

Nashville school board backs DREAM Act

Metro's decision is 'human' one

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A federal bill that would open a path to citizenship for more than a million undocumented students failed more than a year ago, but the Metro Nashville School Board passed a resolution supporting it Tuesday.

Some political analysts say the election season and increasing support from educators could give new life to the DREAM Act, originally introduced a decade ago. Under that act, if students were brought to the country illegally as children, they could attend college or serve in the military for a chance at citizenship.

Tennessee immigration advocates estimate 1,000 undocumented students graduated from high school last year, but districts don't track students by immigration status.

"We are always interested in what happens with our students, though," board Chair Gracie Porter said. "We don't want any of them to be deported. It's our responsibility as a system to do everything we can to make sure they receive a [quality](#) education."

When asked why the Metro School Board decided to support undocumented students in a public way, Porter replied, "Because they're human."

"It's OK that (the DREAM Act) didn't pass last time," she said.

The board also briefly discussed Director of Schools Jesse Register's evaluation and offered him congratulations on his highly rated performance.

Register received a four-year renewed contract in June and a 1 percent pay raise in July, boosting his base salary from \$250,000 to \$253,045.

"There were a lot of formal discussions with Dr. Register about the evaluation," said district spokeswoman Meredith Libbey. "If the board members had chosen to discuss all the details here, it would have added hours to the board meeting."

School board members commented specifically on Register's [communication](#) skills. The evaluation and supporting documentation were more than 100 pages in length, Libbey said.

In other business, the board unanimously agreed that Gaylord Entertainment Company will have exclusive naming rights to McGavock High School's hospitality academy in exchange for \$100,000 of in-kind services — speakers, field trips and equipment — the first year, and \$50,000 in services each year thereafter.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20120111/NEWS04/301110100/Nashville-school-board-backs-DREAM-Act>