



Charter Renewal Application

Applying to Renew a Charter Agreement with
the Existing Authorizer

Charter Agreements ending in 2024-25

Tennessee Department of Education | Updated January 2024

Charter Renewal Application

Purpose

[Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-13-121](#) sets forth the procedures by which a charter school may renew its charter agreement with its authorizer. A charter school must submit a renewal application to its authorizer **no later than April 1 of the year prior to the year in which its charter agreement expires**. Renewal applications should allow authorizers to answer the following questions:

- Has the school met its academic goals?
- Has the school been faithful to its mission and vision?
- Has the school been effectively governed?
- Is the school fiscally sound?
- Are parents and students satisfied?
- Has the school satisfactorily met its legal obligations?
- If the school's charter agreement is renewed, what are its goals for the next charter term and are they likely to be achieved?

In addition to the renewal application, authorizers may review the school's annual reports, interim reviews, performance reports, and audits, including A-133 audits if applicable, when making renewal determinations.

The department of education has developed the following guidelines for use during the charter renewal application process.

Renewal Timeline

The timeline for the schools with charter agreements ending in the 2024-25 school year is as follows:

Renewal Timeline for Charters Ending in SY 2024-25	
January 1, 2024	Authorizer submits performance report
April 1, 2024	Charter school submits renewal application
February 1, 2025	Authorizer makes renewal decision
Within 10 days of date of authorizer decision to deny	If renewal denied by authorizer, charter school may appeal denial to Commission

The renewal application is due by **April 1¹** of the year prior to the year in which the current charter agreement expires². Three months prior to this date – **January 1** – the authorizer shall submit to the public charter school a performance report that reflects the renewal evaluation.

¹ Tennessee law provides that when the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or State observed holiday, the application materials are due on the next business day

² For all charter schools with a 10-year charter term, this would occur in Year 9 of the agreement.

On or before **February 1** of the year in which the current charter agreement expires³, the authorizer shall rule by resolution to approve or deny the renewal application.

If the authorizer denies the renewal application, the charter school governing body may appeal to the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission **within ten (10) days of the date of the decision to deny**.

If the Commission finds that the local board of education's decision to deny renewal of a charter agreement is contrary to the best interest of the students, LEA, or community, then the Commission shall approve the renewal application and the Commission shall become the authorizer. A decision by the Commission to deny the renewal of a charter agreement shall be final. No additional appeals may be considered.

Submission Instructions

Each charter school seeking renewal shall complete all sections of the renewal application, adhering to formatting and maximum page limitations.

A charter school should check with its authorizer to determine if any additional information is required for renewal.

An electronic copy of the completed renewal application must be submitted to the authorizer and the department of education. Electronic submissions may be sent to the department via email at Charter.Schools@tn.gov. All materials must be received by the authorizer and the department by the close of business on the required deadline.

The renewal application shall include the following:

1. Applicant Information Cover Page
2. Signed Assurances
3. Application Narrative
4. Appendices – optional

The renewal application, including the cover page, assurances, narrative, and any appendices may be **no more than 50 pages total**. The application narrative should be formatted using standard, one-inch margins and a font size of no less than 11 points. All pages in the application should be sequentially numbered (e.g., 1 of 18, 2 of 18). The appendices should be clearly labeled and referenced in the application narrative.

³ For all charter schools with a 10-year charter term, this would occur in Year 10 of the agreement.

Renewal Application

Applicant Information Cover Page

General Information

Name of Charter School	
CMO Name (if applicable)	
Mailing Address	
School Phone	
School Website	
Current School Leader	

Primary School Contact

Provide the name of the person who will serve as the primary contact for the application. The primary contact should serve as the contact for follow-up, interviews, and notices regarding the application.

Name of Primary Contact	
Title of Contact	
Contact Telephone	
Contact E-Mail Address	

Charter Agreement

Current Authorizer	
First Year of Operation	
Year Current Charter Awarded	
Year Current Charter Expires	

Student Demographics

Total Existing Enrollment	
% Economically Disadvantaged	
% of Students with Disabilities	
% of English Language Learners	

Proposed Grades / Enrollment for New Charter Term

School Year	Proposed Grade Levels	Proposed Student Enrollment
Y1 - 2025-2026		
Y2 - 2026-2027		
Y3 - 2027-2028		
Y4 - 2028-2029		
Y5 - 2029-2030		
Y6 - 2030-2031		
Y7 - 2031-2032		
Y8 - 2032-2033		
Y9 - 2033-2034		
Y10 - 2034-2035		

Assurances

As the authorized representative of the school, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this renewal application is true, to the best of my knowledge and belief, and if awarded a charter, the school will:

1. operate as a public, nonsectarian, non-religious public school, with control of instruction vested in the governing body of the school under the general supervision of its authorizer and in compliance with its charter agreement and the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002;
2. follow all federal, state and local laws and regulations that pertain to the operation of a public school, unless waived according to T.C.A. § 49-13-111(p);
3. provide special education services for students as provided in Tennessee Code Annotated Title 49, Chapter 10, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
4. adhere to all applicable provisions of federal law relating to students who are English learners, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974;
5. follow all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services;
6. comply with all provisions of the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002, as amended;
7. employ individuals to teach who hold a license to teach in a public school in Tennessee;
8. comply with Open Meetings and Open Records laws (T.C.A. §§ 8-44-101 et seq.; 10-7-503, 504);
9. not charge tuition, except for students transferring from another district to the school pursuant to the local board's out-of-district enrollment policy and T.C.A. § 49-6-3003;
10. follow state financial (budgeting and audit) procedures and reporting requirements according to T.C.A. § 49-13-111, 120 and 127;
11. require any member of the governing body, employee, officer or other authorized person who receives funds, has access to funds, or has authority to make expenditures from funds, to give a surety bond in the form prescribed by T.C.A. § 8-19-101;
12. maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage;
13. obtain all necessary permits, licenses, and certifications related to fire, health, and safety within the school building and on school property;
14. notify its authorizer immediately of any change in circumstances that may have a significant impact on the school's ability to fulfill its goals as stated in its charter agreement; and
15. submit a request to amend its charter agreement if the school plans to make a change to its operations.

Signature of Authorized Applicant Representative

Date

Print Representative Name

Application Narrative

Pursuant to TCA § 49-13-121, a public charter school renewal application shall contain a report of the school's operations, including students' standardized test scores, financial statements, and audits of the eight (8) years immediately preceding the date of the renewal application.

The renewal application narrative is organized into four sections:

1. Academic Success
2. Operational Stability
3. Financial Health
4. Future Plans/Projections

Section I - Academic Success

- a. Describe the school's academic achievement and growth results over the course of the current charter term. Include tables, charts, or graphs, as applicable, to illustrate cumulative and/or yearly assessment results.
- b. Address progress toward meeting the academic goals outlined in the current charter agreement. Were any amendments made to academic goals? If so, explain.
- c. Outline the school's assessment system and explain how assessments are used to inform instructional practice, evaluate teacher effectiveness, and implement professional development.
- d. Describe how the school uses other data (qualitative and quantitative) to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program.
- e. Discuss progress made toward closing achievement gaps.
- f. Outline leader and teacher professional development and its impact on student achievement.
- g. Explain how the school supports diverse learners.
- h. Discuss areas of academic concern and changes made to address any deficiencies.
- i. Explain why the school's academic outcomes merit renewal of its charter agreement.

Section II - Operational Stability

- a. Address progress toward meeting the operational goals outlined in the charter agreement, if applicable.
- b. Discuss student enrollment over the course of the current charter term. Is the school operating at maximum capacity? How many students are currently on the waitlist?
- c. Describe trends in student attrition rates and how leaders have addressed any concerns in attrition.
- d. Explain how the school provides a safe environment and addresses the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of students.

- e. Explain how the school has made community connections and developed working relationships with parents and families.
- f. Explain how the school sustains a well-functioning organizational structure that provides for personnel stability and effective teacher retention.
- g. Describe the development of the board members and school leadership during the current charter term.
- h. Describe any facility changes/improvements and their impact on achieving school goals.
- i. Explain why the school's operational condition merits renewal of its charter agreement.

Section III - Financial Health

- a. Address progress toward meeting the financial goals outlined in the charter agreement, if applicable.
- b. Report on the fiscal management of the school during the current charter term based on previously submitted audits, including A-133 audits if applicable, and financial reports.
- c. Address the alignment between expenditures and the school's mission, plans for student academic growth, and staff professional development.
- d. Review how any significant fiscal challenges were addressed during the current charter term.
- e. Describe efforts to operate the school in a financially sound and transparent manner.
- f. Explain why the school's financial condition merits renewal of its charter agreement.

Section IV - Future Plans/Projections

Provide an overview of the charter school's future goals and plans for their achievement, including:

- a. Academics and updated academic benchmarks
- b. Organizational changes (if applicable)
- c. Expansion (if applicable)
- d. Facility improvements
- e. Projected financial security
- f. Operational management
- g. Addressing any past academic, organizational, or financial deficits

Appendices

Renewal applicants may append documents supporting the renewal application. Any appendices should be clearly labeled and referenced in the narrative of the application.

Ratings and Criteria

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-121, an authorizer shall consider the charter school's renewal application, its annual progress reports, and its renewal performance report when deciding whether to approve or deny the charter school's renewal application.

In addition to the charter renewal application, evaluators may review other materials, including:

- the charter school's annual report(s);
- the local school board's performance report(s) for the charter school;
- the local school board's annual report(s);
- the local school board's site visit report and any responses submitted by the charter school regarding the local school board's visit findings; and
- correspondence from the LEA to the governing body regarding the status of the school during the term of the charter and any plans of correction required by the LEA of the governing body.

The State Board of Education has adopted Quality Charter Authorizing Standards in [Policy 6.111](#). Standard 5(b) addresses renewal decisions based on merit and inclusive evidence. This Standard provides that a quality authorizer “[b]ases the renewal process and renewal decisions on thorough analyses of a comprehensive body of objective evidence defined by the performance framework in the charter agreement” and “[g]rants renewal only to schools that have achieved the standards and targets stated in the charter agreement, are organizationally and fiscally viable, and have been faithful to the terms of the contract and applicable law.” An application that merits a recommendation for renewal should satisfy each of these criteria.

In addition, Standard 5(d) indicates that the authorizer's renewal process should be fair and transparent. The Standard provides that a quality authorizer “[c]learly communicates to schools the criteria for charter revocation, renewal, and non-renewal decisions that are consistent with the charter agreement, including any policy changes thereto.” Authorizers must follow these guidelines when developing their renewal processes. A model scoring rubric is provided below, but is not required to be used by authorizers. If authorizers choose to develop their own scoring rubric, they should share their rubric with charter schools along with their performance report due on January 1.

Model Scoring Rubric

Within each section, specific criteria define the expectations for a thorough response that "Meets the Standard." Evaluators will rate the responses by applying the following guidance:

Rating	Characteristics
Meets or Exceeds Standard	The record includes specific and accurate evidence that the school generally demonstrated success in meeting and upholding the terms of the charter agreement.
Partially Meets Standard	The record meets the criteria in some aspects but lacks sufficient evidence that the charter school is meeting the terms of the charter agreement in one or more areas.
Does Not Meet Standard	The record provides evidence that the charter school committed a violation of its charter agreement, failed to meet or make sufficient academic progress, and/or failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.

Section 1: Academic Plan and Design

Characteristics of a Strong Record:

- The school has been faithful to its mission and vision, and to its academic focus and plan.
- The school met or made sufficient progress toward achieving the academic goals as defined in its charter agreement.
- The school has demonstrated strong academic achievement and growth results over the course of the current charter term, as measured by state assessments and TVAAS scores.
- The school consistently met or exceeded expectations on the local board's annual performance evaluation.
- There is sufficient evidence that the school uses data to evaluate the effectiveness of its academic program, inform instructional practice, evaluate teacher effectiveness, and implement professional development.
- The school has made progress toward closing achievement gaps for all students.
- The school demonstrates clear and compelling evidence of successful student outcomes for diverse learners.
- The school did not receive any notices of concern or other interventions from the LEA or, if received, corrected the finding quickly.
- The school's academic outcomes merit renewal of the charter.

Section Review

<input type="checkbox"/>	Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does Not Meet Standard
Section Strengths					
Reference					Page
Concerns / Questions					
Reference					Page

Section 2: Operational Stability

Characteristics of a Strong Record:

- The school has met or made significant progress toward achieving the operational goals outlined in the charter agreement.
- The school consistently met or exceeded expectations on the local board's annual performance evaluation.
- The school has consistently operated at or near capacity and effectively addresses student attrition.
- The school provided clear and compelling evidence of parent and student satisfaction and community support.
- The school has demonstrated the capacity of its governing board and school leadership to effectively govern the school.
- The school has demonstrated the ability to provide a safe environment for its staff and students, making facility changes/improvements as needed.
- The school consistently addresses the physical, social, emotional and health needs of its students.
- The school has evidence of effective teacher retention, professional development, well-functioning organizational structures, and personnel stability.
- The school did not receive any notices of concern or other interventions from the LEA or, if received, corrected the finding quickly.
- The school's operational condition merits renewal of the charter.

Section Review

<input type="checkbox"/>	Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does Not Meet Standard
Section Strengths					
Reference					Page
Concerns / Questions					
Reference					Page

Section 3: Financial Health

Characteristics of a Strong Record:

- The application provided a detailed description of the school's fiscal health.
- The school has consistently met generally accepted standards of fiscal management.
- The school is fiscally sound and consistently receives clean financial audits with no findings.
- The school consistently met or exceeded expectations on the local board's annual performance evaluation.
- The school met or has made sufficient progress toward meeting financial goals outlined in the charter agreement.
- The school has demonstrated a clear alignment between expenditures and the school's mission, academic growth, and staff development.
- The school has addressed any fiscal challenges effectively during the current charter term.
- The school did not receive any notices of concern or other interventions from the LEA or, if received, corrected the finding quickly.
- The school's financial condition merits renewal of the charter.

Section Review

<input type="checkbox"/>	Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does Not Meet Standard
Section Strengths					
Reference					Page
Concerns / Questions					
Reference					Page

Section 4: Future Planning

Characteristics of a Strong Record:

- The school's future goals and plans for goal achievement are rigorous, measurable, and attainable.
- Growth plans are robust, detailed, and strategic.
- Changes to academic benchmarks and/or organizational structures are reasonable given the school's current standings.
- Plans for addressing any past academic, organizational, and/or financial deficits are comprehensive and realistic.
- The school provides a viable plan for its goals for the next charter term and demonstrates the capacity to meet its goals, if renewed.

Section Review

<input type="checkbox"/>	Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partially Meets Standard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does Not Meet Standard
Section Strengths					
Reference					Page
Concerns / Questions					
Reference					Page

OVERALL SUMMARY

Evaluators: Please use the space below to provide a summary statement of whether or not the charter agreement should be renewed and provide support for the overall recommendation based on evidence contained within the materials reviewed.

A charter school should be renewed if it did not commit a material violation of its charter agreement, met or made sufficient progress toward the performance expectations in its charter agreement, and generally met the accepted standards of fiscal management. Does this charter school's academic outcomes, operational condition, financial condition, and goals for the next charter term merit renewal?

Application Review

Recommend for Renewal

Recommend for Denial

Summary of Key Evidence and Areas of Concern to Support Recommendation