



**Charter School Authorizer Evaluations
Authorizer Handbook
2022**

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About this Document

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a comprehensive handbook for Tennessee charter school authorizers with regard to the State Board of Education’s authorizer evaluations established pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-13-145, Tennessee State Board of Education (“State Board”) Rule [0520-14-01-.08 - Authorizer Evaluation](#), and State Board Policy [6.113 - Charter School Authorizer Evaluations](#). This handbook aims to ensure that the State Board’s authorizer evaluation process is transparent, merit-based, comprehensive, and equitable.

The guidelines and procedures included in this handbook pertain to all authorizers in Tennessee and serve two purposes: 1) to set clear expectations for authorizers; and 2) to drive authorizer quality. Statutory, rule, or policy changes and/or the needs of authorizers with unique context, such as the Achievement School District and the TN Public Charter School Commission, may result in changes to the procedures and expectations described below.

Introduction

In 2019, the General Assembly charged the State Board with conducting periodic evaluations of Tennessee charter school authorizers (“authorizers”) to determine authorizer compliance and evaluate quality. At present, Tennessee is the fourth (4th) state in the U.S. to implement authorizer evaluations. The State Board partnered with an education consulting group with experience in authorizer evaluations, to develop an evaluation system based on State Board [Policy 6.111 – Quality Charter Authorizing Standards](#).

As part of the development process, the State Board gathered feedback from charter school operators, authorizers, and charter school stakeholders on its Quality Charter Authorizing Standards, conducted focus groups to review feedback, connected with the three (3) other states that have an established authorizer evaluation system, and established a task force that included authorizers and operators to share in the development of the evaluation process. In addition, the State Board implemented a pilot evaluation with two (2) authorizers participating voluntarily in Fall 2020. The pilot served as a valuable step to prepare the State Board and Tennessee authorizers for the official high-stakes authorizer evaluations, beginning in Fall 2021.

Upon the conclusion of the pilot evaluation, the State Board finalized its rule and policy on charter school authorizer evaluations, which provide further details on the evaluation process, evaluation ratings, and corresponding follow-up actions. The State Board believes that quality authorizing leads to quality charter schools and increased educational opportunities for students, which is the goal of the authorizer evaluations.

Authorizer Evaluation Cycle

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-145, the State Board shall ensure the effective operation of authorizers in the state and shall evaluate authorizer quality. The State Board is charged with conducting periodic evaluations of authorizers to determine authorizer compliance. An authorizer’s failure to remedy non-compliance may result in the reduction of the authorizer fee.

One of the primary mechanisms for fulfilling this purpose is a comprehensive evaluation process that sets clear standards for authorizer performance through the Quality Charter Authorizing Standards, promotes authorizer accountability, and includes tools and processes designed to evaluate performance and monitor compliance.

The State Board assesses operations and performance of authorizers via the authorizer evaluation every two (2) years. The components of the State Board’s evaluation cycle include an evaluation year, a non-evaluation year, and corrective actions, if applicable. Authorizers are divided into two (2) cohorts and evaluated in the following sequence:

Cohort	Authorizers
Cohort 1 (beginning Fall 2021)	Hamilton County Schools Knox County Schools Shelby County Schools
Cohort 2 (beginning Fall 2022)	Achievement School District Metro Nashville Public Schools Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

Authorizers are typically evaluated biennially, though, in accordance with State Board Rule 0520-14-01-.08, the following exceptions exist:

- Authorizer receiving an “Exemplary” rating
 - Exemption from an upcoming evaluation if the authorizer has achieved an “Exemplary” rating for two (2) consecutive evaluation years
- Authorizer receiving an “Unsatisfactory/Incomplete” rating
 - Requirement to participate in another authorizer evaluation the year immediately following a rating of “Unsatisfactory/Incomplete”

An exemption or required additional evaluation does not change an authorizer’s assigned evaluation cohort. Details regarding the evaluation rating system begins on page 10 of this document.

Evaluation Year

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-145, the State Board shall evaluate authorizers that oversee at least one (1) charter school. Evaluations are aligned to the Quality Charter Authorizing Standards and the key components are outlined below.

Timeline and Process

For authorizers in an evaluation year, the evaluation process includes the following steps (see the [Evaluator Guide](#) for a comprehensive description of each):

- Authorizers attend a required orientation in August;
- Authorizers upload documentation to a folder via Box.com assigned by State Board staff between September and October;
- Authorizers submit a charter school list which includes the status, history, and school leader for each school in its portfolio;
- Authorizers work with the State Board staff to schedule the evaluation week between October and December;
- State Board evaluation team members participate in a mandatory training in October that includes an overview of the evaluation and scoring processes, a review of the rubric, and norming on ratings and the writing of evaluative comments;
- During the evaluation week, the evaluation team reviews the submitted documentation for each authorizer and the authorizer's appeal history, if applicable, which shall include any findings and recommendation report(s) issued by the Executive Director of the appeals body and the final decision by the appeals body for any appeals that occurred within the review term;
- During the evaluation week, the evaluation team schedules and conducts an interview with school leaders from the authorizer's portfolio;
- During the evaluation week, the evaluation team schedules and conducts a meeting with the authorizer, known as the Document Debrief, to discuss the submitted documentation;
- At the end of the evaluation week, the evaluation team lead reviews preliminary evaluation ratings with the authorizer;
- Evaluation team lead shares a draft evaluation report shared with the authorizer by January;
- Authorizer reviews draft evaluation report and provides factual corrections in January, if applicable;
- Evaluation team lead shares the final evaluation report with the authorizer in January;
- Final evaluation ratings presented to the State Board for approval at its first quarterly or special called board meeting following the release of the final evaluation report to the authorizer;
- Upon State Board approval, written notification of approval is sent to the authorizer and the final evaluation report is posted to the State Board's website;
- Authorizers receiving a rating of "Approaching Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory/Incomplete" shall acknowledge receipt of the written notification and any required follow-up actions no later than ten (10) business days after the written notification is sent to the authorizer; and
- Authorizers receiving a rating of "Approaching Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory/Incomplete" shall develop a corrective action plan (see "Corrective Action" beginning on page 10).

Evidence Base and Documentation Submission

The evaluation team will consider the following evidence – additional details about each type of evidence will be provided during Authorizer Orientation:

- Documents submitted by the authorizer during the submission window;
- Narrative Form explanations submitted by the authorizer during the submission window (Appendix A);
- Clarifications and explanations provided by the authorizer during the Document Debrief;
- Supporting narrative shared during the School Leader Interview; and
- Appeals history during the review term, as applicable.

During the submission window, authorizers must submit documentation representing established practices and implementation of those practices. Only documentation submitted within the submission window will be considered. If an authorizer has not implemented an established practice within the review term, only the established practice documentation will be evaluated. For example, if an authorizer has an established closing procedure but did not implement the procedure within the last two years, only documentation regarding the authorizer's closing procedure would be evaluated rather than an evaluation of the procedure and its implementation.

The State Board will provide each authorizer with a randomly generated list of schools for specific implementation standards (Appendix B). Only documentation from the randomly selected schools will be considered for the corresponding evaluation standards. For any remaining evaluation standards not included in the list, authorizers may choose documentation from any authorized charter school in their portfolio. See Appendix B for additional information.

Additionally, authorizers are responsible for ensuring their documents and files are easy to open and easy to read. It is the authorizer's responsibility to make sure all uploaded documents and files work properly. Documents and files that cannot be opened or are unreadable could result in a lower score. Authorizers must also create a table of contents to submit with their documentation. The table of contents should include the names of each document submitted as part of the evaluation and the corresponding document number assigned by the authorizer. The creation of a table of contents will allow the evaluation team to easily identify the authorizer's documentation and grant the authorizer the ability to use the numbering system to identify documents discussed in the Narrative Form (see Appendix A).

The Evaluation Week

Authorizers will be assigned an evaluation week and the State Board will make every effort to set the evaluation week for a date range that works for the authorizer. An evaluation week consists of the following components:

- Days 1 – 2
 - Evaluation Team conducts document review and completes initial ratings
- Day 3
 - Evaluation Team interviews charter school leaders
 - Evaluation Team holds pre-consensus meeting
- Day 4
 - Evaluation Team meets with authorizer for the Document Debrief

- Evaluation Team and Quality Editor hold a consensus meeting
- Day 5
 - Evaluation Team Lead meets with the authorizer to share preliminary ratings
 - Evaluation Team Lead begins drafting the evaluation report

Authorizers are required to participate in the Document Debrief and the preliminary report out; details about each step can be found below. For more information regarding the full evaluation week, please review the State Board’s [Evaluator Guide](#).

Document Debrief (Day 4 AM)

The Document Debrief is an opportunity for the authorizer to identify how the documentation they have uploaded during the submission window aligns with the criteria of the Tennessee Authorizer Evaluation Rubric. Authorizers set the agenda for the meeting, identifying the standards and evidence they would like to discuss; no new evidence may be considered. With each selected standard, an authorizer may present to evaluators how the documentation they uploaded meets the criteria within the Tennessee Authorizer Evaluation Rubric.

The Evaluation Lead will schedule the Document Debrief for up to two (2)-hours and request a list of the standards the authorizer plans to discuss prior to the meeting. The authorizer may choose up to five (5) individuals to participate in the meeting, though typical participants include staff members fully or partially funded by the authorizer fee and/or consultants who have actively implemented the organization’s authorizing responsibilities. School staff should not participate in the Document Debrief. While the authorizer generally drives the meeting, the Evaluation Team may choose to ask clarifying questions regarding the standards presented during the meeting or any documentation submitted by the authorizer during the submission window.

Documentation takes priority to verbal evidence provided by the authorizer during the Document Debrief. For example, an authorizer may verbally explain how they handle conflicts of interest in a convincing and coherent manner, but if no documentation is provided to corroborate their verbal comments, there would be no impact on your scoring. In this case, acknowledge the documentation debrief evidence, and then state that there is no documentation to support this practice. For example, “While the authorizer verbally described collecting data from the Dean of Academics during onsite reviews, authorizer documentation does not corroborate this practice.” Conversely, if an authorizer submits an excellent document, but in the Document Debrief it becomes clear that the authorizer does not understand the document, the Evaluation Lead will note this in the evaluation report but it will not negatively impact the score.

Preliminary Report Out (Day 5 AM)

The preliminary report out provides the authorizer with a summary of the team’s ratings ahead of finalizing the overall report. This step is conducted virtually and held for up to 45 minutes with the Evaluation Lead and authorizer. The Evaluation Lead will schedule and facilitate the call.

Evaluation Preparation

The State Board has developed an [Evaluator Additional Guidance](#) document. While the document is primarily designed to aid evaluators in reviewing documentation submitted by an authorizer against the rubric, it may also be useful for authorizers to gain a deeper understanding of how the sub-standards have

been further defined and to review potential evidence to consider when selecting documentation to submit. The State Board strongly recommends authorizers review this document in preparation for evaluation.

Non-Evaluation Year

As required by State Board Rule 0520-14-01-.08, authorizers in a non-evaluation year shall complete and submit the following to the State Board:

- A completed self-assessment using the State Board’s [form](#); and
- Information and evidence demonstrating completion of a corrective action plan, if required because of the authorizer’s most recent evaluation report.
- If an authorizer is required to participate in another authorizer evaluation in the school year immediately following an “Unsatisfactory/Incomplete” rating, the completed corrective action plan shall be submitted as part of the authorizer’s documentation during the document submission window of the authorizer’s next evaluation.

Authorizers in a non-evaluation year may choose to nominate one (1) member of their authorizing staff to serve as an evaluator for another authorizer. The authorizing staff member will be required to attend the evaluator training as well as all activities during the evaluation week including up to 20 hours of document review, a school leader interview, the Document Debrief, and two consensus calls with the evaluation team. State Board staff will provide authorizers with specific information and time commitments prior to evaluator selection. See the [Evaluator Guide](#) for additional details about the responsibilities of an evaluator.

The option to serve as an evaluator during a non-evaluation year is an excellent professional development opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the evaluation process and to determine areas of strength and growth within an authorizing team without any stakes.

Timeline and Process

For authorizers in a non-evaluation year, the evaluation process includes the following steps:

- Authorizers may choose to attend the authorizer orientation in August;
- Authorizers may nominate one (1) member of their authorizing staff to serve as an evaluator; and
- Authorizers submit a completed self-assessment and any required corrective action plan documentation, if applicable, to the State Board by January 1.

Authorizer Evaluation Rating System

The State Board has established an [evaluation rubric](#) and rating system focused on the following categories aligned to the Quality Charter Authorizing Standards:

- Agency Commitment and Capacity
- Application Process and Decision Making
- Performance Contracting
- Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation
- Revocation and Renewal Decision Making
- Advanced Standards (Bonus Category)

Each category consists of standards and sub-standards. Authorizers will receive scores aligned to criteria for each of the sub-standards and standards within the evaluation rubric. Each sub-standard will be given a numerical rating of 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 based on the documentation (see Chart 1). Sub-standard scores are averaged to determine the standard score for each of the 24 standards. Any scores received within the Advanced Standards category are added into the overall evaluation score.

Chart 1: Sub-Standard Ratings

0	1	2	3	4
No explanation or documentation	Narrative and/or documentation addresses and satisfies less than 50% of the standard	Documentation addresses most but satisfies less than 50% of the standard	Documentation addresses and satisfies 50% or more of the standard	Documentation addresses and satisfies 100% of the standard

The overall evaluation score is determined by averaging all the standard scores. That number is then aligned to one of the overall evaluation rating designations as outlined in Chart 2. At the conclusion of each two (2)-year evaluation cycle, the State Board reserves the right to review and adjust the evaluation score ranges as needed.

Chart 2: Overall Evaluation 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

In accordance with State Board Rule 0520-14-01-.08, the follow-up actions aligned to each overall evaluation rating designation are as follows:

- Exemplary¹
 - Public recognition and highlighting authorizer best practices by the State Board;
 - Exemption from an upcoming evaluation if the authorizer has achieved an “Exemplary” rating for two (2) consecutive evaluation years; and
 - Submission of a self-assessment during the non-evaluation year.
- Commendable
 - Public recognition and highlighting authorizer best practices by the State Board; and
 - Submission of a self-assessment during the non-evaluation year.
- Satisfactory
 - Submission of a self-assessment during the non-evaluation year.
- Approaching Satisfactory
 - Submission of a corrective action plan, which shall include any specific follow-up actions identified in the Evaluation Report. The corrective action plan shall be approved by the Executive Director of the State Board or his/her designee prior to implementation;
 - Submission of a self-assessment during the Non-Evaluation Year; and
 - Submission of documentation demonstrating completion of requirements by the deadlines set forth in the approved corrective action plan. Failure to complete the requirements outlined in the corrective action plan and/or receiving a rating of Approaching Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory/Incomplete in the next authorizer evaluation may result in the reduction of the authorizer’s authorizer fee in an amount and length of time determined by the State Board.
- Unsatisfactory/Incomplete
 - Requirement to participate in another authorizer evaluation the school year immediately following a rating of Unsatisfactory/Incomplete;
 - Submission of a corrective action plan, which shall include any specific follow-up actions identified in the Evaluation Report. The corrective action plan shall be approved by the Executive Director of the State Board or his/her designee prior to implementation; and
 - Submission of documentation demonstrating completion of requirements by the deadlines set forth in in the approved corrective action plan. Failure to complete the requirements outlined in the corrective action plan and/or receiving a rating of Unsatisfactory/Incomplete in the next authorizer evaluation may result in the reduction of the authorizer’s authorizer fee in an amount and length of time determined by the State Board.

¹ An authorizer shall not be rated as “Exemplary” if the authorizer receives a zero (0) or one (1) rating for any rubric standard.

Corrective Action

The State Board has been tasked by the General Assembly to ensure the effective operation of authorizers and to evaluate authorizer quality. Authorizers will receive an overall evaluation rating based on the evaluation team's thorough review of the evidence base against the evaluation rubric. Should an authorizer receive an overall evaluation rating of "Approaching Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory/Incomplete", the authorizer will be required to create and submit a corrective action plan including any specific follow-up actions identified in the evaluation report.

Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

Any authorizer required to complete a CAP may begin doing so upon receipt of the final evaluation report. A Letter of Corrective Action will accompany the evaluation report and include the specific standard(s) identified as deficient through the evaluation. The CAP must be completed using the State Board's [template](#) and includes the identification of the deficiency, specific improvements, responsible person(s), timelines, and measures for each area of concern. The State Board reserves the right to require specific items and timelines to be included in an authorizer's CAP.

The initial CAP and any other required follow-up actions must be submitted to the Executive Director or his/her designee for approval. The State Board will communicate specific timelines for CAP submission following the State Board's approval of the final evaluation ratings. Failure to complete the requirements outlined in the CAP may result in a recommendation by the Executive Director of the State Board for the authorizer to receive a reduction in the authorizer fee, per State Board Rule 0520-14-01-.08.

Appendix A: Narrative Form (Required)

About this Document: For authorizers in an evaluation year, this form affords the authorizer an opportunity to rate and explain their authorizing processes and practices. For each standard the authorizer should include a self-evaluated rating on the rubric and an explanation of the rating with names or numbers of referenced documents cited in **BOLD**. Authorizers should also create a table of contents document which includes a list of the names and corresponding numbers for each document submitted. The submission of a table of contents allows the authorizer to refer to a document number rather than name in the narrative explanations below.

The narrative is limited to this form and must be saved as a PDF and uploaded with your documentation evidence during the document submission window. For authorizers that were required to complete a corrective action plan during their non-evaluation year, the narrative form must also include explanations of changes aligned to the outcomes stated in the corrective action plan.

When rating processes and/or implementation:

- Include a rating of 0-4 for each substandard using the “Ratings Key” below.
- Calculate the Standard Rating as the average of the sub-standard ratings.

When explaining processes and/or implementation:

- Include typed explanations up to 500 words per standard.
- Identify how the submitted documentation supports the rating you selected.
- **BOLD** the names/numbers of documents referenced in the explanation.
- If a corrective action plan was in place, identify the specific applicable page numbers or page ranges for documents referenced in the explanation.

Ratings Key

0	1	2	3	4
No explanation or documentation	Narrative and/or documentation addresses and satisfies less than 50% of the standard	Documentation addresses most but satisfies less than 50% of the standard	Documentation addresses and satisfies more than 50% of the standard	Documentation addresses and satisfies 100% of the standard

Standard 1a - Planning and Commitment to Excellence					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Supports and advances the purposes of charter school law.					
ii. Ensures that the authorizer’s local board of education or authorizing board, leadership, and staff understand and are committed to the quality charter authorizing principles and standards and developing as authorizing professionals.					
iii. Defines external relationships and lines of authority to protect its authorizing functions from conflicts of interest and political influence.					
iv. Implements policies, processes, and practices that streamline and systematize its work toward stated goals, and executes its duties efficiently while minimizing administrative burdens on schools.					
v. Evaluates its work regularly against national and state standards for quality authorizing and recognized effective practices, and develops and implements timely plans for improvement when necessary.					
vi. States a clear mission for quality authorizing.					
vii. Makes authorizing decisions that will result in positive student outcomes, in accordance with state law.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 1b - Human Resources					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Through intra- or inter-agency collaborations, contractual relationships and/or staff, enlists expertise and competent leadership for all areas essential to charter school oversight—including, but not limited to, education leadership; instruction; 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.					
ii. Employs competent personnel at a staffing level appropriate and sufficient to carry out all authorizing responsibilities in accordance with national and state standards, and commensurate with the scale of the charter school portfolio.					
iii. Demonstrates an on-going commitment to developing and retaining authorizing staff members and provides regular professional development for the agency’s leadership and local board of education or authorizing board to achieve and maintain high standards of professional authorizing practice and to enable continual agency improvement.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

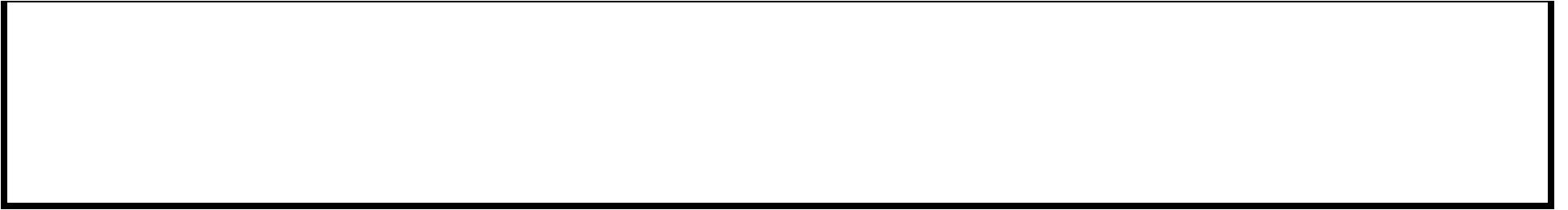
Standard 1c - Financial Resources					0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards									
i.	Determines the financial needs of the authorizing office and devotes financial resources to fulfill its authorizing responsibilities in accordance with national and state standards, commensurate with the scale of the charter school portfolio, and in accordance with Tennessee statute, including all relevant requirements for use of the authorizer fee.								
ii.	Structures its funding in a manner that avoids conflicts of interest, inducements, incentives, or disincentives that might compromise its judgment in charter approval and accountability decision making.								
iii.	Deploys funds effectively, transparently, and efficiently with the public and student interests in mind.								
iv.	Annually reports the authorizing obligations fulfilled using the authorizer fee in accordance with state law.								
								Standard Rating	
Explanation (limited to 500 words):									

Standard 2a - Proposal Information, Questions, and Guidance					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Issues a charter application information packet or request for proposals (RFP) that: a) States any chartering priorities the authorizer may have established; b) Articulates comprehensive application questions to elicit the information needed for rigorous evaluation of applicants' plans and capacities; and c) Provides clear guidance and requirements regarding application content and format, while explaining evaluation criteria.					
ii. Welcomes proposals from first-time charter applicants as well as existing school operators/replicators, while appropriately distinguishing between the two kinds of applicants in proposal requirements and evaluation criteria.					
iii. Encourages expansion of charter schools that demonstrate academic success, financial viability, organizational health, and capacity for growth.					
iv. Encourages replication of charter schools that demonstrate academic success, financial viability, organizational health, and capacity for growth.					
v. Considers diverse educational philosophies and approaches.					
vi. Requires applicants to demonstrate capacity to serve students with diverse needs, such as students with disabilities or learning exceptionalities and English learners.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 2b - Fair, Transparent, Quality-Focused Procedures		0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards						
i.	Implements a charter application process that is open, well-publicized, and transparent, and is organized around clear, realistic timelines.					
ii.	Allows sufficient time for each stage of the application and school pre-opening process to be carried out with quality and integrity.					
iii.	Explains how each stage of the application process is conducted and evaluated.					
iv.	Communicates the education needs of the district, the charter authorizing processes, approval criteria, and decisions clearly to the public.					
v.	Informs applicants of their rights and responsibilities and promptly notifies applicants of approval or denial, while explaining the 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.					
Standard Rating						
Explanation (limited to 500 words):						

Standard 2c - Rigorous Approval Criteria					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. 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, effective governance and management structures and systems, founding team members demonstrating diverse and necessary capabilities in all phases of the school’s development, and clear evidence of the applicant’s capacity to execute its plan successfully.					
ii. Establishes distinct requirements and criteria for applicants who are existing school operators or replicators.					
iii. Establishes distinct requirements and criteria for applicants proposing to contract with educational service providers (ESPs), including charter management organizations.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

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.					
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, conducted by knowledgeable and competent evaluators.					
iii.	Engages, for both written application reviews and applicant interviews, highly competent teams of internal and external evaluators with relevant educational, organizational (governance and management), financial, and legal expertise, as well as thorough understanding of the essential principles of charter school autonomy and accountability.					
iv.	Provides orientation or training to application evaluators (including interviewers) to ensure consistent evaluation standards and practices, the elimination of real or perceived conflicts of interest, the observance of essential protocols, and the fair, unbiased treatment of all applicants.					
v.	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 reviewers or decision makers and applicants.					
vi.	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.					
Standard Rating						
Explanation (limited to 500 words):						



Standard 2e - Elements for Existing School Operators or Applications (if applicable)					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Provide clear evidence of their capacity to operate new schools successfully while maintaining quality in existing schools;					
ii. Document their educational, organizational, and financial performance records based on all existing schools;					
iii. Explain any never-opened, terminated, or non-renewed schools (including terminated or non-renewed third-party contracts to operate schools);					
iv. Present their growth plan, business plan, and most recent financial audits;					
v. Meet high standards of academic, organizational, and financial success to earn approval for replication; and					
vi. Document any current or past litigation and the resolution of such litigation.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 2f - Elements for Applicants Proposing to Contract with Educational Service Providers, including Charter Management Organizations (if applicable)					
	0	1	2	3	4
Sub-standards					
i. Evidence of the service provider’s educational and management success;					
ii. A description of the process for selecting the ESP;					
iii. 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 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					
iv. 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.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 3a - Charter Agreement Term, Negotiation, and Execution					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Executes a charter agreement with a legally incorporated governing board independent of the authorizer.					
ii. Grants charter agreements for an initial term of ten operating years with a high-stakes review every five years, in addition to annual performance reports.					
iii. Defines material and non-material terms of the charter agreement.					
iv. Ensures mutual understanding and acceptance of the terms of the charter agreement by the school’s governing board.					
v. Allows—and requires charter agreement amendments for—occasional material changes to a school’s plans, but does not require amending the charter agreement for non-material modifications.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 3b - Rights and Responsibilities

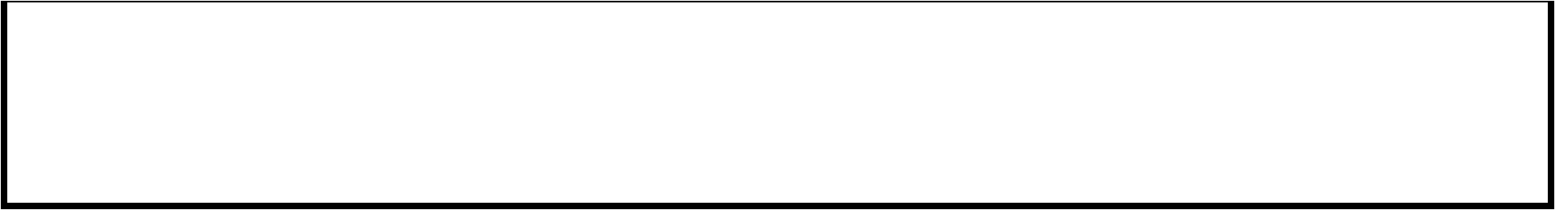
Sub-standards

0 1 2 3 4

<p>i. Executes charter agreements that clearly:</p> <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 approved by the authorizer; and g. State the responsibilities of the school and the authorizer in the event of school closures. 					
<p>ii. Ensures that any fee-based services that the authorizer provides are set forth in a services agreement that respects charter school autonomy and treats the charter school equitably compared to district schools, if applicable; and ensures that purchasing such services is explicitly not a condition of charter approval, continuation, or renewal.</p>					

Standard Rating	
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Explanation (limited to 500 words):



Standard 3c - Performance Standards Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
<p>i. Executes charter agreements that plainly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish the performance standards under which schools will be evaluated, using objective and verifiable measures of student achievement as the primary measure of school quality, in accordance with state law; b. Define 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. Include expectations for appropriate access, education, support services, and outcomes for students with disabilities; d. Define the sources of academic data that will form the evidence base for ongoing and renewal evaluation, including state-mandated and other standardized assessments, student academic growth measures, internal assessments, qualitative reviews, and performance comparisons with other public schools in the district and state; e. Define the sources of financial data that will form the evidence base for ongoing and renewal evaluation, grounded in professional standards for sound financial operations and sustainability; f. Define the sources of organizational data that will form the evidence base for ongoing and renewal evaluation, focusing on fulfillment of legal obligations, fiduciary duties, and sound public stewardship; and g. Include clear, measurable performance standards to judge the effectiveness of alternative model schools, as defined by state law—requiring and appropriately weighting rigorous mission-specific performance measures and metrics that credibly demonstrate each school’s success in fulfilling its mission and serving its special population. 					
<p>ii. Sets detailed performance standards. Performance standards enable schools and authorizers to know the outcomes for which authorizers will hold schools accountable. They are the basis for school evaluation and should be incorporated in the charter agreement, commonly as an attachment. Academic, financial, and organizational performance standards should include clearly defined and measurable indicators, measures, metrics, and targets that:</p>					

<p>a) Academic Performance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set expectations for student academic achievement status or proficiency, including comparative proficiency; 2. Set expectations for student academic growth, including adequacy of growth toward state standards; 3. Incorporate state and federal accountability systems, including state grading and/or rating systems; 4. Set expectations for postsecondary readiness, including graduation rates (for high schools); and 5. 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. <p>b) Financial Performance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enable the authorizer to monitor and evaluate the school’s financial stability and viability based on short-term performance; and 2. Enable the authorizer to monitor and evaluate the school’s long-term financial sustainability. <p>c) Organizational Performance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the essential elements of the educational program for which the authorizer will hold the school accountable; 2. Define financial management and oversight standards based on generally accepted accounting principles; 3. Hold school governing boards accountable for meeting statutory and board-established operating and reporting requirements; 4. Ensure school compliance with student and employee rights and obligations; and 5. Establish expectations related to the school environment, including health and safety, transportation, facilities, and appropriate handling of records. 					
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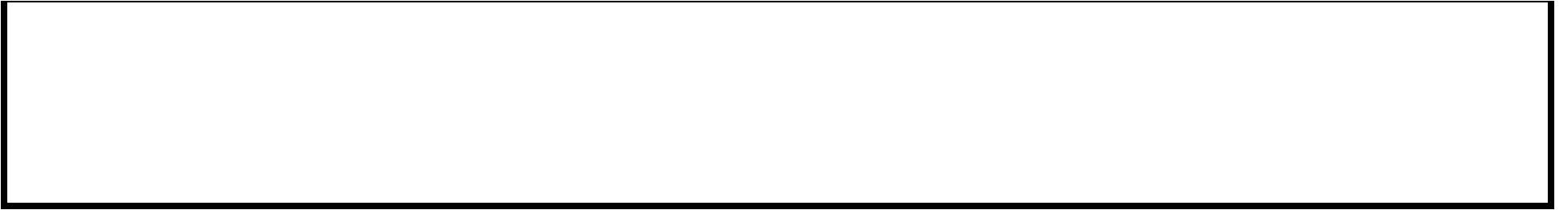
Standard Rating

Explanation (limited to 500 words):

Standard 3d - Provisions for Educational Service Provider (ESP) Within Charter Agreement (if applicable)					
Sub-standard	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, contractual provisions that: ² <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly establish the primacy of the charter agreement over the ESP contract; 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; Prohibit the ESP from selecting, approving, employing, compensating, or serving as school governing board members; Provide for sufficient transparency around the spending of public monies; and 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. 					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

² 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.

Standard 3e - Provisions for ESP Contract					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. The roles and responsibilities of the school governing board and the ESP, including all services to be provided under the contract;					
ii. The performance measures, consequences, and mechanisms by which the school governing board will hold the ESP accountable for performance, aligned with the performance measures in the charter agreement;					
iii. All compensation to be paid to the ESP including all fees, bonuses, and what such compensation includes or requires;					
iv. Terms of any facility agreement that may be part of the relationship;					
v. Financial reporting requirements and provisions for the school governing board's financial oversight;					
vi. 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;					
vii. 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;					
viii. Provisions for contract termination; and					
ix. 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					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					



Standard 4a - Performance Evaluation and Compliance Monitoring					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Implements a comprehensive performance accountability and compliance monitoring system that is defined by the charter agreement and provides the information necessary to make rigorous and standards-based renewal, revocation, and intervention decisions.					
ii. Defines and communicates to schools the process, methods, and timing of gathering and reporting school performance and compliance data.					
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.					
iv. Provides clear technical guidance to schools as needed to ensure timely compliance with applicable rules and regulations.					
v. Visits each school as appropriate and necessary 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.					
vi. 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.					
vii. Requires and reviews annual financial audits of schools, conducted by a qualified independent auditor.					
viii. Communicates regularly with schools as needed, including both the school leaders and governing boards, and provides timely notice of contract violations or performance deficiencies.					
ix. Provides an annual written report to each school, summarizing its performance and compliance to date and identifying areas of strength and areas needing improvement.					
x. Articulates and enforces stated consequences for failing to meet performance expectations or compliance requirements.					

Standard Rating

Explanation (limited to 500 words):

Standard 4b - Respecting School Autonomy					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Respects the school's authority over its day-to-day operations.					
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.					
iii. Periodically 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.					
iv. Refrains from directing or participating in educational decisions or choices that are appropriately within a school's purview under the charter law or contract.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 4c - Protecting Student Rights					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
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.					
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, and gifted students.					
iii. Ensures clarity in the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in serving students with disabilities.					
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.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 4d - School Intervention					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
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.					
ii. Gives schools clear, adequate, evidence-based, and timely notice of contract violations or performance deficiencies.					
iii. Allows schools reasonable time and opportunity for remediation in non-emergency situations.					
iv. Applies professional discretion when intervention is needed and considers context and a range of effective solutions.					
v. Where intervention is needed, 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.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 4e - Public Reporting					
Sub-standard	0	1	2	3	4
i. Produces an annual public report that provides clear, accurate performance data for the charter schools it oversees and reports on individual school and overall portfolio performance according to the framework set forth in the charter agreement in accordance with State law.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 5a - Revocation					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Revokes a charter during the charter term if there is clear evidence of extreme underperformance or violation of law or the public trust that imperils students or public funds, in accordance with state law.					
ii. Does not make revocation decisions on the basis of political or community pressure.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 5b - Renewal Decisions Based on Merit and Inclusive Evidence					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Bases the renewal process and renewal decisions on thorough analyses of a comprehensive body of objective evidence defined by the performance framework in the charter agreement.					
ii. 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.					
iii. Does not make renewal decisions on the basis of political or community pressure or solely on promises of future improvement.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 5c - Cumulative Report and Renewal Application					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Provides to each school, in advance of the renewal decision, 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. 					
ii. Requires any school seeking renewal to apply for it through a renewal application, which provides the school a 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.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 5d - Fair, Transparent Process					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Clearly communicates to schools the criteria for charter revocation, renewal, and non-renewal decisions that are consistent with the charter agreement, including any policy changes thereto.					
ii. Promptly notifies each school of its renewal (or, if applicable, revocation) decision, including written explanation of the reasons for the decision.					
iii. Promptly communicates renewal or revocation decisions to the school community and public within a time frame that allows parents and students to exercise choices for the upcoming school year.					
iv. Explains in writing any available rights of legal or administrative appeal through which a school may challenge the authorizer’s decision, including appeal to the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission.					
v. Regularly updates and publishes the process for renewal decision making, including guidance regarding required content and format for renewal applications.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 5e - Closure					
Sub-standard	0	1	2	3	4
i. In the event of a school closure, oversees and works 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.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Standard 6 - Advanced Standards (Optional)					
Sub-standards	0	1	2	3	4
i. Ensures authorizing is visible, adequately resourced, and the people responsible for day-to-day authorizing functions have input over decision making.					
ii. Articulates and implements an intentional strategic vision and plan for chartering, including clear priorities, goals, and time frames for achievement.					
iii. Evaluates its work regularly against its chartering mission and strategic plan goals, and implements plans for improvement when falling short of its mission and strategic plan.					
iv. Provides an annual public report on the authorizer’s program and performance in meeting its strategic plan goals.					
v. Broadly invites and solicits charter applications while publicizing the authorizer’s strategic vision and chartering priorities, without restricting or refusing to review applications that propose to fulfill other goals.					
Standard Rating					
Explanation (limited to 500 words):					

Appendix B: Selected Schools

About this Document: This document provides authorizers in an evaluation year their list of randomly selected schools by evaluation standard. Only documentation from the randomly selected schools will be considered for the evaluation standards listed below. If more than one (1) school is identified, the authorizer must submit documentation for both schools. If an authorizer submits documentation from a school that has not been selected for one of the standards identified on this form or the documents fall outside of the two-year review term, the authorizer will be unable to receive full points for the standard.

For the remaining evaluation standards not included below, authorizers may choose documentation from any authorized charter school in their portfolio. Refer to the [Evaluator Additional Guidance](#) for a complete list of potential documentation to submit as evidence.

Authorizer:		
<i>Evaluation Standard</i>	<i>Required Documentation</i>	<i>Selected School(s)</i>
2d, 2e, 2f	Charter Applications (2)	A.
		B.
3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e	Charter Agreements (2)	C.
		D.
4a, 4b, 4c, 4e	Operational School Documents: Pre-Five-Year Review (1) <i>Note: Authorizers may submit documentation from all schools for 4d – School Intervention.</i>	E.
4a, 4b, 4c, 4e	Operational School Documents: Post-Five-Year Review (1) <i>Note: Authorizers may submit documentation from all schools for 4d – School Intervention.</i>	F.
5a, 5d	Revocations (1)	G.
5b, 5c, 5d	Renewals (2)	H.
		I.
5e	Closure (1)	J.