

# TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

## APPLICATION REVIEW

6.300

Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-13-108 allows public charter school sponsors to appeal the denial of an application by the local board of education to the State Board of Education (the State Board).

The State Board shall not consider appeals of applications that did not include all of the statutorily required elements or that were submitted outside the application window set by the local board of education in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-107.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to set forth the principles and criteria that the State Board shall use in reviewing charter school applications received on appeal.

### Policy Sections

1. Generally
2. Substantive Application Review
3. Interviews

**1. Generally.** In reviewing charter school applications received on appeal, the State Board shall use the standard of review set forth in State Board Policy 2.500. The State Board is committed to conducting a rigorous evaluation of all charter school applications received on appeal consistent with this policy and national and state authorizing standards.

**2. Substantive Application Review.**

- a. The State Board shall assemble a charter application review committee (Review Committee) to conduct a substantive charter application review of each application received on appeal in accordance with the submission instructions set forth in State Board Policy 2.500. In conducting the substantive application review, the State Board shall contract with third-parties or utilize volunteers as it deems appropriate to serve on the Review Committee.
- b. The Review Committee shall be comprised of highly competent teams of internal and external evaluators with relevant and diverse educational, organizational (governance and management), financial, and legal expertise, as well as a thorough understanding of the essential principles of public charter school autonomy and accountability. The State Board shall provide training to Review Committee members to ensure consistent standards and fair treatment of all application reviews.
- c. The substantive application review shall be an in-depth evaluation of the statutorily required elements as set forth in T.C.A. § 49-13-107, including but not limited to: an evaluation of the proposed charter school's mission; educational focus, program, and academic plan; business plan, including an operating budget; governance board and structure; discipline code; and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The Review Committee shall use the sample scoring criteria provided by the Commissioner of Education to evaluate the charter application.

<b>TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION</b>	
<b>APPLICATION REVIEW</b>	<b>6.300</b>

- d. The State Board and the Review Committee shall take into consideration and, if necessary, gather additional information regarding the past and current performance, including student growth and achievement, of any charter school operated by the sponsor pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-107(e).
- e. The State Board shall ensure that the application review process, Review Committee members, and decision-making processes are free of conflicts of interest in accordance with State Board Policy 6.600 and shall require full disclosure of any potential or perceived conflicts of interest between Review Committee members and sponsors.

**3. Interviews.**

- a. The State Board shall interview the governing board and school leadership, if named, of each sponsor that has filed an appeal in accordance with State Board Policy 2.500.
- b. The focus of the interview shall be the governing board and school leadership's capacity to operate a high-quality charter school that is consistent with the charter application in a fiscally responsible manner that advances the mission of the charter school.
- c. The State Board staff shall schedule interviews in a manner that accounts for scheduling conflicts. However, the final decision as to interview time and location is in the discretion of State Board staff. All interviews shall be held in Nashville, Tennessee.
- d. The interviews shall be closed and not be open to the public.
- e. The officers of the governing board and the school leader (if named) shall attend the interview. Other representatives of the sponsor that may attend the interview include, but are not limited to, all members of the governing board, school leadership positions, and key personnel of identified school partners. The State Board limits the total number of interview participants to eight (8).
- f. The State Board shall assemble an interview panel that may include State Board staff, a State Board member, Review Committee members, and any other internal or external individuals whose knowledge and expertise would assist the State Board in its decision to authorize the charter school.
- g. All interview attendees (both on behalf of charter school and State Board) shall attend the interview in-person. However, State Board staff may allow certain attendees to participate remotely in extraordinary circumstances.