



Charter School Authorizer Evaluation Report

Rutherford County Schools

2025

About Charter School Authorizer Evaluations

In 2019, Tennessee’s General Assembly charged the State Board of Education (“State Board”) with conducting periodic evaluations of authorizers to determine authorizer compliance and evaluate quality. Tennessee was the fourth (4th) state in the U.S. to implement an authorizer evaluation process and now is recognized for its high-quality process around the country. The State Board partnered with [SchoolWorks](#), an education consulting group with experience in authorizer evaluations, to develop an evaluation system based on the State Board’s Quality Charter Authorizing Standards¹.

As part of its development process, State Board staff engaged with Tennessee charter school authorizers, charter school stakeholders, and similar state agencies responsible for this work and conducted a pilot evaluation in Fall 2020. Upon the conclusion of the pilot, the State Board finalized its [Rule 0520-14-01-.08](#) and [Policy 6.113](#) on charter school authorizer evaluations and began implementing the evaluation cycle in Fall 2021. The State Board’s evaluation process centers around its belief that quality authorizing leads to quality charter schools and increased educational opportunities for all students in Tennessee.

Evaluation Schedule

Authorizers are assigned to an evaluation cohort (Table 1) and undergo an evaluation at least biennially. If an authorizer receives an “Exemplary” rating for two (2) consecutive evaluations, the authorizer is exempt from undergoing an evaluation during the next evaluation year. If an authorizer receives an “Unsatisfactory/Incomplete” rating during an evaluation, the authorizer is required to participate in another authorizer evaluation in the school year immediately following the rating. An exemption or required additional evaluation does not change an authorizer’s assigned evaluation cohort.

Table 1. Cohort Evaluation Schedule

Cohort	Authorizers
Cohort 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hamilton County Schools ○ Knox County Schools ○ Memphis-Shelby County Schools ○ Rutherford County Schools
Cohort 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Achievement School District ○ Metro Nashville Public Schools ○ Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

Evaluation Process

Authorizers are evaluated to assess authorizer compliance with the requirements of state law and the rules and regulations of the State Board, and to ensure alignment with the Quality Charter Authorizing Standards. The State Board’s evaluation rubric is organized into five (5) categories: Agency Commitment and Capacity; Application Process and Decision Making; Performance Contracting; Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation; and Amendment, Renewal and Revocation Decision Making. An authorizer’s overall rating represents a summary of outcomes across a variety of indicators within these categories.

¹ [State Board Policy 6.111](#)

Characteristics of the Process

- Each authorizer is evaluated by an evaluation team with experience in charter school authorizing or authorizer evaluations. The State Board also enlists the support of a quality editor responsible for verifying the evidence and ratings for each standard and ensuring consistency across evaluations.
- Evaluations focus on evidence from within a two (2) year review term², which includes documentation provided by the authorizer, an interview with charter school leaders from the authorizer’s portfolio of charter schools, and a documentation debrief with the authorizer. The evaluation team also considers final decisions for any appeals that occurred within the review term, as applicable.
- The evaluation team objectively evaluates the collective evidence against the evaluation rubric to determine a rating (Table 2) between zero (0) and four (4) for each standard and an overall evaluation rating (Table 3) that best represents the authorizer’s performance for that review term. The final product of each evaluation is this Evaluation Report, which includes sub-standard and standard ratings, accompanying feedback, and a final evaluation score.
- Authorizer evaluations are conducted solely by the evaluation team and represent an independent evaluation of the authorizer’s practices in relation to the State Board’s Quality Charter Authorizing Standards.
- Following approval by the State Board, the final evaluation report is provided to the authorizer and publicly posted on the State Board’s [website](#).

Table 2. Standard Ratings

0	1	2	3	4
Verbal evidence and/or documentation DOES NOT address <u>or</u> satisfy the standard	Verbal evidence and/or documentation addresses <u>and</u> satisfies LESS THAN 50% of the standard	Documentation addresses MOST <u>but</u> satisfies 50% OR LESS of the standard	Documentation addresses <u>and</u> satisfies MORE THAN 50% of the standard	Documentation addresses <u>and</u> satisfies 100% of the standard

Table 3. Overall Ratings

Score	Rating
3.50 – 4.00	Exemplary
3.00 – 3.49	Commendable
2.00 – 2.99	Satisfactory
1.00 – 1.99	Approaching Satisfactory
0 – 0.99	Unsatisfactory/Incomplete

² The evaluation review term for the 2025 evaluation includes documentation from September 1, 2022 - August 31, 2025.

Executive Summary

About the Authorizer	<p>Rutherford County Schools (RCS) is the district authorizer in Rutherford County, Tennessee. RCS currently has 2 charter schools in operation serving 378 students, which is approximately 0.7% of the district’s total student population. RCS has 1 additional charter school that is currently in development and will begin operating in the 2026-27 school year.</p>
Evaluation Summary	<p>Identified Areas of Strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authorizer deploys funds effectively, transparently, and efficiently with the public and student interests in mind. • The authorizer executes charter agreements that clearly state the terms, rights, and responsibilities of the charter school and authorizer, and incorporates a performance framework that defines the measurable academic, financial and organizational performance targets for its charter schools. • The authorizer developed a “roles and responsibilities” tracker that is shared with schools and further defines expectations for the authorizer and the charter school in serving special populations of students. <p>Identified Areas for Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authorizer lacks a well-defined authorizing team that is responsible for providing support to its charter schools and receives regular training to further their understanding of how charter schools differ from traditional schools. • The authorizer’s training process for application review committee members does not ensure an understanding of the required scoring criteria and consistent review of applications. • The authorizer lacks a comprehensive monitoring system that clearly encompasses all requirements outlined in its charter agreements, is proactive in identifying potential concerns, and clearly informs intervention and decision-making. <p>Overall Evaluation Rating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.16 out of 4, Commendable <p>Required Follow Up Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public recognition by the State Board and highlighting of the authorizer’s best practices • Submission of a self-assessment in the 2026-27 school year, as required for all authorizers in a non-evaluation year

Charter School Authorizer Evaluation

Authorizer: Rutherford County Schools

Overall Ratings Summary

Standard		Rating (0-4)
1a	Planning and Commitment to Excellence	2.4
1b	Human Resources	2.67
1c	Financial Resources	4
2a	Proposal Information, Questions, and Guidance	3
2b	Fair, Transparent, Quality-Focused Process	3
2c	Rigorous Approval Criteria	4
2d	Rigorous Decision Making	3.2
3a	Charter Agreement Negotiation and Execution	3
3b	Terms, Rights and Responsibilities	3.83
3c	Performance Standards	4
3d	Provisions for Educational Service Provider (ESP) (if applicable)	N/A
4a	Performance Evaluation and Compliance Monitoring	3.67
4b	Respecting School Autonomy	3.3
4c	Protecting Student Rights	3.25
4d	School Intervention	3.2
4e	Public Reporting	N/A
5a	Amendments to the Charter Agreement	1
5b	Renewal Process	N/A
5c	Renewal Decisions Based on Merit and Inclusive Evidence	2.5
5d	Revocation	4
5e	Closure	3
Overall Rating		3.16 Commendable

Standard 1a - Planning and Commitment to Excellence	0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards					
i. Ensures that the authorizer’s decision-makers, leadership, and staff understand and are committed to these quality charter authorizing principles and standards.				3	
ii. Ensures external relationships, funding structures, and lines of authority to protect its authorizing functions from conflicts of interest and political influence that might compromise its judgement in charter approval and accountability decision-making.			2		
iii. States a clear mission for quality authorizing and develops goals and timely plans for improvement in response to regular evaluation of its work against national and state authorizing standards.			2		
iv. Implements policies, processes, and practices that streamline and systematize its work toward stated goals and executes its duties efficiently.				3	
v. Makes authorizing decisions that are likely to result in positive student outcomes, based on an accumulation of evidence, data, and expertise, and in accordance with state law.			2		
Standard Rating					2.4

Evaluative Comments:
<p>i. Annual board training materials, board meeting minutes documenting regular charter school updates presented by the charter coordinator, and evidence of the charter coordinator attending various authorizer trainings facilitated by national organizations and state agencies demonstrate efforts to ensure decision-makers, leadership, and staff understand and are committed to the quality charter authorizing standards. However, as documented by the authorizer’s budgets and site visit reports, the authorizer enlists additional staff members to support charter school monitoring and oversight (i.e., special projects accountant, student information system coordinator, special populations directors) without evidence of ensuring these staff members understand the quality charter authorizing principles and standards and the unique autonomy and accountability requirements that exist for charter schools. While having no impact on the score, as outlined in more detail in sub-standard 1bi, it is recommended that the authorizer clearly identify the team of leaders and staff who oversee and provide support to its charter schools.</p> <p>ii. Board policy 1.107 addresses personal interests of the board that may conflict with voting matters and requires board members to abstain from voting if a conflict of interest exists. Additionally, the authorizer requires all members of its charter application review team to complete a conflict-of-interest form prior to reviewing an application. However, there is no further evidence of how potential conflicts for staff and leadership involved in authorizing functions are handled for their authorized and open charter schools.</p> <p>iii. The authorizer’s handbook states a clear mission for authorizing, which is to “offer innovative, high-quality, and diverse school choice options that meet the needs of a rapidly growing district and advance academic achievement for all learners”. The handbook also provides commitment</p>

statements that align with national and state best practices for authorizing. However, while the authorizer completed a self-assessment during the evaluation review term, it has not yet developed specific authorizing goals or timely plans for improvement in response to regular evaluation of its work against national and state authorizing standards.

- iv. The authorizer has established processes and practices outlined in board policies and an authorizer handbook and utilizes tools such as a reporting calendar and online submission platform to streamline and systematize its work; however, some processes require further adjustments to ensure efficiency, such as clear monitoring processes that build upon one another and are used to inform annual evaluations. Additionally, as noted in sub-standard 1aiii, authorizing goals have not been established and, therefore, cannot connect to or drive authorizing processes and practices.
- v. As a new authorizer, decisions have mostly been limited to charter applications, and while documentation demonstrates that the authorizer's review committee utilizes the required state scoring criteria when evaluating applications, the criteria have been inconsistently applied, as further explained in sub-standard 2di. Additionally, as explained further in sub-standard 1biii, decision-makers disregarded staff and leadership recommendations without clearly documented evidence or data to support their decisions. Furthermore, the authorizer issued three intervention notices to its two authorized schools in their first year of operation for serious issues, including curriculum not aligned to state academic standards and not meeting the needs of students with disabilities; thus, questioning whether its authorizing decisions are likely to result in positive outcomes for students.

Standard 1b - Human Resources	0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards					
i. Through intra- or inter-agency collaborations, contractual relationships and/or staff, enlists competent staff with relevant expertise for all areas essential to charter school oversight—including, but not limited to, education leadership; instruction and assessment; local community needs; special education, English learners, and other diverse learning needs; performance management and accountability; law; finance; facilities; and nonprofit governance and management.				3	
ii. Demonstrates an on-going commitment to developing and retaining authorizing staff members and provides regular professional development for the authorizer’s leadership and staff to achieve and maintain high standards of professional authorizing practice and to enable continual agency improvement.			2		
iii. Ensures authorizing is visible and the people responsible for day-to-day authorizing functions have clear opportunities to provide input with leadership and decision-makers and input is given significant weight in decision-making.				3	
Standard Rating					2.67

Evaluative Comments:
<p>i. A roles and responsibilities document, notes from a charter monitoring team meeting, and resumes demonstrate that the authorizer enlists staff to support in areas essential to charter school oversight; however, evidence of staff with nonprofit governance and management expertise was not provided. While having no impact on the score, it is recommended that the authorizer clearly identify staff and defines responsibilities for all individuals within the district who provide support to its charter schools, such as developing a core and extended core teams, regardless of whether they are funded by the authorizer fee. The authorizer’s team should also include district leadership with clear responsibilities for understanding the responsibilities of an authorizer and supporting authorizing efforts.</p> <p>ii. The charter coordinator has participated in a variety of authorizing-related professional development, as evidenced by registrations and notes from various authorizer trainings. However, no further evidence of professional development relevant to their roles was provided for individuals partially covered by the authorizer fee, nor for those responsible for monitoring and oversight functions, such as conducting special populations audits or participating in monitoring site visits.</p> <p>iii. Presentations to the board on charter school outcomes and application reviews are conducted by the charter coordinator demonstrate that the people responsible for authorizing functions have opportunities to provide input with leadership and decision-makers. However, recordings of board meetings reveal that this input is not always given significant weight, with one recording documenting an instance in which a decision-maker questioned the purpose of appointing a review committee if decision-makers were going to disregard the committee’s advice. While decision-makers</p>

are not bound by recommendations from staff or leadership, the recommendations and evidence-based rationale should be clearly discussed and given significant weight in the decision-making process.

Standard 1c – Financial Resources		0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards						
i.	Determines the financial needs of the authorizing office and devotes financial resources to fulfill its authorizing responsibilities in accordance with national and state standards, commensurate with the scale of the charter school portfolio, and in accordance with Tennessee law, including all relevant requirements for use of the authorizer fee.					4
ii.	Deploys funds effectively, transparently, and efficiently with the public and student interests in mind.					4
iii.	Annually reports the authorizing obligations fulfilled using the authorizer fee in accordance with state law.	N/A				
Standard Rating						4
Evaluative Comments:						
i.	Two authorizing budgets from the evaluation review term and capital budget request forms demonstrate that the authorizer determines the financial needs of the authorizing office and devotes its collected authorizer fee funds, as well as additional financial resources of the district to fulfill authorizing responsibilities. Though outside of the evaluation review term and therefore not included in this evaluation, the authorizer recently hired a full-time staff member to further support its charter authorizing work. While having no impact on the score, it is recommended that the authorizer includes a line item that explains how it funds additional expenses not covered by the authorizer fee.					
ii.	Two authorizing budgets from the evaluation review term document the authorizer’s effective use of its collected authorizer fees from its two charter schools in their first year of operation during the 2024-25 school year. The authorizer posts its authorizing budget to its website to ensure transparency and provides an overview of its process for determining the efficient use of funds with the public and student interests in mind. School leaders confirmed awareness of the authorizer’s budget and use of authorizer fee funds.					
iii.	N/A – The authorizer’s first charter schools began operating at the start of the 2024-25 school year; therefore, the authorizer’s first fee report was not due during the evaluation review term.					

Standard 2a - Proposal Information, Questions, and Guidance Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Develops and issues a charter application information packet or request for proposals (RFP) that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) States the authorizer’s mission and any chartering priorities the authorizer may have established; b) Provides the state’s required comprehensive application and rubric to elicit the information needed for rigorous evaluation of applicants’ plans and capacities; and c) Communicates clear guidance, requirements and timelines with prospective operators regarding the application content and format, while explaining evaluation criteria. 				3	
Standard Rating					3
Evaluative Comments:					
i. The authorizer’s charter application guidance contains its established mission and chartering priorities, including areas of need identified by the district, and directs applicants to use the state’s required application and rubric to ensure a rigorous evaluation of an applicant’s plans and capacities. The guidance also communicates the general requirements (i.e., hard copies, application fees), submission details (i.e., email addresses, deadlines), and a timeline for its application process that is aligned to most of the state’s required timeline; however, the applicant’s ability to appeal a denial within 10 days was not included. Additionally, the document attempts to limit the ability of a prospective applicant to apply outside of a 10-day window or to submit an application that includes more than two grade bands; neither of which is allowable in law. While having no impact on the score, the authorizer must be careful in identifying the correct state agency for submission of the letter of intent and should include details regarding an applicant’s right to appeal the authorizer’s decision about an amended application.					

Standard 2b - Fair, Transparent, Quality-focused Process		0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards						
i.	Implements a charter application process that is defined in policy, open, well-publicized, and transparent, and is organized around clear, realistic timelines.				3	
ii.	Allows sufficient time for each stage of the application and school pre-opening process to be carried out with quality and integrity and explains how each stage of the application process is conducted and evaluated.					4
iii.	Engages, for both written application reviews and applicant interviews, highly competent teams of internal and external evaluators with relevant academic, organizational (governance and management), financial, and legal expertise, as well as thorough understanding of the essential principles of charter school autonomy and accountability.				3	
iv.	Provides orientation or training to application evaluators (including interviewers) to ensure consistent evaluation of standards, practices, and the fair and unbiased treatment of all applicants.			2		
Standard Rating						3

Evaluative Comments:

- i. The authorizer's charter application process is defined in board policy 1.901, publicly posted on the authorizer's website, and establishes an open process that mirrors the process outlined in its application guidance and handbook. Additionally, the policy defines an application timeline that is organized around clear, realistic timelines in accordance with state law, and application documentation for selected schools A and B demonstrates that the authorizer implements its process as defined. The policy also states that the board will adopt review criteria for evaluating applications and, although application evidence demonstrates that the authorizer considers information that goes beyond the state's required scoring rubric (i.e., district priorities, fiscal impact/due diligence), the authorizer has not yet defined its full criteria for application review. While having no impact on the score, it is recommended that board members do not serve as members of an application review committee. Board members are the decision-makers to whom the review committee makes its recommendation and, as a best practice, the two roles should be regarded separately. Should a decision-maker serve as a member of the review committee and therefore participate in the committee's recommendation, it is recommended that the decision-maker abstain from the formal application decision.
- ii. Email communication, decision notices, board meeting minutes, and a pre-opening checklist make it evident that the authorizer allows sufficient time for each stage of the application and pre-opening process to be carried out. The authorizer's application guidance and email communication also demonstrate the authorizer's ongoing communication with the selected schools to explain how each stage of the process is conducted. Evidence of the authorizer's use of the state's required scoring rubric and decision notices for the selected schools demonstrates that the authorizer communicates how each stage of the process is evaluated.

- iii. While review committee member lists indicate that the authorizer appoints internal and external evaluators with relevant academic and organizational expertise, and email communication with counsel demonstrates engagement with legal during the application review process, the 2024 application review team lacked members with charter school or authorizing experience. This lack of experience likely contributed to the inflated application scores from the review committee, which scored the amended application as meeting the standard across all major sections of the application; the same application was later scored as partially meeting the standard in all areas by the state's appellate body.
- iv. Signed conflict of interest forms for all review committee members for the selected schools demonstrate that the authorizer ensures the unbiased treatment of all applications. However, while the documentation includes training materials for both years of the evaluation review term, the documentation does not include evidence of all review committee members participating. Additionally, though the training materials review charter authorizing best practices, the materials do not include evidence of ensuring the consistent evaluation of standards, such as through norming practice, which likely also contributed to concerns raised in the evaluative comment for sub-standard 2biii.

Standard 2c - Rigorous Approval Criteria Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Utilizes the state’s required application and rubric which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Requires all applicants to present a clear and compelling mission, a quality educational program, a demonstration of community support, a solvent and sustainable budget and contingency financial plans, a clear demonstration of the effectiveness of the model for the target student population and students with diverse needs, effective governance and management structures and systems, founding team members demonstrating diverse and necessary capabilities in all phases of the school’s development; b) Establishes distinct requirements and criteria for applicants who are existing school operators or replicators including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clear evidence of their capacity to operate new schools successfully while maintaining quality in existing schools; 2. Documentation of their educational, organizational, and financial performance records based on all existing schools; 3. Explanation for any never-opened, closed, revoked, or non-renewed schools (including closed, revoked or non-renewed third-party contracts to operate schools); 4. Presentation of their growth plan, business plan, and most recent financial audits; 5. Evidence of meeting high standards of academic, organizational, and financial success to earn approval for replication; and 6. Document any current or past litigation and the resolution of such litigation. c) Establishes distinct requirements and criteria for applicants proposing to contract with educational service providers (ESPs), including charter management organizations by requiring applicants to provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence of the service provider’s educational and management success; 2. A description of the process for selecting the ESP; 3. A draft (or existing) service/management contract that sets forth proposed key terms, including roles and responsibilities of the school governing board, the school staff, and the service provider; the services and resources to be provided; performance-evaluation measures and mechanisms; detailed 					4

<p>explanation of compensation to be paid to the provider; financial controls and oversight; investment disclosure; methods of contract oversight and enforcement; and conditions for contract renewal and termination; and</p> <p>4. Disclosure and explanation of any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the school governing board and proposed service provider or any affiliated business entities.</p> <p>d) Considers diverse educational philosophies and approaches.</p> <p>e) Requires applicants to demonstrate capacity to serve students with diverse needs, including students with disabilities or learning exceptionalities, English learners, at-risk students, and gifted students.</p>					
<p>ii. Requires all applicants to participate in a capacity interview to elicit evidence-based explanations which allow the applicant to demonstrate clear evidence of capacity to execute its plan successfully.</p>					4
Standard Rating					4
Evaluative Comments:					
<p>i. Submitted application materials, consensus scoring rubrics, and review committee summary reports demonstrate the use of the state’s required application and scoring rubric. While having no impact on the score, it is recommended that the authorizer prioritize application outcomes based on the minimum requirements stated in this sub-standard.</p> <p>ii. Email communication between the authorizing staff and applicants as well as capacity interview questions and notes for the selected schools make it evident that the authorizer requires applicants to participate in a capacity interview which allows the applicant to demonstrate clear evidence of capacity to execute its plan successfully.</p>					

Standard 2d - Rigorous Decision Making	0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards					
i. Grants charters only to applicants that have demonstrated competence and capacity to succeed in all aspects of their particular charter school model, consistent with the stated approval criteria.				3	
ii. Rigorously evaluates each application through thorough review of the written proposal, a substantive in-person interview with each qualified applicant, and all appropriate due diligence to examine the applicant’s experience and capacity.					4
iii. Ensures that the application-review process and decision making are free of conflicts of interest and requires full disclosure of any potential or perceived conflicts of interest between applicants, the reviewers, and the decision makers.				3	
iv. Promptly notifies applicants of its application decision, explaining in writing any available rights of legal or administrative appeal through which a school may challenge the authorizer’s decision and including written explanation of the evidence-based factors that determined the decision so that applicants can decide if they wish to revise their plans based in part on that information and resubmit in the future.			2		
v. Does not make application decisions on the basis of political or community pressure.					4
Standard Rating					3.2

Evaluative Comments:
<p>i. Review committee reports, staff recommendation presentation materials, and decision notices for the selected schools demonstrate a misunderstanding of and misalignment in the authorizer’s implementation of this sub-standard. Though the authorizer’s decision to deny the amended application for selected school A was upheld by the state’s appellate body, the appellate body cited multiple areas of concern for the application aligned to the state’s approval criteria that were not cited by either the review committee (which had recommended approval) or the decision-makers. However, a year later, when the school resubmitted its application, decision-makers approved the applicant, this time against the recommendation of the review committee, which scored all major sections of the application as only partially meeting the standard. Decision materials for selected school B demonstrate a more consistent use of the approval criteria, with the review committee and decision-makers citing reasons for denial aligned to the approval criteria.</p> <p>ii. Application materials and capacity interview documents for the selected schools demonstrate that the authorizer evaluates each application through review of the written proposal and an in-person interview. Authorizing staff conducted due diligence on behalf of the selected schools (i.e., data outcomes research, discussions with current authorizers) to further examine experience and capacity. While having no impact on the score,</p>

- authorizing staff and leadership should consider incorporating a fiscal impact analysis into its due diligence to ensure it is issuing consistent, expert financial information to decision-makers if the board is going to weigh fiscal impact as part of its decision-making process.
- iii. Board policy 1.107 requires decision-makers to disclose potential conflicts of interest and a sampling of completed conflict of interest forms document the authorizer's process to ensure its application review process and decision making are free from conflicts; however, not all signed forms for review committee members evaluating the selected schools' applications were provided. Email communication with board resolutions attached for selected school B demonstrate that the authorizer promptly communicated with the applicants following its initial and amended decisions; however, no appeal rights were articulated following the amended application decision for selected school B. Additionally, while there are resolutions denying the initial and amended applications for selected school A in 2024, there is no evidence of communicating these outcomes with the applicant.
- iv. Board meeting minutes and recordings do not provide evidence that the authorizer makes decisions on the basis of political or community pressure. While having no impact on the score, board meeting recordings document decision-makers communicating reasons for decisions that were not part of leadership or staff recommendations or clearly defined as being part of the authorizer's stated approval criteria.

Charter School Authorizer Evaluation
Authorizer: Rutherford County Schools

Standard 3a - Charter Agreement Negotiation, and Execution		0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards						
i.	Executes a charter agreement between the authorizer and a legally incorporated governing board independent of the authorizer.					4
ii.	Ensures mutual understanding and acceptance of the terms of the charter agreement by the school's governing board.			2		
Standard Rating						3
Evaluative Comments:						
i.	The charter agreements for selected schools C and D were executed between the authorizer and the governing board within six months of approval, as affirmed through signatures from the authorizer and the governing board chairs for each school.					
ii.	A draft agreement with comments and proposed edits from selected school D demonstrates that the authorizer ensured mutual understanding and acceptance of the terms of the agreement prior to execution; however, the documentation does not include evidence of engaging with the governing board to ensure mutual understanding and acceptance of the terms prior to execution of the agreement for selected school C.					

Charter School Authorizer Evaluation
Authorizer: Rutherford County Schools

Standard 3b – Terms, Rights and Responsibilities	0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards					
i. Grants charter agreements for an initial term of ten operating years with the authorizer conducting a high-stakes review every five years and producing annual performance reports.					4
ii. Explicitly defines material terms of the charter agreement.					4
iii. Allows – and requires charter agreement amendments for – occasional material changes to a school’s plans but does not require a formal amendment process for modifications to non-material terms of the charter agreement.					4
iv. Executes charter agreements that clearly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. State the rights and responsibilities of the school and the authorizer; b. State and respect the autonomies to which schools are entitled—based on statute, waiver, or authorizer policy—including those relating to the school’s authority over educational programming, staffing, budgeting, and scheduling; c. Define performance standards, criteria, and conditions for renewal, intervention, revocation, and non-renewal, while establishing the consequences for meeting or not meeting standards or conditions; d. State the statutory, regulatory, and procedural terms and conditions for the school’s operation; e. State reasonable pre-opening requirements or conditions for new schools to ensure that they meet all health, safety, and other legal requirements prior to opening and are prepared to open smoothly; f. State the responsibility and commitment of the school to adhere to essential public-education obligations, including admitting and serving all eligible students so long as space is available, and not expelling or counseling out students except pursuant to a legal discipline policy; and g. State the responsibilities of the school and the authorizer in the event of school closures. 				3	
v. Ensures that purchasing any fee-based services that the authorizer provides is explicitly not a condition of charter approval, continuation, or renewal.					4
vi. For any fee-based services that the authorizer provides, the authorizer develops a separate services agreement that respects charter school autonomy and treats the charter school equitably compared to district schools, if applicable.					4

Standard Rating
3.83
Evaluative Comments:

- i. Charter agreements for selected schools C and D establish a ten-year operating term (section 1.5) and outline the authorizer’s responsibility to conduct a high-stakes interim review during the fifth year of operation and to produce annual performance reports (section 1.7).
- ii. Material terms are defined throughout the charter agreements for the selected schools, such as enrollment (section 2.1), academic program (2.2), staffing (section 3), and governance (section 8). Page one of the agreements establishes the approved charter school application as Exhibit 1; approved agreements and their exhibits are publicly available on the authorizer’s website.
- iii. Section 10 of the charter agreements for the selected schools allows and requires amendments for material changes to the agreement, such as those outlined in Tennessee Public Charter School Commission Rules, as well as material changes to the mission, school calendar by five or more days, and school location. The agreements also require notice of specific non-material changes rather than requiring a formal amendment process.
- iv. Most of the seven areas of the sub-standard are addressed in the charter agreements for selected schools C and D. The agreements state the rights and responsibilities of the school and authorizer, respect the autonomies to which schools are entitled, and state requirements for pre-opening, operation, and enrollment. However, though the agreements state that its performance framework will supersede all evaluation measures for purposes of accountability, renewal, and revocation, the agreements do not define the criteria and conditions for renewal or revocation decisions. Lastly, while there is language in section 11.3 concerning closure and cooperation between the authorizer and charter school, it does not define responsibilities of each party or link/incorporate a policy or protocol with the responsible parties.
- v. Section 9.3 of the charter agreements for the selected schools allow schools to enter into a separate fee for services agreement and states that “an agreement for services is not a condition of charter approval, continuation, or renewal”.
- vi. Selected school D entered into a fee-for-services agreement with the authorizer for nursing services and the authorizer provided documentation of the separate services agreement that appears to respect autonomy and treat the school equitably compared to district schools. While having no impact on the score, the authorizer should ensure that those signing fee-based services agreements on behalf of each party have the authority to do so.

Standard 3c - Performance Standards Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Executes charter agreements with a performance framework incorporated in the agreement, commonly as an attachment, that plainly establishes the standards under which schools will be evaluated and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Objective and verifiable measures of student achievement as the primary measure of school quality, in accordance with state law; b. Clear, measurable, and attainable academic, financial, and organizational performance standards and targets that the school must meet as a condition of renewal, including but not limited to state and federal measures; c. Expectations for appropriate access, education, support services, and outcomes for students with disabilities; 					4
ii. The performance framework includes clearly defined and measurable indicators, measures, metrics, and targets that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Academic Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the sources of academic data that will form the evidence base for ongoing and renewal evaluation; 2. Set expectations for student academic achievement status or proficiency, including comparative proficiency; 3. Set expectations for student academic growth, including adequacy of growth toward state standards; 4. Incorporate state and federal accountability systems, including state grading and/or rating systems; 5. Set expectations for postsecondary readiness, including graduation rates (for high schools); and 6. Provide schools an option to incorporate mission-specific performance measures for which the school has presented valid, reliable, and rigorous means of assessment approved by the authorizer (optional). b) Financial Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the sources of financial data that will form the evidence base for ongoing and renewal evaluation, including the school's annual financial audit conducted by a qualified independent auditor; 					4

<p>2. Enable the authorizer to monitor and evaluate the school’s financial stability and viability based on short-term performance; and</p> <p>3. Enable the authorizer to monitor and evaluate the school’s long-term financial sustainability.</p> <p>c) Organizational Performance</p> <p>1. Define the sources of organizational data that will form the evidence base for ongoing and renewal evaluation;</p> <p>2. Define the essential elements of the educational program for which the authorizer will hold the school accountable;</p> <p>3. Define financial management and oversight standards based on generally accepted accounting principles;</p> <p>4. Hold school governing boards accountable for meeting statutory and board-established operating and reporting requirements;</p> <p>5. Ensure school compliance with student and employee rights and obligations; and</p> <p>6. Establish expectations related to the school environment, including health and safety, transportation, facilities, and appropriate handling of records.</p>					
Standard Rating					4
<p>Evaluative Comments:</p> <p>i. Academic, organizational, and financial performance frameworks that establish standards for evaluation are incorporated as Exhibit 2 of the charter agreements for selected schools C and D. The frameworks establish the standards under which schools will be evaluated and meet all requirements of this sub-standard.</p> <p>ii. The performance framework includes clearly defined and measurable indicators and metrics for academic, financial, and organizational performance with data sources provided and all requirements of this sub-standard incorporated. While having no impact on the score, the authorizer should consider developing a more specific list of organizational data sources tailored to its monitoring processes beyond those generally stated in the organizational metrics provided in its framework.</p>					

Standard 3d - Provisions for Educational Service Provider (ESP) (if applicable) Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Includes, for any school that contracts with an ESP provider for the management of its educational program, finances, or school operations, provisions within the charter agreement that: ³ <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clearly establish the primacy of the charter agreement over the ESP contract; b. Clearly identify the school governing board as the party ultimately responsible for the success or failure of the school, and clearly define the ESP as a vendor of services; c. Prohibit the ESP from selecting, approving, employing, compensating, or serving as school governing board members; d. Provide for sufficient transparency around the spending of public monies; and e. Require all instructional materials, furnishings, and equipment purchased or developed with public funds to be the property of the school, not the ESP, in compliance with state law. 	N/A				
ii. Reviews the proposed ESP contract with the charter school’s governing board to ensure that it is consistent with applicable law, authorizer policy and the public interest, and requires, prior to contract execution, the contract between the ESP and the charter school’s governing board to articulate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The roles and responsibilities of the school governing board and the ESP, including all services to be provided under the contract; b. The performance measures, consequences, and mechanisms by which the school governing board will hold the SEP accountable for performance, aligned with the performance measures in the charter agreement; c. All compensation to be paid by the ESP, including all fees, bonuses, and what such compensation includes or requires; d. Terms of any facility agreement that may be part of the relationship; e. Financial reporting requirements and provisions for the school governing board’s financial oversight; f. All other financial terms of the contract, including disclosure and documentation of all loans or investments by the ESP to the school, and provision for the disposition of assets in accordance with law; 	N/A				

³ The standard does not apply to contracts with ESPs that do not have substantial responsibility for education, operational, and financial operations such as for payroll, textbooks, curriculum, etc.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. Assurances that the school governing board, at all times, maintains independent fiduciary oversight and authority over the school budget and ultimate responsibility for the school's performance; h. Provisions for contract termination; and i. Respective responsibilities of the governing board and ESP in the event of school closure, including transparency in the school's revenues and expenditures, as well as those managed by the ESP. 	
Standard Rating	N/A
Evaluative Comments:	
<p>This standard is N/A as none of the authorizer's charter schools currently operate with an educational service provider.</p>	

Charter School Authorizer Evaluation
Authorizer: Rutherford County Schools

Standard 4a – Performance Evaluation and Compliance Monitoring	0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards					
i. Implements a comprehensive performance accountability and compliance monitoring system that is defined by the charter agreement, outlined in policy, and provides the information necessary to make rigorous and standards-based renewal, revocation, and intervention decisions.				3	
ii. Defines and communicates to schools the process, methods, and timing of gathering and reporting school performance and compliance data.					4
iii. Implements an accountability system that effectively streamlines federal, state, and local performance expectations and compliance requirements while protecting schools' legally entitled autonomy and minimizing schools' administrative and reporting burdens.				3	
iv. Solicits feedback from its schools and utilizes the results to provide clear technical guidance to schools as needed to ensure timely compliance with applicable rules and regulations.					4
v. Conducts at least one formal on-site review to each school annually, uses the evidence collected to inform the school's annual evaluation, and provides schools with a report summarizing the review.					4
vi. Proactively communicates the purpose of any proposed on-site visit and ensures visits are used for collecting data that cannot be obtained otherwise and in accordance with the contract, while ensuring that the frequency, purposes, and methods of such visits respect school autonomy, minimize administrative burdens, and avoid operational interference.					4
vii. Evaluates each school annually on its performance and progress toward meeting the standards and targets stated in the charter agreement, including essential compliance requirements, and clearly communicates evaluation results to the school's governing board and leadership.	N/A				
Standard Rating					3.67
Evaluative Comments:					

- i. Board policy 1.903 establishes the authorizer’s accountability and performance monitoring process that is referenced in its charter agreements and includes reporting requirements, site visits, and the authorizer’s annual performance review. The handbook, reporting calendar, site visit reports, and intervention notices provide evidence of the authorizer implementing its accountability and monitoring system. However, while the documentation provides evidence of currently utilizing its systems, how each component works together to inform decisions is not clearly defined. For instance, a curriculum concern that should have been addressed during the authorizer’s review of the application resulted in a notice of concern during the pre-opening process. Similarly, while a site visit report from the spring semester of the school’s first year in operation stated, “approximately 25% of students considered economically disadvantaged are not receiving free meals as required”, this serious issue was not highlighted by the authorizer as necessitating immediate attention.
- ii. The authorizer’s handbook and reporting calendar define processes, methods, and timing of gathering school performance and compliance data. The authorizer has established a shared online platform for document collection and regular reporting reminder emails demonstrate the authorizer’s ongoing communication with schools regarding these expectations.
- iii. The authorizer implements its accountability system through the use of a reporting calendar that establishes an annual routine with requirements documented by month and clearly defined sources for each item in an effort to streamline federal, state, and local performance requirements. However, while the authorizer acknowledged a desire to further refine reporting requirements, certain submissions requirements lack a clear rationale for collecting (i.e., notification of resignation or firing of licensed personnel within 7 days, copies of all service contracts exceeding \$25,000) and therefore create administrative and reporting burdens. School leaders reported that the authorizer’s accountability system feels more appropriate for a traditional school than a charter school.
- iv. Documentation from an annual site visit demonstrates an opportunity in which the authorizer asks schools if any support is needed and follow-up communication documents the authorizer’s response to some of these requests, specifically those related to student interventions and English learner supports. While having no impact on the score, the authorizer should consider providing a more formal opportunity for schools to provide feedback, such as through an annual survey, to garner more comprehensive feedback beyond immediate needs.
- v. Site visit reports from the evaluation review term provide evidence of the authorizer conducting at least one formal on-site review at each school annually. The reports state that observations and evidence collected during visits are tied to the academic and organizational performance frameworks, and a summary table directly aligns findings with performance metrics.
- vi. The site visit protocol communicates the purpose (i.e., “ensure a thorough performance review of each school and to provide an opportunity for evaluators to see the school in action”) and methods (i.e., classroom observations, interviews, document review) for collecting information during the authorizer’s annual on-site visit. The protocol describes instances in which the authorizer may use discretion in determining whether to conduct a full-day or half-day visit and defines how information collected will inform specific measures on the performance framework.
- vii. N/A – The authorizer’s first charter schools began operating at the start of the 2024-25 school year; therefore, the authorizer’s first annual report was not due during the evaluation review term. The authorizer will publish its first annual report by January 1, 2026.

Charter School Authorizer Evaluation
Authorizer: Rutherford County Schools

Standard 4b - Respecting School Autonomy		0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards						
i.	Respects the school's authority over its day-to-day operations by refraining from directing or participating in educational decision or choices that are within a school's purview under the charter law or contract and does not conflict with the authorizer's additional responsibilities as the local education agency.					4
ii.	Collects information from the school in a manner that minimizes administrative burdens on the school, while ensuring that performance and compliance information is collected with sufficient detail and timeliness to protect student and public interests.				3	
iii.	Regularly reviews compliance requirements and evaluates the potential to increase school autonomy based on flexibility in the law, streamlining requirements, demonstrated school performance, or other considerations.				3	
Standard Rating						3.3
Evaluative Comments:						
i.	Site visit reports, meeting notes, and intervention notices provide evidence demonstrating that the authorizer refrains from directing or participating in educational decisions within a school's purview. School leaders affirmed that, while compliance activities take a significant amount of administrative time, the authorizer does not infringe on their autonomy.					
ii.	Reporting calendar processes, email communication, meeting minutes, and site visit reports demonstrate that the authorizer collects information from the school in a manner that ensures performance and compliance information is collected with sufficient detail and timeliness. However, some methods of information collection impose an administrative burden on schools, such as requesting schools to provide information that can be obtained through other reporting systems (i.e., quarterly personnel lists that include license numbers, endorsements and courses taught). School leaders expressed this concern as well, citing that there is significant time spent on administrative tasks.					
iii.	Email communication between the authorizer and the charter schools regarding process changes based on reflections from the pre-opening year provides evidence of the authorizer reviewing compliance requirements and evaluating the potential to further streamline. School leaders acknowledged improvements in this area, and the authorizer noted efforts to pare back unnecessary compliance requirements. However, the authorizer has largely focused on establishing compliance and oversight systems and assessing where the line of autonomy lies; hence, specific examples of considering ways to increase school autonomy were not provided.					

Standard 4c - Protecting Student Rights	0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards					
i. Ensures that schools admit students through a random selection process that is open to all students, is publicly verifiable, and does not establish undue barriers to application (such as mandatory information meetings, mandated volunteer service, or parent contracts) that exclude students as provided by federal, state, and local law.			2		
ii. Ensures that schools provide equitable access and inclusive services to all students as required by applicable federal and state law, including, but not limited to, students with disabilities, English learners, homeless students, students in foster care, migrant students, at-risk students, and gifted students.				3	
iii. Ensures clarity in the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in serving students with disabilities.					4
iv. Ensures that schools' student discipline policies and actions are legal, fair, and equitable and that no student is suspended, expelled, or counseled out of a school outside of that process, and that schools have a clear process for addressing parent/community grievances.					4
Standard Rating					3.25
Evaluative Comments:					
<p>i. The authorizer currently conducts lotteries on behalf of both authorized schools, which supports randomization, as confirmed by lottery certifications. However, while initial enrollment applications appear to only request basic information, the more recent common charter school enrollment application developed by the schools and issued by the district revealed questions that should not be asked as part of the application process. Specifically, the more recent application contains questions related to parents' highest level of education obtained, students' intentions to participate in sports, and students' birth countries. These questions have the potential to impede a random selection process and to create undue barriers to application or suggest that the application is not open to all students.</p> <p>ii. Organizational indicators on the authorizer's performance framework, site visit reports, and intervention notices related to special education and English learner services make evident that the authorizer ensures schools provide equitable access and inclusive services to students as required in law; however, the documentation did not include evidence of ensuring these rights for some populations of students required by this sub-standard, including students in foster care, migrant students, and gifted students.</p> <p>iii. The authorizer developed a tracker that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the authorizer (or local education agency) and the charter school for serving students with disabilities, including identification, child find, writing individual education plans, and transportation. The tracker also includes similar information for other special populations of students, such as English learners and homeless students. Additionally, the authorizer offers related training, as evidenced by email communication with its charter schools.</p>					

- iv. The authorizer collects and reviews school handbooks, as indicated by its reporting calendar, to ensure policies are legal, fair, and equitable and that schools have a process for addressing grievances. The authorizer also requires regular reporting of discipline data by its charter schools and includes an indicator in its performance framework that assesses suspension rates.

Standard 4d - School Intervention	0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards					
i. Establishes and clearly communicates to schools at the outset an intervention and problem-solving policy that states the general conditions that may trigger intervention and the types of actions and consequences that may ensue.			2		
ii. Utilizes ongoing oversight and evaluation processes to determine when intervention in non-emergency situations is needed.				3	
iii. Provides clear, evidence-based, and timely notice of contract violations or performance deficiencies that are aligned to the intervention policy and is communicated to the school leaders and governing board.				3	
iv. Allows schools reasonable time and opportunity for remediation in non-emergency situations.					4
v. Engages in intervention strategies that clearly preserve school autonomy and responsibility (identifying what the school must remedy without prescribing solutions) while clearly stating possible consequences for noncompliance.					4
Standard Rating					3.2

Evaluative Comments:
<p>i. Board policy 1.904 establishes and communicates the authorizer’s intervention policy by defining its process for notifying schools of a violation or performance deficiency and requiring schools to provide notice regarding its next steps; however, the policy does not state the general conditions that may trigger intervention or the types of actions and consequences that may follow, as required by this sub-standard and in accordance with state law⁴. While having no impact on the score, the authorizer’s handbook includes an intervention table of actions and consequences, and it is recommended that this information be moved into the board-approved policy to fully demonstrate the authorizer’s progressive intervention process.</p> <p>ii. The authorizer utilizes its pre-opening tracker for schools in Year 0, a monthly reporting calendar for compliance submissions, and site visits as its main tools for monitoring and oversight, and engages in email communication and meetings to discuss any questions or concerns related to items on these monitoring tools. During the evaluation review term, the authorizer issued a series of intervention notices, but it was not always clear what decision-making process was used to determine the need for intervention. For example, a notice of probation was issued in January 2025 without any evidence of prior intervention when relevant data that could have triggered intervention was first provided in September 2024. Additionally, the authorizer cited several areas requiring immediate attention in a site visit report, but next steps were not documented. The authorizer may want to further consider the host of instances that may warrant action and in what instances it is appropriate to jump levels of intervention.</p> <p>iii. A notice of concern related to curriculum, a notice of deficiency for special population services and licensure concerns, and a notice of probation for failure to comply with special education service requirements demonstrate that the authorizer provides clear, evidence-based notice of contract</p>

⁴ T.C.A. § 49-13-122

violations. The notices align with the authorizer's intervention process outlined in its handbook and email communication documents that the notices are addressed to school leaders and the governing board. The notice of concern, however, did not include a date or evidence of sending to anyone beyond the school leader.

- iv. Timelines stipulated in notices and the corrective action plan appear reasonable and allow for the opportunity to remediate the non-emergency situations cited.
- v. Intervention notices that state factual details about the area of concern and next steps as well as a corrective action plan developed in partnership between the authorizer and the charter school, as required by the authorizer's intervention policy, provide examples of the authorizer engaging in intervention strategies that preserve school autonomy and responsibility while stating possible consequences for noncompliance.

Charter School Authorizer Evaluation
Authorizer: Rutherford County Schools

Standard 4e - Public Reporting Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Produces and communicates to its decision-makers, charter school leaders, and the public an annual authorizer report that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provides clear, accurate performance data for the charter schools it oversees; b. Reports on individual school and overall portfolio performance according to the framework set forth in the charter agreement in accordance with state law; and c. Reports on the authorizer’s performance in meeting its goals. 	N/A				
Standard Rating					N/A
Evaluative Comments:					
N/A – The authorizer has not yet produced its first annual authorizer report. The authorizer’s first report will be due on January 1, 2026, which is outside of the evaluation review term.					

Charter School Authorizer Evaluation
Authorizer: Rutherford County Schools

Standard 5a – Amendments to the Charter Agreement	0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards					
i. Establishes and clearly communicates to schools an amendment process that’s aligned to the charter agreement and state law, utilizes the state’s required application, and follows the state’s required timeline and approval criteria.		1			
ii. Promptly notifies a school of its amendment decision, including written explanation of the evidence-based reasons for the decision and explains in writing any available rights of legal or administrative appeal through which a school may challenge the authorizer’s decision.	N/A				
iii. Grants amendments only to schools with a petition that demonstrates alignment to the school’s mission and goals and provides specific, evidence-based information that shows thorough preparation and viability of the plan.	N/A				
iv. Does not make amendment decisions on the basis of political or community pressure.	N/A				
Standard Rating					1
Evaluative Comments:					
i. While the authorizer’s handbook is posted on its website and discusses amendments to the charter agreement, the document is missing several key details (i.e., fall submission dates, emergency petitions, use of the state’s required petition materials, approval criteria) and does not clearly communicate a process aligned to the requirements of its charter agreements or state law. The handbook provides a link to state guidelines, but the link is out of date. ii. N/A – The authorizer did not receive an amendment petition during the evaluation review term. iii. N/A – The authorizer did not receive an amendment petition during the evaluation review term. iv. N/A – The authorizer did not receive an amendment petition during the evaluation review term.					

Charter School Authorizer Evaluation
Authorizer: Rutherford County Schools

Standard 5b - Renewal Process Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Conducts a high-stakes interim review of each school in the fifth year of the current charter term and clearly communicates the results to the school in accordance with Department of Education guidelines.	N/A				
ii. Provides to each school, in advance of the renewal decision using the timeline specified in state law, a cumulative performance report that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Summarizes the school’s performance record over the charter term; and b. States the authorizer’s summative findings concerning the school’s performance and its prospects for renewal. 	N/A				
iii. Allows the school meaningful opportunity and reasonable time to respond to the cumulative report; to correct the record, if needed; and to present additional evidence regarding its performance.	N/A				
iv. Requires any school seeking renewal to complete the state’s renewal application and follows the renewal application timeline required in state law.	N/A				
Standard Rating					N/A
Evaluative Comments:					
N/A – The authorizer did not have a school in the renewal process during the evaluation review term.					

Standard 5c - Renewal Decisions Based on Merit and Inclusive Evidence	0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards					
i. Establishes and clearly communicates a renewal policy which requires the thorough analysis of a school’s comprehensive body of objective evidence defined by the performance framework and consistent with the charter agreement and state law, including any policy changes thereto.					4
ii. Defines and communicates with its schools the criteria for renewal and non-renewal decisions that are consistent with the charter agreement.		1			
iii. Grants 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.	N/A				
iv. Promptly notifies a school of its renewal decision, including written explanation of the evidence-based reasons for the decision and any available rights of legal or administrative appeal through which a school may challenge the authorizer’s decision.	N/A				
v. Promptly communicates renewal decisions to the school community and public within a time frame that allows parents and students to exercise choices for the upcoming school year.	N/A				
vi. Does not make renewal decisions on the basis of political or community pressure or solely on promises of future improvement.	N/A				
Standard Rating					2.5

Evaluative Comments:
<p>i. Board policy 1.905 establishes and communicates a renewal policy that requires analysis of the renewal application, annual progress reports, and renewal performance report, in accordance with state law. The policy provides a general timeline for the process requirements (i.e., cumulative report, application) outlined in law. While having no impact on the score, it is recommended that the authorizer update its policy to clearly link the use of its performance framework to the annual progress reports to ensure clear communication of how the performance framework is used to inform renewal.</p> <p>ii. The authorizer had not yet defined or communicated its renewal criteria, such as the level of performance expected to be on track or recommended for renewal, beyond restating basic requirements in law. The handbook contains conflicting information regarding renewal evidence. For instance, page 16 of the 2025-26 handbook states, “renewal recommendations are made based upon a body of evidence around the school’s academic and organizational performance”, while page 17 lists several other pieces of evidence that are analyzed as part of the renewal process. Furthermore, the</p>

authorizer must ensure information included in its handbook aligns with the specific renewal evidence requirements in its board policy and in state law.

- iii. N/A - The authorizer did not have a school in the renewal process during the evaluation review term.
- iv. N/A - The authorizer did not have a school in the renewal process during the evaluation review term.
- v. N/A - The authorizer did not have a school in the renewal process during the evaluation review term.
- vi. N/A - The authorizer did not have a school in the renewal process during the evaluation review term.

Standard 5d - Revocation		0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards						
i.	Establishes and clearly communicates a revocation policy with criteria for charter revocation decisions that are consistent with the charter agreement and state law, including any policy changes thereto.					4
ii.	Revokes a charter during the charter term only if there is clear violation in accordance with the reasons set forth in state law.	N/A				
iii.	Promptly notifies each school of its revocation decision, including written explanation of the reasons for the decision and any available rights of legal or administrative appeal through which a school may challenge the authorizer's decision.	N/A				
iv.	Promptly communicates revocation decisions to the school community and public within a timeframe that allows parents and students to exercise choices for the upcoming school year.	N/A				
v.	Does not make revocation decisions on the basis of political or community pressure.	N/A				
Standard Rating						4
Evaluative Comments:						
i.	Board policy 1.906 establishes and communicates the authorizer's revocation policy with criteria for revocation that are consistent with its charter agreement and state law. The policy provides a general timeline for notice and details regarding revocation due to federally designated priority status, in accordance with state law.					
ii.	N/A – The authorizer did not revoke a charter school during the evaluation review term.					
iii.	N/A – The authorizer did not revoke a charter school during the evaluation review term.					
iv.	N/A – The authorizer did not revoke a charter school during the evaluation review term.					

Charter School Authorizer Evaluation
Authorizer: Rutherford County Schools

Standard 5e - Closure Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Establishes and clearly communicates to schools a closure policy or procedure that is consistent with the charter agreement and requires the authorizer to oversee and work with the school governing board and leadership in carrying out a detailed closure protocol that ensures timely notification to parents; orderly transition of students and student records to new schools; and disposition of school funds, property, and assets in accordance with law.				3	
Standard Rating					3
Evaluative Comments:					
i. Board policy 1.906 states that the authorizer will develop administrative procedures for closure prior to denying renewal or revoking a charter school agreement; however, an administrative procedure was not provided. Additionally, while the authorizer’s handbook states primary goals in the event of closure, including reassigning students and addressing financial obligations, information in the handbook is inconsistent with the minimum expectations for closure established in its charter agreements and required by this sub-standard.					