



**HAMILTON  
COUNTY  
SCHOOLS**



# Annual Authorizer Report

Hamilton County Schools 2024-2025

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# Introduction

Hamilton County Schools has approved and authorizes nine charter schools in the district. Each school has a unique approach and strives to educate some of the district's most vulnerable students. The Charter School Coordinator works under the direction of the Office of Opportunity and Access, Department of Access and School Choice. Through open communication and transparency, there is a clear line from each charter to the support they need in the various district departments.

In 23-24

- One charter school Received Level 5 TVAAS scores for the 24-25 school year: CGLA.
- Ivy's Skillern Elementary expanded to serve students in grades K-3.
- ChattAcademy Community School opened their doors to students in grades 6-7.
- CCSE-H served students in grades 9-11.
- Chatt Prep served students in grades 6-12 and graduated their first graduating class.

## ***Office of Access and School Choice - Charter Schools Office Mission Statement***

*The HCS Charter Schools Office will practice rigorous charter school authorization, provide meaningful support, and protect school choice in order to uphold high academic standards, create fair and equitable opportunities, and improve outcomes for students and families in Hamilton County.*

## Section 2 Authorized School Data

### *Chatt Academy Community School*

Address:	901 Woodmore Lane Chattanooga, TN 37411
Telephone:	(423) 258 - 5595
School Leader(s):	Nolan McDaniel, Founder/CEO Juan Aguinaga, Principal
School Leader(s) Email Address:	<a href="mailto:nolan.mcdaniel@chattacademy.org">nolan.mcdaniel@chattacademy.org</a> <a href="mailto:juan.aguinaga@chattacademy.org">juan.aguinaga@chattacademy.org</a>
Operating Status:	(B) Open and operating First Enrollment Year 23-24, Currently Serving Grades 6-8
Contracted Services:	None

### *Chattanooga Charter School of Excellence Elementary*

Address:	2029 E. 23 <sup>rd</sup> Street Chattanooga, TN 37404
Telephone:	(423) 710-1121
Fax:	(423) 710-3180
School Leader(s):	Marcia Griffin, Founder/CEO Amy Childress, Principal Renee Krehl, Chief of Staff
School Leader(s) Email Address:	<a href="mailto:mgriffin@chattanooga charter.com">mgriffin@chattanooga charter.com</a> <a href="mailto:achildress@chattanooga charter.com">achildress@chattanooga charter.com</a> <a href="mailto:rkrehl@chattanooga charter.com">rkrehl@chattanooga charter.com</a>
Operating Status:	(B) Open and operating
Contracted Services:	None

### *Chattanooga Charter School of Excellence Middle*

Address:	1912 S. Willow Street Chattanooga, TN 37404
Telephone:	(423) 777-4603
Fax:	(423) 777-4075
School Leader(s):	Marcia Griffin, Founder/CEO Arianna Gladney, Principal Renee Krehl, Chief of Staff
School Leader(s) Email Address:	<a href="mailto:mgriffin@chattanooga charter.com">mgriffin@chattanooga charter.com</a> <a href="mailto:agladney@chattanooga charter.com">agladney@chattanooga charter.com</a> <a href="mailto:rkrehl@chattanooga charter.com">rkrehl@chattanooga charter.com</a>
Operating Status:	(B) Open and operating
Contracted Services:	None

### *Chattanooga Charter School of Excellence High*

Address:	201 E. 37 <sup>th</sup> Street Chattanooga, TN 37410
Telephone:	(423) 777-4603
Fax:	(423) 777-4075
School Leader(s):	Marcia Griffin, Founder/CEO Karen Hughes, Principal Rene Krehl, Chief of Staff
School Leader(s) Email Address:	<a href="mailto:mgriffin@chattanoogacharter.com">mgriffin@chattanoogacharter.com</a> <a href="mailto:khughes@chattanoogacharter.com">khughes@chattanoogacharter.com</a> <a href="mailto:rkrehl@chattanoogacharter.com">rkrehl@chattanoogacharter.com</a>
Operating Status:	(B) Open and operating First Enrollment Year 22-23, Currently Serving Grades 9-12
Contracted Services:	None

### *Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy*

Address:	1802 Bailey Avenue Chattanooga, TN 37404
Telephone:	(423) 702-7230
Fax:	(423) 386-3005
School Leader(s):	Dr. Elaine Swafford, Executive Director Ronnie Christian, Chief of Staff Sylvia Davis, Principal
School Leader(s) Email Address:	<a href="mailto:elaineswafford@cglonline.com">elaineswafford@cglonline.com</a> <a href="mailto:ronniechristian@cgl.com">ronniechristian@cgl.com</a> <a href="mailto:sylviadavis@cglonline.com">sylviadavis@cglonline.com</a>
Operating Status:	(B) Open and operating
Contracted Services:	None

### *Chattanooga Preparatory School*

Address:	1849 Union Ave Chattanooga, TN 37404
Telephone:	(423) 602-7737
Fax:	(423) 541-6003
School Leader(s):	Troy Kemp, Chief Executive Office Sam Thompson, Chief Operations Officer Ja'Keel Daniels, Principal
School Leader(s) Email Address:	<a href="mailto:troykemp@prepschools.org">troykemp@prepschools.org</a> <a href="mailto:samthompson@prepschools.org">samthompson@prepschools.org</a> <a href="mailto:jakeeldaniels@prepschools.org">jakeeldaniels@prepschools.org</a>
Operating Status:	(B) Open and operating
Contracted Services:	None

### *Ivy Academy*

Address:	8520 Dayton Pike Soddy Daisy, TN 37379
Telephone:	(423) 305-7494
School Leader(s):	Holly Slater, Executive Director Matt Raper, Principal
School Leader(s) Email Address:	<a href="mailto:hslater@ivyacademychattanooga.com">hslater@ivyacademychattanooga.com</a> <a href="mailto:mraper@ivyacademychattanooga.com">mraper@ivyacademychattanooga.com</a>
Operating Status:	(B) Open and operating
Contracted Services:	None

### *Montessori School at Highland Park*

Address:	700 S. Hawthorne Street Chattanooga, TN 37404
Telephone:	(423) 541-9822
School Leader(s):	Dr. Elaine Swafford, Executive Director Ronnie Christian, Chief of Staff Amanda Parker, Principal
School Leader(s) Email Address:	<a href="mailto:elaineswafford@cglonline.com">elaineswafford@cglonline.com</a> <a href="mailto:ronniechristian@cglonline.com">ronniechristian@cglonline.com</a> <a href="mailto:amandaparker@mehp.com">amandaparker@mehp.com</a>
Operating Status:	(B) Open and operating
Contracted Services:	None

### *Ivy Academy's Skillern Elementary*

Address:	P.O. Box 39 Soddy Daisy, TN 37384
Telephone:	(423) 654-7308
School Leader(s):	Angie Markum, Founder and CEO Ryan Dixon, Principal
School Leader(s) Email Address:	<a href="mailto:amarkum@skillernelementary.com">amarkum@skillernelementary.com</a> <a href="mailto:rdixon@skillernelementary.com">rdixon@skillernelementary.com</a>
Operating Status:	(B) Open and operating First Enrollment Year 22-23, Currently Serving Grades K-4
Contracted Services:	None



## Section 3 Authorized School Waivers

The following waivers were requested and approved as part of the application process and original charter agreement. All information below was copied directly from the submitted application including the replacement policy/practice and addresses how the waiver would increase student achievement.

### ChattAcademy Community School Waivers

The following waivers were approved on June 23, 2022, and were granted for the 10-year duration of the charter agreement.

T.C.A. Citation or State Board of Education Policy	Description of State/Rule/Policy	Proposed Replacement Rule, Policy, or Practice	How this waiver will increase student achievement.
T.C.A. § 49-3-306(a)	Licensed Personnel Salaries	CACS Board approves all salaries during annual budgeting process.	This will increase student achievement by annually ensuring that our payroll system reflects the purpose, mission, vision, and philosophy of CACS while consistently ensuring that all public dollars are used properly with all personnel being paid adequately and timely.
T.C.A. § 8-23-206(a)	Longevity Pay	CACS Board approves all salaries during annual budgeting process.	In order to retain effective talent, CACS teachers may be given incentive pay that will compensate them for years of consistent student performance, professional development, teacher-leadership service, not just years of service.
T.C.A. § 49-5-401	Teacher Assignments	CACS Board approves annual calendar and school schedules.	CACS may utilize an extended schedule that includes increased instructional and professional development hours. These work hours

			will inform teacher compensation.
T.C.A. § 49-6-304A (2)-D; SBE Rule 0520-01-03-.03 (4)	School Term Vacations and other Non-Instructional Days	CACS Board approves annual calendar and school schedules.	CACS may choose to operate with an extended school year, school day, and implement extra non-instructional days for professional development and data analysis days.
T.C.A. § 49-5-5002-5010, 49-5-5206-5209, 49-5-5301, 49-5-5304-5306, 49-5-5401, 49-5-5405, 49-5-5406, 49-5-5501, 49-5-5504-5506; SBE Rule 0520-02-02	Career Ladder	CACS Board approves all salaries during annual budgeting process.	There is currently no need or funding availability for career ladder initiatives.
T.C.A. § 49-5-5205; SBE Rule 0520-01-01-.01	General Requirements for Evaluation	CACS Board approves all salaries and compensation during annual process.	In order to ensure mission alignment and achievement of school goals, it is imperative that CACS can tailor hiring, pay, benefits, promotion, and evaluation systems. Guidelines and performance expectations and metrics will be outlined in annual contracts developed for CACS personnel.
SBE Rules 0520-02-03-01 through 0520-02-03-14	Educator Licensure	CACS Executive Director will ensure that all staff are qualified to succeed in their roles.	This waiver will provide CACS with the flexibility needed to properly staff the school, including the large number of bilingual EL certified teachers that will be required to fulfill our mission and model.
SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.03	Employment Standards	CACS Executive Director will ensure that all staff are qualified to success in their roles.	This waiver will provide CACS with the flexibility needed to properly staff the school, including the opportunity to hire a mental health counselor or certified social worker

			as a school counselor.
T.C.A. § 49-5-501-513	Tenure	CACS Executive Director and other school leaders oversee annual performance evaluations.	CACS is a results-driven organization. Therefore, all employees of ChattAcademy will be at-will employees.
SBE Rule 0520-01-02	Administrative Rules and Regulations	CACS will operate its school in accordance with all applicable laws and policies.	Greater autonomy at CACS over administrative practices will result in a minimized compliance burden that allows the school and its leaders to focus more time and resources on student growth and achievement. Hamilton County will hold CACS accountable for outcomes rather than processes to provide CACS the maximum flexibility to achieve its goals.
T.C.A. §49-5-101(a); SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.03 (6)	Licensed Principals	CACS leaders will participate in internal training and skills development.	CACS will internally train all school leaders in alignment with our unique mission and model. We will recruit the most qualified leaders from around the state, region, and country to fulfill our ambitious and innovative mission.
SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.04	Leave for Teachers	CACS will set its own leave policies in compliance with all state and federal laws, which will be approved by the CACS Board.	ChattAcademy leave policies will balance both the needs of teachers and those of students by minimizing disruptions to student learning.
SBE Rule 0520-01-03-.07 (2)	Library Information Center Personnel	CACS will provide students with access to a robust bilingual classroom library.	Students at CACS will have access to local public libraries and substantial classroom libraries to support our bilingual studies

			curriculum.
T.C.A. § 49-6-3004	School Year Commencement	CACS Board approves annual calendar and school schedules.	CACS may utilize an expanded school year calendar, which could result in an earlier start or later end date.
SBE 0520-01-04-.01	School Facilities	The CACS Board approves all facility contracts and leases.	ChattAcademy will have classrooms that are sufficient in number and space to meet the school's mission and vision. CACS facilities will meet all federal, state, and local requirements regarding planning of new buildings, renovations, and safety.
T.C.A. § 49-3-316	Local Fiscal Accounting	The CACS Board approves the budget through annual process.	It is critical that fiscal management systems reflect the school's mission and vision while ensuring that all public dollars will be used properly, that all non-waived regulations are met, and that all operations stand up to a financial audit.
T.C.A. § 49-6-4012(b)	Formulation and Administration of Behavior and Discipline Codes	The CACS Board approves the Student and Family Handbook and all discipline policies.	CACS believes it is imperative that school discipline practices establish a safe and supportive learning environment for all students in a manner that aligns with our mission and vision.
T.C.A. § 49-6-2206	Use of Unapproved Textbooks	The CACS Board will approve the use of all curricular materials.	The CACS curriculum and instructional approaches will always be grounded in our mission and vision. The uniqueness of that vision

			will require the use of both state-approved textbooks and other unapproved instructional materials.
T.C.A. § 49-3-311	Capital Outlay	The CACS Board approves all facility contracts and leases.	Preparation of a charter school facility poses a great challenge, provided that charter schools must finance their own facilities and do not have the power to raise taxes to find capital outlay. It is necessary that CACS gain freedom from non-health and safety standards for the school facility and have control of the facility vested in the CACS Board rather than the local board of education. This freedom allows the school to use facility resources most effectively and align all facility choices with our mission, vision, and goals.
T.C.A. § 49-3-359(a)	Instructional Materials and Supplies	The school will provide all classroom materials for students, including notebooks, folders, pencils, etc. The CACS Director of Operations will oversee school procurement of all supplies, furniture, and all other needs.	The CACS budget sufficiently meets the needs of classroom supplies. Teachers will also have the ability to request special supplies through centralized ordering and management by the Director of Operations. This will cut down on the need for teacher personal spending and reimbursement.
SBE 0520-01-03-.03(5)	Duty Free Lunch Period	The Executive Director will ensure proper lunch and planning time are built into staff schedules, though they may not	Adequate supervision during lunch is essential to creating and maintain and safe and supportive environment.

		align with student lunch times.	
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### CCSE - Elementary School Waivers

The following waiver was approved September 5, 2025, and was granted through May 2027.

T.C.A. Citation or State Board of Education Policy	Description of State/Rule/Policy	Mission and goals of the charter school as contained in the application files with the local board of education pursuant to § 49-13-107	Explanation of how the statute(s) and/or state board rule(s) inhibits or hinders the charter school's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission statement
T.C.A. § 49-5-101(a); SBE Rule 0520-1-2-.03(6)	License of Principals	CCSE's mission is dedicated to the ideas of individual creativity, excitement for learning, and motivation through rigorous instruction. We seek to uphold high standards of student achievement, accountability, personal responsibility, character development, and community involvement in order to cultivate long-term academic success. The goal is to provide a place where we partner with parents to build a better tomorrow for our scholars through opportunity, academic discipline, rigorous instruction, and personal excellence.	This statute inhibits our ability to identify the most appropriate candidates to assume leadership of the school. The school would like to have the ability to hire candidates who best align to the mission and vision and are best equipped to lead the implementation of the school's academic plan.

### CCSE - Middle School Waivers

The following waiver was approved September 5, 2025, and was granted through May 2030.

T.C.A. Citation or State Board of Education Policy	Description of State/Rule/Policy	Mission and goals of the charter school as contained in the	Explanation of how the statute(s) and/or state board rule(s) inhibits or hinders

		application files with the local board of education pursuant to § 49-13-107	the charter school's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission statement
T.C.A. § 49-5-101(a); SBE Rule 0520-1-2-.03(6)	License of Principals	CCSE's mission is dedicated to the ideas of individual creativity, excitement for learning, and motivation through rigorous instruction. We seek to uphold high standards of student achievement, accountability, personal responsibility, character development, and community involvement in order to cultivate long-term academic success. The goal is to provide a place where we partner with parents to build a better tomorrow for our scholars through opportunity, academic discipline, rigorous instruction, and personal excellence.	This statute inhibits our ability to identify the most appropriate candidates to assume leadership of the school. The school would like to have the ability to hire candidates who best align to the mission and vision and are best equipped to lead the implementation of the school's academic plan.

### CCSE - High School Waivers

The following waivers were approved April 15, 2021, and were granted for the 10-year duration of the charter agreement.

T.C.A. Citation or State Board of Education Policy	Description of State/Rule/Policy	Proposed Replacement Rule, Policy, or Practice	How this waiver will increase student achievement.
T.C.A. § 49-3-306(a); SBE 0520-1-2-.02	Licensed Personnel Salaries	Rather than follow a set timeline and structure for pay, we propose to pay our employees with adequate and commensurate salaries.	The ability to determine our pay structure will help us put the right people in the right roles and ensure that they are sufficiently compensated for their work in achieving our mission

			and vision, supporting our academic plan, and advancing student achievement.
T.C.A. § 49-3-311	Use of Capital Outlay	This statute could prevent us from the ability to use outlay for our facility. We will provide a safe facility for staff and students, as well as adhere to all local occupancy and construction codes as applicable for our facility.	To ensure that we deploy our facility resources in the most efficient and effective manner to support student learning, we need freedom around managing and making decisions about our outlay.
T.C.A. § 49-5-101(a); SBE Rule 0520-1-2-.03(6)	License of Principals	This statute inhibits our ability to identify the most appropriate candidates to assume leadership of the school; we propose having the ability to hire candidates that best align to our mission and vision and are best equipped to lead the implementation of our academic plan.	We are committed to hiring staff that fully meets all our hiring criteria, including alignment to our mission, vision, and academic plan. The candidates that we deem best to lead the school and drive student achievement may or may not hold licensure or fulfill only some State Board requirements.
T.C.A. § 49-5-501-515	Tenure	We will employ on an at-will basis.	Employing staff on an at-will basis will enable us to practice flexibility in hiring and retention policies, which will better ensure that all staff members are helping us achieve our mission, vision, and performance goals, as well as implementing our academic plan.
T.C.A. § 49-5-702-216; 49-5-806-811; SBE Rule 0520-1-2.04	Leave	To ensure that we implement our academic plan with fidelity, as well as establish and maintain our intended culture across the school, we plan	Consistency and continuity benefit student achievement - our leave policies will promote both and better ensure that students receive

		to proactively minimize the use of substitute teachers. Additionally, employment will be at-will. Accordingly, we are creating a leave policy that best addresses the needs of students and allows for the most effective implementation of our plan.	high-quality instruction every single day school is in session.
T.C.A. § 49-6-2206	Use of Unapproved Texts	To implement our academic plan with fidelity and to meet all of our students' needs, we propose to use both state-approved and other unapproved texts and instructional materials as needed.	To meet the diverse needs of our students, we will utilize culturally-relevant texts and resources that may not yet be approved by the state. Further, our academic plan calls for us to offer enriched elective offerings and implement 21st career clubs, which may entail using texts and resources that are not approved but will best serve our students and programming.
T.C.A. § 49-6-2004	Custody of School Property	We will operate our own facility and maintain a Governing Board separate from that of the county. As such, we need custody of our facility and property to implement our mission, vision, and academic plan.	We will be able to make strategic decisions that enable us to deploy our resources to most effectively to support our students, families, and staff by maintaining internal control.

### ChattPrep School Waivers

The following waiver was approved July 22, 2025, and was granted through June 30, 2026.

T.C.A. Citation or State Board of Education Policy	Description of State/Rule/Policy	Mission and goals of the charter school as contained in the	Explanation of how the statute(s) and/or state board rule(s) inhibits or hinders
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		application files with the local board of education pursuant to § 49-13-107	the charter school's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission statement
T.C.A. § 49-5-101(a);	License of Principals	<p>Mission – To engage young men in a rigorous yet supportive learning environment that nurtures resilience, promotes academic excellence, inspires leadership, and prepares critical thinkers.</p>	<p>The current licensure requirements set by the State Board of Education inhibit our LEA's ability to promptly place a highly qualified and mission-aligned leader in a critical school leadership role. We have identified a principal candidate who meets all licensure requirements in the state of New York and brings significant instructional experience. However, his Tennessee license hangs on the processing of his New York license. While we intend to pursue licensure reciprocity and he is scheduled to take the Leadership Praxis exam, the current rule delays our ability to formally employ him in the principal position. Additionally, the candidate has been a principal of multiple charter schools in the state of New York. Our principal will participate in internal training and skills development to best lead an all-boy school. Chattanooga Preparatory will internally train school leaders in alignment with our unique mission and approach and will continue to recruit the most qualified leaders to fulfill its mission.</p>

## Ivy Academy’s Skillern Elementary School

The following waivers were approved on June 23, 2022, and were granted for the 10-year duration of the charter agreement.

T.C.A. Citation	Description of Statute	Proposed replacement policy or practice	How this waiver will increase student achievement
T.C.A. 49-5-101(a)	Staffing requirements – licensed principal	Typically, charters recruit and interview all highly qualified candidates. It is not required that the school leader be licensed, just teachers, but the waiver must be asked for in the application.	We reserve the option of using non-principal-licensed personnel for administrative leadership at points during the school’s existence. However, we do and will always keep at least one licensed principal on staff, and we have a core of retired principals on as part-time staff to coach or mentor any administrator. This will increase student achievement in more than one way. 1) Unlicensed personnel are generally less expensive, which allows those gained dollars to be used for direct student services such as educational assistants, which data shows increases student achievement. 2) Incorporating the use of decades of experience from retired principals to compensate brings a wealth of know-how, best practices, and patience at a level that could probably not be achieved by one person.

T.C.A. 49-5-401	Hours and Benefits – Teacher Assignment	Charters sometimes utilize an extended schedule/calendar. Teachers usually receive additional compensation for additional hours.	In our 6th-12th school, by adding outdoor active learning to our daily educational routine we have been able to change the trajectory of students to increase their achievement as evidenced by parent testimonials and near 100% graduation rate for several years running. In order to properly train our teachers for outdoor learning and the Classical model’s curriculum, we need to have additional professional development which means they come more than the 201 teacher days. This increases student achievement by the fidelity to methods it produces.
T.C.A. 49-6-304A(2) D	Hours and Benefits – School Term Vacations and Other Non-Instructional Days	If a charter operates on an extended calendar or extended school day (i.e. afternoon tutoring, related arts after regular school hours, etc.), they will ask for this waiver.	We have written our calendar and daily schedule to be the same as the district’s, but we request this waiver in the event that there could be a temporary need for adjustment. This will increase student achievement in cases where there might be a global pandemic, and we need to extend the school day or year for additional instruction.
T.C.A. 49-6-3004	School Management/Operational Waivers – School Year Commencement	If a charter school uses extended calendar, they may start before the traditional schools or extend the school year after the traditional school year.	We begin our PD before the district. We request this waiver. Again, this would increase student achievement by teachers being more extensively prepared for our model.

T.C.A. 49-6-206	Curriculum – Use of Unapproved Textbooks	This ensures a charter school can utilize the texts they believe will help their students achieve under their system regardless of whether they are on the approved list. Most charters consider this essential to their operations.	We propose to use the collection of curriculum as described in section 1.3. We request this waiver. It will increase student achievement by enabling us to support our model with the appropriate curriculum.
T.C.A. 0520-1-3-05	Curriculum – Fine Arts	Unless it is a high school where fine arts credits are required, a charter school schedule may not have room for fine arts classes, or they may be offered in different ways. For instance, during Intercession, or extended summer classes.	We will always have fine arts, but we may not have a certified fine arts instructor the first few years of this school. We request the right to have a teacher of record who is not fine arts certified to direct students for their fine arts instruction until we can work up to this position. This will increase student achievement by ensuring that students always get the benefit of fine art instruction.
T.C.A. 49-3-306(a)	Compensation – Licensed personnel salaries	Most charter schools pay above the district average or have some sort of bonus plan where teachers can earn more during the year.	We use the district’s salary scale as a base, but pay signing bonuses, merit bonuses, and additional for high needs areas compensations in over and above the district’s scale. We request this waiver and the right to not follow the district’s salary scale. This will increase student achievement by making us competitive for high quality teachers in the hiring market.

T.C.A. 8-23-206(a)	Compensation – Longevity Pay	Again, most charters have different compensation pay than just step raises or years of service.	We frequently vary from the district regarding experience pay. We request the right to set our own compensation longevity pay. This will increase student achievement by making us competitive for high quality staff in the hiring market.
T.C.A. 49-5-5002-5010, 49-5-5206-5209, 49-5-5301, 49-5-5304, 49-5-5401, 49-5-5405, 49-5-5406, 49-5-5501, 49-5-5504-5506	Promotion and Evaluation – Career Ladder	Charters do not have to honor teachers who still collect the bonus unless they do not ask for this waiver.	We currently pay our career ladder employees. The district works with us for the state reimbursements. We want to continue with the same plan. Therefore, we do not ask for this waiver. We wish to continue to pay our employees their CL bonuses. This will increase student achievement by allowing us to retain our veteran teachers instead of them exiting to go where they could earn \$1,000+ per year.
T.C.A. 49-5-5205	Promotion and Evaluation – Third Year Apprentice Educators	Most charters outline performance expectations and guidelines in their offer letters or contracts, and these are usually one-year agreements. They are not bound by usual state guidelines unless they do not ask for a waiver.	We have annual contracts. We request this waiver to utilize one-year contracts even with practitioner and apprentice teachers. This will increase student achievement by allowing us to move along teachers who are not responding to coaching and get better teaching for our students in the classroom.

T.C.A. 49-5-408-409	Tenure – Evaluation Contracts and Employment Termination	Charters assess teachers based on performance and also their contracts. Tennessee is an “at-will” state and tenure does not apply unless this waiver is not asked for.	We do not have a tenure system and base contract renewal on performance. We request this waiver. This will increase student performance by allowing us to focus on students, instead of a staff member who has not responded to coaching.
T.C.A. 49-5-501-513	Tenure – Tenure	Again, employment at a charter school is “at-will.” Tenure does not apply unless the waiver is not asked for. This enhances the ability of a charter school to attract and retain highly qualified staff.	We request this waiver since we do not honor tenure. This will increase student performance by allowing us to focus on students instead of a staff member who has not responded to coaching.
T.C.A. 49-3-316	School Management/Operational Waivers – Local Fiscal Accounting	Charter schools are required to set up accounting according to state law, but not required to use the same accounts or ways that a school system uses. They are also required to have an outside audit, which traditional LEA’s are not.	We operate exactly according to the TCA, so we <b><u>do not need this waiver.</u></b>
T.C.A. 49-6-4012(b)	School Management/Operational Waivers – Formulation and Administration of Behavior and Discipline Codes	Charter schools must have a comprehensive behavior and discipline code, but it does not have to mirror the LEA.	We request this waiver. We use our district’s discipline code; however, in the past, we have gone above and beyond what is defined by the district in order to academically and behaviorally service some

			of our students in need of behavior modification. We are small and can seek out personalized options more so than a district with 40,000 students. This will increase student achievement by increasing the likelihood of their success.
T.C.A. 49-3-311	Capital Outlay	This gives charter schools control of non-health and safety standards for school sites and allows the charter governing board rather than the LEA governing board to make decisions on capital expenditures.	We request this waiver. Our financial policies and procedures define our board as the authority for capital expenditures. This will increase student achievement by keeping the decision makers closer to the need, which will hopefully mean that they understand the need more than a board that is distanced.

<b>State Board of Education Rule or Policy</b>	<b>Description of Rule or Policy</b>	<b>Proposed Replacement Rule, Policy, or Practice</b>	<b>Ivy Academy's Skillern Specific Notes</b>
SBR 0520-1-3-07(2)	Staffing Requirements- Library Information Center Personnel	Charters typically do not have traditional libraries or media centers but use public libraries for their needs.	We request this waiver. Our students will initially have access to our 6th - 12th library which has an extensive children's reader section. However, we will not have a licensed librarian to staff that library. This will increase student achievement by enabling students to still utilize a library, but not having to commit funds towards a librarian.

SBR 0520-1-3-05	Curriculum – Health, Physical, and Wellness Education	Many times, charters do not use standard health and wellness curriculum, and may have a staff member such as the Principal or Dean oversee the wellness and health curriculum.	We request this waiver. We utilize community helpers for a portion of our health and wellness curriculum. This increases student achievement by increasing student engagement with community helpers.
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## Section 4 Portfolio

### *Academic Performance & School Culture*

Using the scoring rubric from the Tennessee Charter School Performance Framework, the school scores in academic performance are in the table below. The table demonstrates comparison with the district.

Following the adopted HCS Framework for Evaluation, the following data is ranked with the scoring scale:

1. Falls Far Below Standard
2. Does Not Meet Standard
3. Meets Standard
4. Exceeds Standards

### *Student Achievement*

School	English	Math	Science	School-Wide TVAAS	Chronic Absenteeism	State Report Card Grade
ChattAcademy Community School	2	1	1	2	1	D
CCSE Elem K-5	1	1	1	3	1	D
CCSE Middle 6-8	1	1	1	2	1	D
CCSE High 9-11	1	1	1	1	1	F
CGLA 6-12	2	3	1	4	4	B

<b>Chatt Prep 6-12</b>	2	1	1	1	4	D
<b>Ivy Academy 6-12</b>	3	2	2	1	2	C
<b>Ivy Academy's Skillern Elementary K-3</b>	4	3	3	Not Eligible	3	Not Eligible
<b>Montessori Elementary at Highland Park PreK-5</b>	2	1	1	2	3	D
<b>HCS District All Students</b>	3	3	2	3	3	

## Comparative Performance

School	English	Math	Science	Social Studies
<b>ChattAcademy Community School</b>	20.0%	15.4%	25.3%	16.5%
Score	1	1	1	1
<b>CCSE Elem</b>	13.0%	10.2%	15.8%	
Score	1	1	1	
<b>CCSE Middle</b>	8.4%	14.6%	18.1%	22.1%
Score	1	1	1	1
<b>CCSE High</b>	16.7%	3.8%	12.5%	4.0%
Score	1	1	1	1
<b>CGLA</b>	31.9%	40.6%	37.1%	41.9%
Score	2	3	2	2
<b>Chatt Prep</b>	21.3%	19.3%	27.4%	38.0%
Score	1	1	1	2
<b>Ivy Academy</b>	35.0%	34.3%	44.7%	44.1%
Score	3	3	3	3
<b>Ivy Academy's Skillern Elementary</b>	52.4%	43.9%	52.4%	
Score	4	4	4	
<b>Montessori Elementary at Highland Park</b>	20.8%	18.5%	25.6%	
Score	1	1	1	
<b>HCS District All Students</b>	39.3%	37.5%	45.3%	47.7%

Color Key: Yellow – Falls Far Below Standard

Orange – Does Not Meet Standard

Blue – Meets Standard

Green – Exceeds Standard

## School Culture

School	Suspension Rate	Student Attrition Rate	Teacher Retention Rate	Attendance Rate
<b>ChattAcademy</b>	18.9%	3.2%	100%	90.6%
<b>Score</b>	2	4	4	2
<b>CCSE Elem</b>	17%	3.6%	90.0%	92.9%
<b>Score</b>	1	4	4	2
<b>CCSE Middle</b>	44%	8.0%	81%	92.3%
<b>Score</b>	1	4	3	2
<b>CCSE High</b>	39%	4.4%	84%	89.3%
<b>Score</b>	1	4	3	1
<b>CGLA</b>	0%	2.0%	89%	95.9%
<b>Score</b>	4	4	4	3
<b>Chatt Prep</b>	19.1%	3.0%	54.5%	96.7%
<b>Score</b>	1	4	1	3
<b>Ivy Academy</b>	32.4%	3.7%	93%	92.8%
<b>Score</b>	1	4	4	2
<b>Ivy Academy's Skillern Elementary</b>	5.3%	2.5%	95%	94.6%
<b>Score</b>	1	4	4	3
<b>Montessori Elementary</b>	0%	4.6%	78%	95.8%
<b>Score</b>	4	4	3	3

\*CGLA and Montessori both utilize an evening school where students are remanded for serious disciplinary infractions in lieu of Out of School Suspension.

### Summary of Results

Using the same framework scale from page 6, the green areas (4) indicate where the charter school is doing an outstanding job of creating a culture that keeps teachers and students returning, exceeding standards set by the state and in the HCS Framework. Blue areas (3) meet the set standard, while orange (2) indicates the score falls below the standard. A yellow score (1) indicates an area that needs improvement as the school falls far below the standard in that area. The table does not compare scores to the Hamilton County School District.

## *Finance and Operations Performance*

### ChattAcademy Community School

#### Financial Performance

Information for the financial standing is drawn from the annual audit results submitted by the charter school at the completion of the fiscal year.

<b>Near Term Indicators</b>	<b>Performance</b>
a. Current Ratio	Meets Standard
b. Unrestricted Days Cash	Meets Standard
c. Enrollment Variance	Falls Far Below Standard
d. Default	Meets Standard
<b>Sustainability Indicators</b>	<b>Performance</b>
a. Total Margin	Meets Standard
b. Debt to Asset Ratio	Meets Standard
c. Cash Flow	Meets Standard
d. Debt to Service Coverage Ratio	Meets Standard
e. Unrestricted Net Position	Meets Standard

#### Organizational Performance

Through site visits and interviews with students, staff, parents, and board members, the health of the operational aspects of the charter school can be ascertained. These visits along with performance oversight are considered below.

<b>Education Program</b>	
a. Charter Terms	Meets Standard
b. Compliance with Education Requirements	Meets Standard
c. Students with Disabilities Rights	Does Not Meet Standard
d. English Language Learner Rights	Meets Standard
<b>Financial Management/Oversight</b>	
a. Financial Reporting and Compliance Reporting	Meets Standard
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	Meets Standard
<b>Governance and Reporting</b>	
a. Governance Requirements	Meets Standard
b. Accountability of Management	Meets Standard
c. Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard
<b>Students and Employees</b>	
a. Rights of Students	Meets Standard
b. Attendance	Meets Standard
c. Credentialing	Meets Standard

d. Employment Rights	Meets Standard
e. Background Checks	Meets Standard
<b>School Environment</b>	
a. Facilities and Transportation	Meets Standard
b. Health and Safety	Meets Standard
c. Information Handling	Meets Standard
<b>Additional Obligations</b>	
a. All Other Obligations	Meets Standard

## Chattanooga Charter School of Excellence Elementary

### Financial Performance

Information for the financial standing is drawn from the annual audit results submitted by the charter school at the completion of the fiscal year.

<b>Near Term Indicators</b>	<b>Performance</b>
a. Current Ratio	Meets Standard
b. Unrestricted Days Cash	Meets Standard
c. Enrollment Variance	Meets Standard
d. Default	Meets Standard
<b>Sustainability Indicators</b>	<b>Performance</b>
a. Total Margin	Meets Standard
b. Debt to Asset Ratio	Meets Standard
c. Cash Flow	Meets Standard
d. Debt to Service Coverage Ratio	Meets Standard
e. Unrestricted Net Position	Meets Standard

### Organizational Performance

Through site visits and interviews with students, staff, parents, and board members, the health of the operational aspects of the charter school can be ascertained. These visits along with performance oversight are considered below.

<b>Education Program</b>	
a. Charter Terms	Meets Standard
b. Compliance with Education Requirements	Meets Standard
c. Students with Disabilities Rights	Meets Standard
d. English Language Learner Rights	Meets Standard
<b>Financial Management/Oversight</b>	
a. Financial Reporting and Compliance Reporting	Meets Standard
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	Meets Standard
<b>Governance and Reporting</b>	
a. Governance Requirements	Falls Far Below Standard
b. Accountability of Management	Meets Standard
c. Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard
<b>Students and Employees</b>	
a. Rights of Students	Meets Standard
b. Attendance	Meets Standard
c. Credentialing	Meets Standard
d. Employment Rights	Meets Standard
e. Background Checks	Meets Standard

<b>School Environment</b>	
a. Facilities and Transportation	Meets Standard
b. Health and Safety	Meets Standard
c. Information Handling	Meets Standard
<b>Additional Obligations</b>	
a. All Other Obligations	Meets Standard

## Chattanooga Charter School of Excellence Middle

### Financial Performance

Information for the financial standing is drawn from the annual audit results submitted by the charter school at the completion of the fiscal year.

<b>Near Term Indicators</b>	<b>Performance</b>
a. Current Ratio	Meets Standard
b. Unrestricted Days Cash	Meets Standard
c. Enrollment Variance	Does Not Meet Standard
d. Default	Meets Standard
<b>Sustainability Indicators</b>	<b>Performance</b>
a. Total Margin	Meets Standard
b. Debt to Asset Ratio	Meets Standard
c. Cash Flow	Meets Standard
d. Debt to Service Coverage Ratio	Meets Standard
e. Unrestricted Net Position	Meets Standard

### Organizational Performance

Through site visits and interviews with students, staff, parents, and board members, the health of the operational aspects of the charter school can be ascertained. These visits along with performance oversight are considered below.

<b>Education Program</b>	
a. Charter Terms	Falls Far Below Standard
b. Compliance with Education Requirements	Meets Standard
c. Students with Disabilities Rights	Does Not Meet Standard
d. English Language Learner Rights	Meets Standard
<b>Financial Management/Oversight</b>	
a. Financial Reporting and Compliance Reporting	Meets Standard
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	Meets Standard
<b>Governance and Reporting</b>	
a. Governance Requirements	Falls Far Below Standard
b. Accountability of Management	Meets Standard
c. Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard
<b>Students and Employees</b>	
a. Rights of Students	Meets Standard
b. Attendance	Meets Standard
c. Credentialing	Meets Standard
d. Employment Rights	Meets Standard

e. Background Checks	Meets Standard
<b>School Environment</b>	
a. Facilities and Transportation	Meets Standard
b. Health and Safety	Meets Standard
c. Information Handling	Meets Standard
<b>Additional Obligations</b>	
a. All Other Obligations	Meets Standard

# Chattanooga Charter School of Excellence High

## Financial Performance

Information for the financial standing is drawn from the annual audit results submitted by the charter school at the completion of the fiscal year.

Near Term Indicators	Performance
a. Current Ratio	Does Not Meet Standard
b. Unrestricted Days Cash	Meets Standard
c. Enrollment Variance	Falls Far Below Standard
d. Default	Meets Standard
Sustainability Indicators	Performance
a. Total Margin	Does Not Meet Standard
b. Debt to Asset Ratio	Falls Far Below Standard
c. Cash Flow	Meets Standard
d. Debt to Service Coverage Ratio	Does Not Meet Standard
e. Unrestricted Net Position	Falls Far Below Standard

## Organizational Performance

Through site visits and interviews with students, staff, parents, and board members, the health of the operational aspects of the charter school can be ascertained. These visits along with performance oversight are considered below.

Education Program	
a. Charter Terms	Meets Standard
b. Compliance with Education Requirements	Meets Standard
c. Students with Disabilities Rights	Meets Standard
d. English Language Learner Rights	Meets Standard
Financial Management/Oversight	
a. Financial Reporting and Compliance Reporting	Meets Standard
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	Meets Standard
Governance and Reporting	
a. Governance Requirements	Falls Far Below Standard
b. Accountability of Management	Meets Standard
c. Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard
Students and Employees	
a. Rights of Students	Meets Standard
b. Attendance	Meets Standard
c. Credentialing	Meets Standard
d. Employment Rights	Meets Standard
e. Background Checks	Meets Standard

<b>School Environment</b>	
a. Facilities and Transportation	Meets Standard
b. Health and Safety	Meets Standard
c. Information Handling	Meets Standard
<b>Additional Obligations</b>	
a. All Other Obligations	Meets Standard

# Chattanooga Girls' Leadership Academy

## Financial Performance

Information for the financial standing is drawn from the annual audit results submitted by the charter school at the completion of the fiscal year.

Near Term Indicators	Performance
a. Current Ratio	Meets Standard
b. Unrestricted Days Cash	Meets Standard
c. Enrollment Variance	Meets Standard
d. Default	Meets Standard
Sustainability Indicators	Performance
a. Total Margin	Meets Standard
b. Debt to Asset Ratio	Meets Standard
c. Cash Flow	Meets Standard
d. Debt to Service Coverage Ratio	Meets Standard
e. Unrestricted Net Position	Meets Standard

## Organizational Performance

Through site visits and interviews with students, staff, parents, and board members, the health of the operational aspects of the charter school can be ascertained. These visits along with performance oversight are considered below.

Education Program	
a. Charter Terms	Meets Standard
b. Compliance with Education Requirements	Meets Standard
c. Students with Disabilities Rights	Meets Standard
d. English Language Learner Rights	Meets Standard
Financial Management/Oversight	
a. Financial Reporting and Compliance Reporting	Meets Standard
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	Meets Standard
Governance and Reporting	
a. Governance Requirements	Meets Standard
b. Accountability of Management	Meets Standard
c. Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard
Students and Employees	
a. Rights of Students	Meets Standard
b. Attendance	Meets Standard
c. Credentialing	Meets Standard
d. Employment Rights	Meets Standard

e. Background Checks	Meets Standard
<b>School Environment</b>	
a. Facilities and Transportation	Meets Standard
b. Health and Safety	Meets Standard
c. Information Handling	Meets Standard
<b>Additional Obligations</b>	
a. All Other Obligations	Meets Standard

# Chattanooga Preparatory School

## Financial Performance

Information for the financial standing is drawn from the annual audit results submitted by the charter school at the completion of the fiscal year.

Near Term Indicators	Performance
a. Current Ratio	Meets Standard
b. Unrestricted Days Cash	Meets Standard
c. Enrollment Variance	Does Not Meet Standard
d. Default	Meets Standard
Sustainability Indicators	Performance
a. Total Margin	Meets Standard
b. Debt to Asset Ratio	Meets Standard
c. Cash Flow	Meets Standard
d. Debt to Service Coverage Ratio	Does Not Meet Standard
e. Unrestricted Net Position	Falls Far Below Standard

## Organizational Performance

Through site visits and interviews with students, staff, parents, and board members, the health of the operational aspects of the charter school can be ascertained. These visits along with performance oversight are considered below.

Education Program	
a. Charter Terms	Meets Standard
b. Compliance with Education Requirements	Does Not Meet Standard
c. Students with Disabilities Rights	Does Not Meet Standard
d. English Language Learner Rights	Meets Standard
Financial Management/Oversight	
a. Financial Reporting and Compliance Reporting	Meets Standard
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	Meets Standard
Governance and Reporting	
a. Governance Requirements	Meets Standard
b. Accountability of Management	Meets Standard
c. Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard
Students and Employees	
a. Rights of Students	Meets Standard
b. Attendance	Meets Standard
c. Credentialing	Does Not Meet Standard

d. Employment Rights	Meets Standard
e. Background Checks	Does Not Meet Standard
<b>School Environment</b>	
a. Facilities and Transportation	Meets Standard
b. Health and Safety	Meets Standard
c. Information Handling	Meets Standard
<b>Additional Obligations</b>	
a. All Other Obligations	Meets Standard

# Ivy Academy

## Financial Performance

Information for the financial standing is drawn from the annual audit results submitted by the charter school at the completion of the fiscal year.

Near Term Indicators	Performance
a. Current Ratio	Falls Far Below Standard
b. Unrestricted Days Cash	Does Not Meet Standard
c. Enrollment Variance	Meets Standard
d. Default	Meets Standard
Sustainability Indicators	Performance
a. Total Margin	Does Not Meet Standard
b. Debt to Asset Ratio	Meets Standard
c. Cash Flow	Falls Far Below Standard
d. Debt to Service Coverage Ratio	Does Not Meet Standard
e. Unrestricted Net Position	Falls Far Below Standard

## Organizational Performance

Through site visits and interviews with students, staff, parents, and board members, the health of the operational aspects of the charter school can be ascertained. These visits along with performance oversight are considered below.

Education Program	
a. Charter Terms	Meets Standard
b. Compliance with Education Requirements	Meets Standard
c. Students with Disabilities Rights	Meets Standard
d. English Language Learner Rights	Meets Standard
Financial Management/Oversight	
a. Financial Reporting and Compliance Reporting	Meets Standard
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	Meets Standard
Governance and Reporting	
a. Governance Requirements	Meets Standard
b. Accountability of Management	Meets Standard
c. Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard
Students and Employees	
a. Rights of Students	Meets Standard
b. Attendance	Meets Standard
c. Credentialing	Meets Standard
d. Employment Rights	Meets Standard
e. Background Checks	Meets Standard
School Environment	

a. Facilities and Transportation	Meets Standard
b. Health and Safety	Meets Standard
c. Information Handling	Meets Standard
<b>Additional Obligations</b>	
a. All Other Obligations	Meets Standard

# Ivy Academy’s Skillern Elementary School

## Financial Performance

Information for the financial standing is drawn from the annual audit results submitted by the charter school at the completion of the fiscal year.

Near Term Indicators	Performance
a. Current Ratio	Falls Far Below Standard
b. Unrestricted Days Cash	Does Not Meet Standard
c. Enrollment Variance	Meets Standard
d. Default	Meets Standard
Sustainability Indicators	
a. Total Margin	Meets Standard
b. Debt to Asset Ratio	Meets Standard
c. Cash Flow	Meets Standard
d. Debt to Service Coverage Ratio	Does Not Meet Standard
e. Unrestricted Net Position	Falls Far Below Standard

## Organizational Performance

Through site visits and interviews with students, staff, parents, and board members, the health of the operational aspects of the charter school can be ascertained. These visits along with performance oversight are considered below.

Education Program	
a. Charter Terms	Meets Standard
b. Compliance with Education Requirements	Meets Standard
c. Students with Disabilities Rights	Meets Standard
d. English Language Learner Rights	Meets Standard
Financial Management/Oversight	
a. Financial Reporting and Compliance Reporting	Meets Standard
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	Meets Standard
Governance and Reporting	
a. Governance Requirements	Meets Standard
b. Accountability of Management	Meets Standard
c. Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard
Students and Employees	
a. Rights of Students	Meets Standard
b. Attendance	Meets Standard
c. Credentialing	Meets Standard
d. Employment Rights	Meets Standard
e. Background Checks	Meets Standard
School Environment	
a. Facilities and Transportation	Meets Standard

b. Health and Safety	Meets Standard
c. Information Handling	Meets Standard
<b>Additional Obligations</b>	
a. All Other Obligations	Meets Standard

# Montessori School at Highland Park

## Financial Performance

Information for the financial standing is drawn from the annual audit results submitted by the charter school at the completion of the fiscal year.

Near Term Indicators	Performance
a. Current Ratio	Meets Standard
b. Unrestricted Days Cash	Meets Standard
c. Enrollment Variance	Does Not Meet Standard
d. Default	Meets Standard
Sustainability Indicators	Performance
a. Total Margin	Meets Standard
b. Debt to Asset Ratio	Meets Standard
c. Cash Flow	Meets Standard
d. Debt to Service Coverage Ratio	Meets Standard
e. Unrestricted Net Position	Meets Standard

## Organizational Performance

Through site visits and interviews with students, staff, parents, and board members, the health of the operational aspects of the charter school can be ascertained. These visits along with performance oversight are considered below.

Education Program	
a. Charter Terms	Meets Standard
b. Compliance with Education Requirements	Meets Standard
c. Students with Disabilities Rights	Meets Standard
d. English Language Learner Rights	Meets Standard
Financial Management/Oversight	
a. Financial Reporting and Compliance Reporting	Meets Standard
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	Meets Standard
Governance and Reporting	
a. Governance Requirements	Meets Standard
b. Accountability of Management	Meets Standard
c. Reporting Requirements	Meets Standard
Students and Employees	
a. Rights of Students	Meets Standard
b. Attendance	Meets Standard
c. Credentialing	Meets Standard
d. Employment Rights	Meets Standard
e. Background Checks	Meets Standard

<b>School Environment</b>	
a. Facilities and Transportation	Meets Standard
b. Health and Safety	Meets Standard
c. Information Handling	Meets Standard
<b>Additional Obligations</b>	
a. All Other Obligations	Meets Standard

## Section 5 Performance

The mission of the Charter Schools Office within the Hamilton County Schools Department of Access and School Choice is to practice rigorous charter school authorization, provide meaningful support, and protect school choice in order to uphold high academic standards, create fair and equitable opportunities, and improve outcomes for students and families in Hamilton County.

As Hamilton County Schools continues to grow and mature as a charter school authorizer in Tennessee, the district remains committed to continuously strengthening its authorizing practices in alignment with this mission and the State Board of Education's Quality Charter Authorizing Standards.

HCS currently authorizes nine charter schools and values these schools as essential partners in expanding high-quality school choice for families. While the district remains committed to honoring charter school autonomy, it also recognizes that consistent oversight and evaluation are critical to ensuring school quality, compliance, and continuous improvement. Effective oversight provides the district with a deeper understanding of each school's academic, operational, and organizational health; informs decision-making related to support, renewal, and intervention; and promotes transparency for all stakeholders.

Following the 2023 Authorizer Evaluation and 2024 Authorizer Self Evaluation, HCS identified opportunities to strengthen its monitoring practices. In response, the district established a targeted goal aligned to Quality Authorizing Standard 4, with particular focus on subpart 4.1.e: *conducting at least one formal on-site review annually for each charter school, using the evidence collected to inform the school's annual evaluation, and providing schools with a written summary of findings.*

To strengthen this process, the Charter Schools Office first sought feedback from charter school leaders regarding existing monitoring practices. This feedback revealed that while written feedback was provided, it was sometimes unclear or misinterpreted and not always aligned to individual school priorities or action plans. In response, HCS implemented a procedural adjustment to increase clarity and collaboration during site visits without increasing the burden on schools. Principals and relevant school leaders were invited to participate in classroom observations, allowing for real-time dialogue, immediate clarification, and stronger alignment between observed practices, school goals, and subsequent written feedback.

To further reduce burden while capturing meaningful evidence across the school year, HCS conducted two half-day formal site visits annually for each charter school. Both visits included classroom observations, while stakeholder interviews were strategically sequenced. This site visit structure and evidence-collection process is applied consistently across all schools in the district's charter portfolio. During the fall visit, interviews were conducted with students and teachers, allowing school leadership to act on feedback within the same academic year. During the spring visit, interviews were conducted with parents, principals, CEOs, and governing board members. These conversations focused on how feedback from the fall visit informed decision-making and allowed school leaders to reflect on strengths, address areas of need, and begin planning for the upcoming school year, including staffing and budget considerations.

HCS also intentionally included district subject matter experts during site visits to support both compliance monitoring and high-quality feedback. Representatives from Exceptional Education and ENL conducted targeted file reviews, supported compliance checks, and collaborated with school leaders on scheduling, funding, and

required training. This approach ensured accuracy while minimizing instructional disruption. In response to charter leader feedback, the district also included the transportation director during spring visits to address operational needs more effectively.

Following each site visit cycle, the Charter Schools Office provided each charter school with a written report summarizing site visit findings. These reports highlighted strengths and areas for improvement and were aligned to the district's annual performance framework, which includes Academics, Operations, and Climate and Culture. The feedback respected charter autonomy while clearly identifying considerations and next steps. Evidence collected through site visits informs each school's annual evaluation and also supports renewal considerations, targeted support, and, when necessary, intervention decisions. This process further supports transparent and accurate public reporting of charter school performance.

This written communication resulted in increased collaboration between charter schools, the Charter Schools Office, and other district departments, as well as improved communication with charter school governing boards. These conversations helped clarify expectations, address misconceptions, and provide charter leaders with more actionable data to support planning and continuous improvement.

As HCS moves forward, the district remains committed to high-quality authorizing, transparent oversight, and continuous improvement. Through refinement of its site visit and evaluation processes, HCS has strengthened communication, deepened alignment to the performance framework, and increased charter leader understanding of evaluation practices. The district will continue to seek charter school feedback and refine evidence-collection practices to ensure annual evaluations are fair, informative, and aligned to the Quality Charter Authorizing Standards. These efforts will ultimately increase transparency among all stakeholders and strengthen charter schools' ability to provide high-quality educational options for the students and families of Hamilton County.