



**TENNESSEE**  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

# **AUTHORIZER EVALUATIONS**

---

FEBRUARY 3, 2022

# **EVALUATION HISTORY AND PROCESS**

---

# EVALUATIONS IN TENNESSEE

---

- In 2019, the General Assembly amended T.C.A. § 49-13-145, charging the State Board with the responsibility of ensuring the effective operation of authorizers in the state and evaluating authorizer quality.
- Beginning in July 2019, the State Board gathered feedback from operators, authorizers and stakeholders, conducted focus groups, and established a task force to develop the evaluation process.
- In Fall 2020, the State Board implemented a pilot of its evaluation process with Metro Nashville Public Schools and the Achievement School District.
- In February 2021, the State Board finalized its rule on charter school authorizer evaluations and the rule became effective on July 12, 2021.
- The 2021 evaluations represent one half of the first formal evaluation cycle.

# EVALUATION COHORTS

---

Tennessee authorizers will be evaluated in the following sequence:

**Cohort 1 beginning in Fall 2021:**

- Hamilton County Schools
- Knox County Schools
- Shelby County Schools

**Cohort 2 beginning in Fall 2022:**

- Achievement School District
- Metro Nashville Public Schools
- Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

*NOTE: Cohorts will not change regardless of evaluation outcomes.*

# 2021 FULL TIMELINE

---

- **August 26:** Orientation for authorizers
- **Sept. 1 – Oct. 15:** Document submission window
- **October 25-26:** Evaluator Training
- **November 1:** Evaluation #1 began
- **November 15:** Evaluation #2 began
- **November 29:** Evaluation #3 began
- **December 15:** Draft reports shared with authorizers
- **January 1:** Non-Evaluation Year Self-Assessment due
- **Mid-January:** Evaluation reports finalized
- **February 4:** Ratings approved at State Board meeting

# EVALUATION WEEK TIMELINE

---

## **Days 1-2**

- Evaluation Team conducts full document review and completes preliminary ratings

## **Day 3**

- Evaluation Team interviews charter school leaders and holds pre-consensus meeting

## **Day 4**

- Evaluation Team meets with Authorizer and holds consensus meeting

## **Day 5**

- Evaluation Team Lead meets with Authorizer for report out of preliminary ratings

## **Days 6-10**

- Evaluation Team Lead and Quality Editor work together on evaluation report

# EVALUATION TEAMS

---

- Each evaluation team was comprised of 3 evaluators: a State Board staff member, a national consultant, and a TN authorizer representative.
- Evaluators spent an average of 18 hours per evaluation reviewing and scoring authorizer documentation plus several more hours conducting interviews and debriefing the ratings.

Shelby County Schools	Knox County Schools	Hamilton County Schools
Ali Gaffey, State Board Staff	Ali Gaffey, State Board Staff	Ali Gaffey, State Board Staff
Lauren Iannuccilli, National Consultant for SchoolWorks	Lauren Iannuccilli, National Consultant for SchoolWorks	Lauren Iannuccilli, National Consultant for SchoolWorks
Teri Manning-Euell, Achievement School District	Beth Figueroa, TN Public Charter School Commission	Shereka Roby-Grant, Metro Nashville Public Schools

# EVIDENCE BASE

---

During the evaluation, the Evaluation Team shall consider:

- **Documents** submitted by the authorizer during the submission window;
- **Narrative** explanations submitted by the authorizer during the submission window;
- Clarifications and explanations provided by the authorizer during the **Document Debrief**;
- Supporting narrative shared during the **School Leader Interview**; and
- **Appeals history**, as applicable.

# EVALUATION RUBRIC

---

- The evaluation is based on the twenty-four standards within State Board Policy 6.111 – Quality Charter Authorizing Standards.
- The standards are organized into six categories:
  1. Agency Commitment and Capacity
  2. Application Process and Decision Making
  3. Performance Contracting
  4. Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation
  5. Revocation and Renewal Decision Making
  6. Advanced Standards

# RATINGS & EVALUATIVE COMMENTS

---

**Ratings:** When determining the rating for a sub-standard, the evaluation team considers:

- Whether the authorizer has explained practices in the documentation debrief or narrative;
- Whether documentation addresses the sub-standard; and
- Whether the documentation satisfies the sub-standard.

**Evaluative Comments:**

- Every sub-standard will have an evaluative comment which explains the key evidence or lack thereof used to determine the rating.

# OVERALL RATINGS

---

Score	Rating
3.5 – 4.0	Exemplary
3.0 – 3.49	Commendable
2.0 – 2.99	Satisfactory
1.0 – 1.99	Approaching Satisfactory
0 – 0.99	Unsatisfactory/Incomplete

# 2021 EVALUATION OUTCOMES

---

# HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS (HCS)

---

<b>About the Authorizer:</b>	HCS is a district-level authorizer in Hamilton County. HCS's first charter school opened in 2008 and its charter schools currently serve approximately 4% of the district's students.
<b>Operational Schools:</b>	5 schools in the 2020-21 school year
<b>Students Enrolled:</b>	1,710 students in the 2020-21 school year
<b>Approved School(s) in Development:</b>	2 schools in development, 1 recently opened <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Montessori Elementary School of Highland Park (2021)</li><li>• Chattanooga Charter School of Excellence High School (2022)</li><li>• Ivy's Skillern Elementary School (2022)</li></ul>
<b>Closed Schools:</b>	0 schools closed since September 1, 2019

# HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

---

## Identified Areas of Strength:

- As of April 2021, the authorizer effectively utilizes a portion of its authorizer fee to fund a full-time charter school coordinator to support its growing portfolio of charter schools.
- The authorizer approves applications that are comprised of a detailed plan for charter school opening, operation, and fiscal stability, with little substantive work left for later development.
- The authorizer respects charter school autonomy and provides its schools with opportunities to participate in district-led professional development for teachers and leaders.

# HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

---

## Identified Areas for Growth:

- The authorizer lacks an established performance framework that is outlined as either an item within or as an exhibit of the charter agreement as required by state law and has not conducted annual performance evaluations of its charter schools.
- The authorizer has not established criteria for renewal and has not consistently held five (5) year interim reviews for its schools as required by state law.
- The authorizer has not implemented a comprehensive performance accountability and compliance monitoring system that is aligned to its charter agreement and provides key outcomes to inform renewal, revocation, and intervention decisions.

# HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

---

**Overall Rating:** 1.83 Approaching Satisfactory

**Required Follow-Up Actions:**

- Submission of a corrective action plan approved by the State Board's executive director or designee prior to implementation.
- Submission of a self-assessment in the 2022-23 school year with documentation demonstrating completion of the required follow-up actions outlined in the approved corrective action plan.

# KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS (KCS)

---

<b>About the Authorizer:</b>	KCS is a district-level authorizer in Knox County. KCS's first and only charter school opened in 2015 and its charter school currently serves approximately 0.07% of the district's students.
<b>Operational Schools:</b>	1 school in the 2020-21 school year
<b>Students Enrolled:</b>	450 students in the 2020-21 school year
<b>Approved School(s) in Development:</b>	0 schools in development
<b>Closed Schools:</b>	0 schools closed since September 1, 2019

# KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

---

## Identified Areas of Strength:

- The authorizer employs competent personnel at a staffing level that is appropriately funded through efficient use of the authorizer fee and sufficient in scale to support its single charter school.
- The authorizer implements a quality new-start application process that is aligned with state guidelines, is transparent and clearly communicated, follows rigorous approval criteria for applicants, and is open to all.
- The authorizer executes a charter agreement with its charter school that articulates the rights and responsibilities of each party regarding school autonomy, funding, administration and oversight, and other material terms.

# KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

---

## Identified Areas for Growth:

- The authorizer evaluates its schools using a performance framework that is not clearly outlined as either an item within or as an exhibit of the charter agreement. Additionally, the performance framework does not set detailed organizational standards that define the essential elements of the educational program, hold the governing board accountable for operating and reporting requirements, ensure compliance with student and employee rights, and establish school environment expectations.
- The authorizer does not implement a comprehensive performance accountability and compliance monitoring system that is aligned to its charter agreement and provides key outcomes to inform renewal, revocation, and intervention decisions.
- The authorizer's compliance monitoring system does not include evidence of ensuring its school provides access and services to all students as required by federal and state law.

# KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

---

**Overall Rating:** 2.94 Satisfactory

**Required Follow-Up Actions:**

- Submission of a self-assessment in the 2022-23 school year, as required for all authorizers in a non-evaluation year.

# SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS (SCS)

---

<b>About the Authorizer:</b>	SCS is a district-level authorizer in Shelby County. SCS's first charter school opened in 2003 and its charter schools currently serve approximately 18% of the district's students.
<b>Operational Schools:</b>	56 schools in the 2020-21 school year
<b>Students Enrolled:</b>	19,985 students in the 2020-21 school year
<b>Approved School(s) in Development:</b>	0 schools in development
<b>Closed Schools:</b>	4 schools closed since September 1, 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kaleidoscope School of Memphis (2021)</li><li>• Aster College Prep (2019)</li><li>• City University School Boys Preparatory (2109)</li><li>• Southwest Early College High School (2020)</li></ul>

# SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS

---

## Identified Areas of Strength:

- The authorizer implements a quality new-start application process that's aligned with state guidelines, is transparent and clearly communicated, follows rigorous approval criteria for applicants, and is open to all.
- The authorizer follows a quality monitoring and intervention process that is clearly communicated to schools, promptly notifying schools of any violation of their charter agreement, allows time for resolution, and honors charter school autonomy.
- The authorizer revokes a charter school when there is clear evidence of extreme underperformance, violation of law, or loss of public trust and does so without political influence or community pressure.

# SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS

---

## Identified Areas for Growth:

- The authorizer lacks a clear authorizing mission and relevant training for all members of its authorizing staff and board.
- The authorizer evaluates its schools using a performance framework that is not clearly outlined as either an item within or as an exhibit of the charter agreement for each of its schools.
- The authorizer's documentation did not include evidence that it follows each step of its closure process to ensure timely notification to parents, orderly transition of students and student records to new schools, and the full disposition of school funds, property, and assets.

# SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS

---

**Overall Rating:** 3.53 Exemplary

**Required Follow-Up Actions:**

- Public recognition and highlighting authorizer best practices by the State Board.
- Submission of a self-assessment in the 2022-23 school year, as required for all authorizers in a non-evaluation year.

# SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS: BEST PRACTICES

---

- Developed informational videos for charter school applicants and invites applicants to an informational meeting at the start of the application process.
- Publishes a priorities document which outlines the greatest needs in each neighborhood, including seat quality and seat capacity, to inform potential charter school applicants.
- Annually publishes a comprehensive guidebook for charter school operators which includes required submission timelines and an explanation of the data sources aligned to its performance framework.
- Hosts a charter school leader institute each summer to provide technical assistance and relevant training for principals, CEOs/board chairs and operations managers.
- Created sample intervention notifications to streamline support and ensure consistent feedback to schools that are out of compliance.

# EVALUATION REFLECTIONS

---

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

---

- Our evaluation process is rigorous, thorough and transparent.
- Our authorizers value the opportunity to be involved in the development process, to serve on the evaluation team, and for the feedback provided through the evaluation.
- Our authorizers are now asked annually to identify their own areas of strength and areas for growth and to develop an action plan as a result.

# TO CONSIDER FOR NEXT CYCLE BEGINNING IN 2023

---

- Recalibration of the overall ratings
- Ensure that the process fairly evaluates our wide range of authorizers which includes those with a small portfolio and those with a large portfolio
- Update standards to ensure there are no duplicates and they are clearly stated
- Consider specific “Advanced” standards that allow authorizers to receive bonus points for actions that push beyond the day-to-day work of the authorizer
- Allow authorizers the opportunity to submit missing documentation during the evaluation week, as requested

# AUTHORIZER RESOURCES

---

- Technical Assistance Sessions
- Charter authorizer contacts on State Board's website
- Bi-Monthly Authorizer Connect meetings
- Access to SchoolWorks' charter school authorizer video module library
- Quality Authorizing Series

# QUALITY AUTHORIZING SERIES

---

- Part I: You've Received an LOI – Now what? (January 2022)
- Part II: Application Review 101 (February 2022)
- Part III: The Appeal Process (July 2022)
- Part IV: The Charter Agreement (August 2022)
- Part V: Effective Authorizing (October 2022)



**TENNESSEE**  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION