



Tennessee Department of Education

Annual Authorizer Report

Authorizer Toolkit | August 2026



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Annual Authorizer Report

The annual authorizer report is one of the most consequential responsibilities of a Tennessee authorizer. While it is a legally required practice, it can also be one of the most powerful opportunities to support transparency, strengthen relationships, and guide a school's continuous improvement. When done well, annual reporting strengthens trust and helps schools understand that oversight is rooted in student success.

In addition to providing a record of school performance for the year, the annual authorizer report can be used for several key purposes:

Purposes of Annual Reporting	
Transparency and Accountability	Schools, governing boards, district leadership, and the public can see clearly and concisely how each charter school is performing and whether it is on track to meet renewal standards.
Early Detection of Concerns	Annual reports can illuminate trends and reveal early Indicators of Distress, such as: • Declining proficiency or growth • Inconsistent financial management • High staff turnover • Weak governance practices
Consistency and Fairness	Annual reports create a shared foundation for oversight and consistent evaluation of criteria and expectations.
Relationship-Building	The report, and the process leading to it, provides a structured opportunity for: • Two-way communication • Clarifying misunderstandings • Setting expectations for the year ahead • Collaborative planning for improvement
Support Renewal Decisions	Annual reports should build toward renewal by: • Providing a complete evidentiary record • Identifying patterns that may trigger intervention • Signaling whether a school is on track or off track for renewal

Required Components of the Annual Authorizer Report

[T.C.A. § 49-13-120](#) requires that each authorizer submit an annual authorizer report to the State Board of Education (SBE) by **January 1** of each year. The SBE has set forth [guidelines](#) for the report, and the following are the required components.

- **Cover Sheet:** Provides basic information on the report such as name, contract information, and date
- **Authorized School Data:** Includes clear, accurate data for all charter schools authorized, including any that may have closed in the past year
- **Authorized Approved School Waivers:** Includes all waivers granted to schools over the life of the charter agreement, not just those granted in the previous year
- **Portfolio:** Includes the components of the performance framework as set forth in the charter agreement for each school and a summary of how the portfolio is performing collectively
- **Authorizer Performance:** Provides information on the authorizer's performance in meeting its goals

Additional Components

The following components are not required to be included in the annual authorizer report. However, they can provide additional information and context to capture school performance and move the report from simply a compliance exercise to a more robust tool for strengthening relationships and transparency.

School Overview

A brief, accessible summary which describes the following can situate the performance data in context and help external stakeholders better understand the school's environment.

- Mission and educational model
- Grades served and enrollment (including trends)
- Student demographics, especially special populations
- Governing board membership and meeting cadence
- Leadership team roles and tenure
- Any material changes approved during the year (e.g., enrollment cap changes, grade expansion)

Academic Performance Narrative

The portfolio section of the report includes academic outcomes aligned to the performance framework set forth in the charter agreement, but including a narrative can provide a more robust picture of the school's academic performance. Including the following can make the data easier to understand by external stakeholders.

- Two to three years of data showing multi-year trends with graphs or tables to show directionality
- Comparison of school performance to statewide performance or to schools with similar demographics
- Graduation rate and postsecondary readiness indicators
- Accountability status (i.e., Reward, Priority, or other federal designations)

Financial Performance Narrative

Financial health is a core dimension of stability, and the addition of a narrative can help to explain the financial indicators in terms that external stakeholders can understand, provide additional context, and/or identify any additional fiscal red flags. The narrative can provide answers to the following:

- Is the school financially sustainable?
- Are any financial issues isolated or chronic?
- Do the issues pose risk to student learning, operations, or compliance?

Organizational Performance

The indicators in this area provide a comprehensive lens through which authorizers can assess the extent to which a charter school is meeting operational expectations and protecting student and public interests. Any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in a charter school's organizational performance may be an indicator of the overall health of a charter school, and the indicators focus on the presence of school processes that are legally or ethically required. Therefore, including a narrative analysis to provide more information and context can be necessary to avoid unnecessary concern or stress important ones. The narrative may provide the following:

- Multi-year data to identify a chronic issue versus a one-time problem
- Adjustments or modifications made to account for a school's growth plan
- Improvements made which may not be apparent from the rating
- Site visit information related to these areas
- Interventions that have been implemented

Steps to Develop the Annual Authorizer Report

A high-quality process is just as important as the report itself, the following is a structured approach that may be adopted:

Step 1: Anchor to Expectations: Identify which measures from the authorizer's adopted performance framework and charter agreement will be included. Confirm alignment before beginning analysis.

Step 2: Collect and Verify Data: Gather academic, financial, and organizational data from a variety of sources and cross-check for internal consistency and accuracy.

Step 3: Conduct an Internal Analysis: Summarize the data and identify findings based upon evidence, not anecdotal judgements.

Step 4: Draft the Report: Include all the required information and consider the inclusion of additional information to provide a more robust picture of the school. Stick to the evidence at this point and hold off on prescriptive solutions unless required by law.

Step 5: Share the Draft with the School(s): Provide a clear window (e.g., 2-4 weeks) for the school to review the factual accuracy, provide context where needed, and submit clarifying documentation.

Step 6: Hold a Feedback Meeting: Offer a formal meeting with the school(s) to review the findings, discuss trends and trajectories, clarify expectations, and provide an early checkpoint on renewal.

Step 7: Share the Final Report(s) with the School(s): Update the draft and communicate the final report with both the school governing body and school leadership.

Step 8: Submit: Submit the report to the SBE according to its procedures.

Step 9: Post: Post the complete Annual Authorizer Report on the LEA website.

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