



TENNESSEE
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

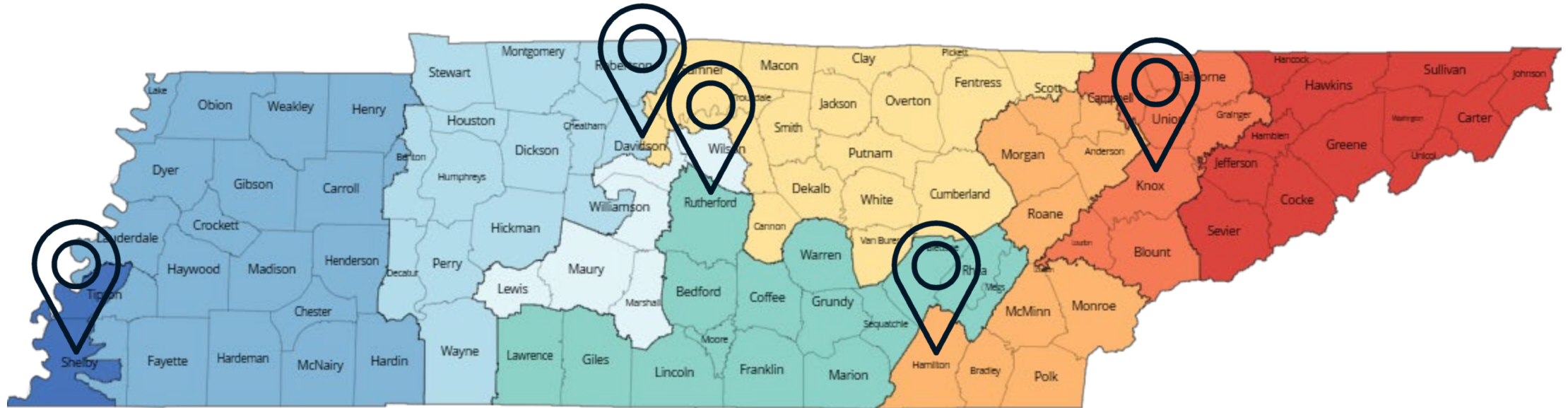
2024 Authorizer Evaluations

Nathan James, Deputy Executive Director for Legislative and External Affairs
February 20, 2025

What is an “Authorizer”?

- **Authorizer** – A local board of education, the TN Public Charter School Commission, or the Achievement School District that makes decisions regarding approval of a charter school application and the renewal or revocation of a charter school agreement.
- **Charter School** – A public school that operates within a school district structure but is allowed maximum flexibility to achieve its goals.

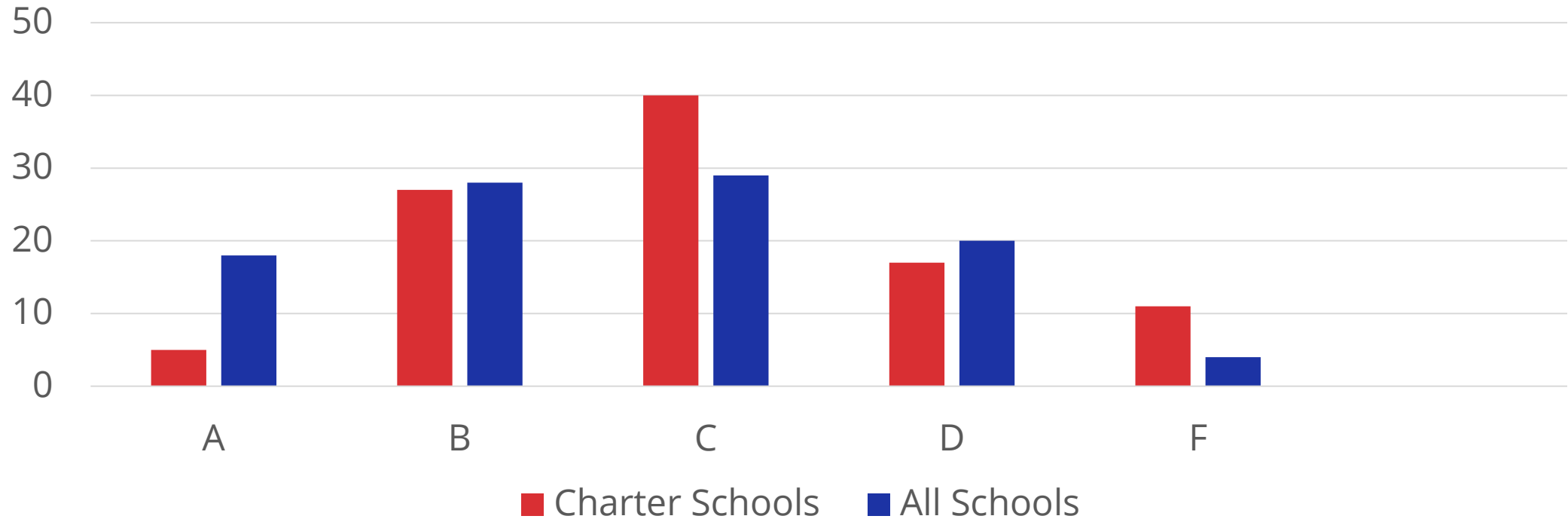
Charter Schools in Tennessee



There are currently 115 public charter schools serving approximately 44,000 students.

Statewide Charter Performance

Percentage of Schools By Letter Grade in 2023-24

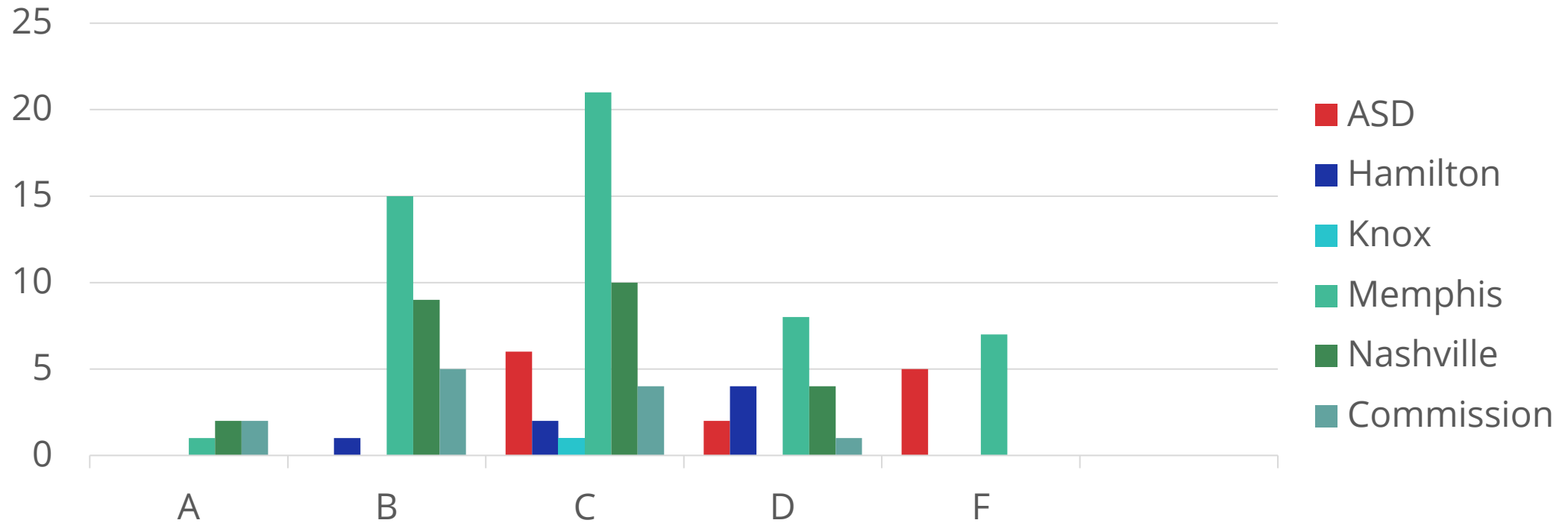


Charter Authorizers in Tennessee

Authorizer	# of Charters in 2023-24
Achievement School District	13 Charter Schools
Hamilton County Schools	6 Charter Schools
Knox County Schools	1 Charter School
Memphis-Shelby County Schools	52 Charter Schools
Metro-Nashville Public Schools	25 Charter Schools
Rutherford County Schools	0 Charter Schools (2 Opened in August 2024)
Tennessee Public Charter School Commission	12 Charter Schools

Charter Performance by Authorizer

Number of Charters by Letter Grade & Authorizer in 2023-24



Evaluating Charter Authorizers

- Tennessee's charter law was updated in 2019 to require the State Board to ensuring the effective operation of authorizers and evaluating authorizer quality (T.C.A. § 49-13-145).
- The State Board began evaluating authorizers in 2021.
- Authorizers are assigned an evaluation cohort and are evaluated at least every two years.
- This report marks the conclusion of the State Board's second full cycle of authorizer evaluations.

2024 Evaluation Team Members

Name	Experience	Team Role
Ali Reid	State Board Staff	Evaluator
David Hartman	National Charter School Consultant, Venn Education	Evaluator
Lauren Iannuccilli	National Charter School Consultant, Independent	Evaluator
Elana Feinberg	National Charter School Consultant, SchoolWorks	Evaluator
Aubrey Goodman	National Charter School Consultant, SchoolWorks	Evaluator
Jeff McCann	Authorizing Staff, Rutherford County Schools	Evaluation Shadow
Fannie Moore	Authorizing Staff, Hamilton County Schools	Evaluation Shadow
Katie Wheeler	Authorizing Staff, Knox County Schools	Evaluation Shadow

Evaluation Evidence Base

The Evaluation Team considers evidence from within a two-year review term:

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

Evaluation Rubric & Ratings

The evaluation is based on the 21 standards within State Board Policy 6.111 – Quality Charter Authorizing Standards.

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

Evaluation Outcomes

COHORT 2: 2024



Achievement School District

About the Authorizer:	State-level authorizer within the Tennessee Department of Education that was established by law in 2011 to serve as an intervention for some of the state's lowest performing schools.
Operational Schools:	13 schools in the 2023-24 school year (decreased to 3 schools in the 2024-25 school year)
Students Enrolled:	4,456 students in the 2023-24 school year
Approved School(s) in Development:	0 schools in development
Closed Schools:	4 schools closed since September 1, 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Humes Preparatory Academy Middle School (July 2024)• Martin Luther King Jr. Prep High School (July 2024)• Memphis Scholars Florida Kansas (July 2024)• Memphis Scholars Raleigh-Egypt (July 2024)

Achievement School District

Identified Areas of Strength:

- Established a performance framework that includes academic, organizational, and financial indicators and utilizes the framework to annually evaluate its schools.
- Updated its charter agreements to incorporate the established performance framework and clearly define the rights and responsibilities of its schools.
- Established and now implements a compliance monitoring system that informs the annual evaluation of its schools and includes indicators to ensure its schools are protecting the rights of all students.

Achievement School District

Identified Areas for Growth:

- Devoted a portion of its authorizer fee funds collected from its schools for expenses beyond those relevant to authorizing and allowable in state law and State Board Rule.
- Does not publicly communicate the academic, organizational, and financial performance outcomes of its schools via its annual report.
- Does not consistently utilize its monitoring processes to inform the need for intervention in non-emergency situations and, when intervening, does not consistently follow its established intervention policy.

Achievement School District

Overall Rating: 2.19 Satisfactory

Required Follow-Up Actions:

Submission of a self-assessment in the 2025-26 school year. The self-assessment must address the steps taken to distribute the misallocated authorizer fee funds directly to the authorizer's impacted charter schools in accordance with State Board Rule 0520-14-01-.05.

Metro Nashville Public Schools

About the Authorizer:	District authorizer in Davidson County. MNPS's first charter school opened in 2007, and its charter schools currently serve approximately 16% of the district's students.
Operational Schools:	27 schools in the 2023-24 school year
Students Enrolled:	13,008 students in the 2023-24 school year
Approved School(s) in Development:	0 schools in development
Closed Schools:	0 schools closed since September 1, 2022

Metro Nashville Public Schools

Identified Areas of Strength:

- Improved its charter agreements by updating the terms of its agreements to better align with the quality authorizing standards and establishing a process discussion of and mutual agreement to these terms.
- Refrains from directing or participating in education decisions or choices that are within the purview of its charter schools.
- Promptly notifies new charter school applicants and existing operators of its authorizing decisions in writing and documents the factors that determined the decision.

Metro Nashville Public Schools

Identified Areas for Growth:

- Does not involve members of its authorizing staff with the greatest understanding of charter school autonomy and accountability and 4 of its 7 charter decisions were overturned by the appellate body in the last two years.
- Has not defined or communicated renewal criteria to its schools, which impacted a decision to deny renewal for 1 of its schools.
- Lacks a LEA board-approved progressive intervention policy, as required by state law.

Metro Nashville Public Schools

Overall Rating: 2.9 Satisfactory

Required Follow-Up Actions:

Submission of a self-assessment in the 2025-26 school year

TN Public Charter School Commission

About the Authorizer:	State agency established in 2019 by Public Chapter 219 of the 111th General Assembly (“PC 219”) to serve as the state’s charter school appellate body and authorizer for any charter school that it approves upon appeal.
Operational Schools:	13 schools in the 2023-24 school year
Students Enrolled:	4,796 students in the 2023-24 school year
Approved School(s) in Development:	11 schools in development
Closed Schools:	0 schools closed since September 1, 2022

TN Public Charter School Commission

Identified Areas of Strength:

- Demonstrates a strong commitment to the quality charter authorizing standards and continuous improvement through ongoing professional development and impactful improvement planning.
- Utilizes experienced review teams in its charter application review process, prepares thoughtful rubric findings and questions for capacity interviews and public hearings, and drafts detailed, comprehensive recommendation reports.
- Incorporates a performance framework into its charter agreement and connects framework standards to compliance monitoring, site visits, and annual reporting.

TN Public Charter School Commission

Identified Areas for Growth:

- Made positive updates to its authorizing activities based on school feedback, yet there remains a level of frequency and duplication to oversight in certain areas that creates administrative burden on its schools.
- Lacks consistent evidence of only granting amendments to schools that demonstrate thorough preparation and strong academic results, as required by its approval criteria.
- Does not clearly communicate the criteria for renewal or have an established closure protocol.

TN Public Charter School Commission

Overall Rating: 3.76 Exemplary

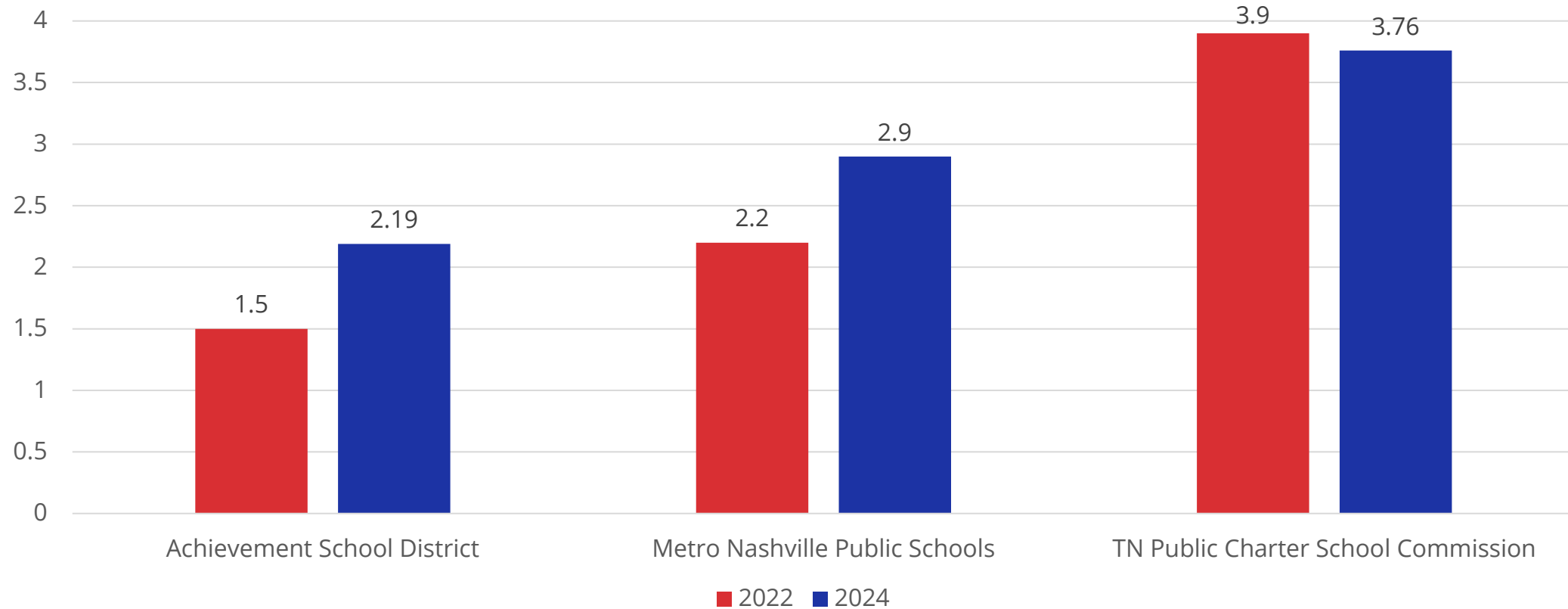
Required Follow-Up Actions:

- Public recognition and highlighting best practices by the State Board
- **Exemption from 2026 evaluation for receiving 2 consecutive “Exemplary” scores**
- Submission of a self-assessment in its non-evaluation years

TN Public Charter School Commission: Best Practices

- Set a clear mission for authorizing and ensures its policies, processes and practices align with that mission
- Updated its performance framework to provide schools an option to incorporate mission-specific goals as part of its annual evaluation
- Clearly defines and communicates a robust and comprehensive reporting process for gathering performance and compliance data from its schools
- Consistently uses its ongoing oversight, intervention and evaluation processes to determine when intervention is needed
- Requires a thorough analysis of a comprehensive body of evidence as part of its renewal process

Cohort 2 Evaluation History



Evaluation Reflections

Focused on Continuous Improvement

- Gathering evaluation process feedback from authorizers, evaluators, and charter school leaders
- Annually updating evaluation documents and processes
- Preparing for a deeper analysis of evaluation results to determine a need for further updates to the evaluation standards and evaluation ratings

Charter Authorizer Resources

- **Bi-Monthly Authorizer Connect Meetings**
 - Facilitated by SBE staff with topics related to authorizer needs and evaluation outcomes; provides opportunity for relationship building, professional development, and resource sharing
- **Engagement with TOSS and TSBA**
 - Building additional superintendent and school board member buy-in and engagement through trainings and evaluation participation
- **National Association of Charter School Authorizers**
 - Authorizers dedicate funding to cover annual membership dues and engage in professional development opportunities with this national organization
- **National Network for District Authorizers**
 - Newly established TN Chapter that provides additional professional development and resource supports to authorizers



TENNESSEE
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION