connects time, talent, and treasure from the community to Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS). These relationships must be reciprocal, equity-informed, and sustainable — with shared accountability and clear communication.

Cross-cutting Themes & Anchoring Questions

Cultural Cohesion, Staff Wellness & Human Capital -

Are we creating a workplace where people can thrive, grow, and lead with purpose?

- Are we cultivating trust, inclusion, and belonging across all teams?
- Do staff feel equipped and empowered to represent and advance the mission — especially as demands increase?
- Are we recognizing and developing internal talent (including interns, hybrid workers, and non-executive staff)?
- How are we supporting managers to lead well and grow others?

Systems for Equity & Agility - Are we aligned, nimble, and honest about our limits and responsibilities?

- Are our systems fair, accessible, and responsive to both school and staff realities?

- How do we balance urgency with sustainability? What truly requires a “yes” right now?
- How do we ensure that innovation and growth don’t outpace our values, our people, or our mission?
- When we say “yes” what are we saying no to, and vice versa?

Visibility, Belonging & Community Activation - Does the broader community know they belong here — and how to plug in?

- Are we sharing our wins clearly and consistently — with staff, partners, and the public?
- Do everyday Nashvillians (not just executives) understand how they can help?
- Are we removing the barrier for volunteers, families, and non-traditional partners to engage with public education?
- How do we make PENCIL feel less like an insider network and more like a citywide movement?

Financial Wellbeing & Strategic Growth

Long-term sustainability will require a strategic approach to facility needs, donor engagement, board activation, and revenue diversification — grounded in PENCIL’s mission and values.

PENCIL’s long-term impact and stability depend on a diversified, mission-aligned financial strategy that anticipates and responds to political shifts, funding volatility, and community opportunity. PENCIL can sustain and grow its impact by prioritizing meaningful

investments in infrastructure and resource allocation — all while inviting individuals, corporations, and community partners into a shared responsibility for Nashville’s educational future, grounded in its core values.

Priority	Strategic Goals
<u>New Facility & Resource Infrastructure</u> PENCIL will secure and sustain a long-term facility that meets operational needs while investing in up-to-date systems and a capital campaign to support growth and innovation.	• Execute a dynamic capital campaign including traditional and non-traditional funding sources, with a focus on inviting individuals, corporation, and community partners into shared responsibility for Nashville’s education future. • Identify and integrate resource management systems and best practices necessary for modernizing logistics and increasing efficiency in resource tracking. • Identify pathways for long term financial sustainability rooted in innovation, collaboration and landscape responsiveness.
<u>Revenue Growth & Fiscal Sponsorship</u> We will expand and diversify revenue streams, grow the endowment, and strengthen our fiscal sponsorship model to ensure long-term financial resilience and impact.	• Identify vision aligned revenue and endowment growth plan leveraging more diversified funding streams. • Map scenario planning and decision making levers tied to immediate, mid-term and long-term landscape shifts, aligning each with potential financial impact. • Clarify the value, criteria, and process for fiscal sponsorships to ensure they are transparent and rooted in equity. • Empower all Board Members and Staff to be development focused.
<u>Strategic Resource Allocation</u> PENCIL will implement values-aligned decision-making processes that guide how resources are evaluated, prioritized, and leveraged for greatest impact.	• Define process to evaluate funding requests through a values aligned equity and transformation lens. • Develop protocols for decision-making on high-stakes, urgent and/or resource-intense requests. • Leverage internal assets, technology and sector expertise to assess ROI and organizational capacity.

Operational Alignment & Organizational Health

PENCIL’s internal systems, culture, infrastructure, and communications must model the excellence, clarity, and care it aims to deliver externally. Alignment here is essential not just for efficiency, but for impact, morale, and trust — inside and out.

PENCIL’s operational alignment ensures that its internal capacity—staffing, systems, board, and brand—is positioned to meet the moment with clarity, agility, and care. This includes not only the infrastructure to deliver resources equitably and efficiently, but also the trust, tools, and transparency to invite everyday community

members into the work, elevate the voices and wellness of staff, and tell the success stories that counter a narrative of despair. When operations are grounded in people and possibility, PENCIL can scale what works, adapt to what’s emerging, and deepen its impact across Nashville.

Priority	Strategic Goals
<u>Data-Driven Agility</u> PENCIL will strengthen its data systems and decision-making processes to enable responsive, real-time action grounded in measurable impact and evolving community needs.	• Improve data collection and systems integration for real-time insights into school and landscape needs. • Create standard operating procedures and dashboards to track resource usage, program impact, and urgent vs. long-term priorities. • Build agility into decision-making structures supporting staff’s responsiveness to needs and community moments in real-time.
<u>Brand Identity, Visibility & Storytelling</u> We will identify & amplify PENCIL’s unique value and broaden its reach through a dynamic brand awareness campaign that drives engagement, investment, and recognition across the community.	• Execute a comprehensive brand awareness campaign centering PENCIL’s unique impact and role within the local educational ecosystem. • Amplify PENCIL’s value proposition as a catalyst for impact through relationship-driven channeling of community resources. • Deploy a marketing campaign that elevates the intersection of PENCIL’s service module and low-barrier community activation possibilities.
<u>Human Capital Optimization, Development & Elevation</u> PENCIL will invest in the growth, satisfaction, and leadership of its staff and board by aligning internal culture with values and expanding opportunities for development, recognition, and influence.	• Equip Board members with vision, clarity and tools to effectively serve as PENCIL “Champions.” • Establish pathways for staff elevation providing growth in role, responsibility and/or employee benefits. • Explore PENCIL’s Values Framework as an anchor and standard to align internal operations and culture. • Define policies and implement organizational procedures that encourage and facilitate professional development and exposure. • Curate a Board recruitment and retention pipeline and process informed by leadership needs and gaps in diversification strategies.

Transformational Partnerships & Collaborations

PENCIL connects time, talent, and treasure from the community to MNPS and beyond. These relationships must be reciprocal, equity-informed, and sustainable — with shared accountability and clear communication.

PENCIL is uniquely positioned as an independent and trusted bridge between Nashville’s public education system and the broader community—connecting individuals, businesses, and civic partners to schools through equitable, transformational partnerships that respond to both long-standing inequities and emerging needs.

PENCIL enables MNPS schools, students, and teachers to access resources, relationships, and opportunities that promote student success while protecting its ability to remain adaptive, inclusive, and mission-focused in a changing educational landscape.

Priority	Strategic Goals
<u>Clarify and Elevate the Partnership Model</u> PENCIL will maintain and grow a consistent, values-driven partnership model that ensures equitable engagement and clear alignment across all schools and programs.	• Formalize PENCIL’s Partnership Model providing standardization and consistent brand representation across programming. • Define and align engagement tiers informed by school capacity and need. • Maintain and grow the values-oriented partnership pipeline including onboarding, training, engagement & tracking.
<u>Deepen Collaboration with MNPS and Strategic Partners</u> We will strengthen collaboration with MNPS and key partners to align priorities, share resources, and support school- and district-level goals.	• Maintain and strengthen alignment with MNPS. • Develop shared understanding of the resource landscape and collaborative agreements increasing impact & efficiency. • Identify opportunities for strategic and informed collaboration resulting in supporting and complementary priorities across anchoring partnerships. • Explore and clarify organizational capacity and policy related to non-MNPS public schools.
<u>District Responsiveness</u> PENCIL will enhance its role as a trusted connector by building systems that enable equitable, data-informed, and responsive support for MNPS students and schools.	• Maintain and continue curating pathways for more equitable access to resources through informed programmatic decision making. • Position PENCIL as a trusted & informed partner to connect community resources with their intended impact. • Expand understanding and informed positioning as a local foundation supporting the local educational landscape.