Dear Oklahoma State Board of Education,

We, the four undersigned Tulsa City Councilors, kindly request that you keep Tulsa Public Schools accreditation intact. We represent the communities within Tulsa with most of our Title I Schools, primarily serving low-income students and families. We acknowledge and understand that there is significant, complex work to do to ensure all children in our community receive a high-quality education. We believe that work is best done collaboratively with a focus on solutions and support for the second-largest school district in the state.

We believe in accountability paired with compassion, especially in considering the intricacies of operating a large district serving 34,000 students and families and one of the largest employers in the county. The ramifications of downgrading the accreditation or removing the accreditation of Tulsa Public Schools is gravely concerning for our students and our entire region’s economy.

Downgraded accreditation would negatively harm the avid efforts of our region to recruit and retain much-needed businesses and employees. The negative impact on workforce development, core to maintaining a thriving economy, is also worth noting. Our entire state already faces a severe teacher shortage, which is critical to having an educated and excellent workforce, and these actions would exacerbate that shortage.

We hope to work together with local and state partners to uplift our public schools in a shared effort to best serve our culturally, racially, and religiously diverse student population. Our schools are at the heart of our community’s present and future. Thank you all for your thoughtful consideration and service on behalf of public education. We are here to support ensuring all our community’s children are safe, educated, and have access to every opportunity.

Sincerely,

District 1 Councilor Vanessa Hall-Harper

District 3 Councilor Crista Patrick

District 2 Councilor Jeannie Cue

District 4 Councilor Laura Bellis