



Rutherford County Schools

CHARTER SCHOOLS AUTHORIZER ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

Choice and Charter Schools Coordinator

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RUTHERFORD COUNTY CHARTER SCHOOLS - ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS

MISSION AND VISION

The mission for authorization of charter schools in Rutherford County is to offer innovative, high-quality, and diverse school choice options that meet the needs of a rapidly growing district and advance academic achievement for all learners.

Our **mission** in Rutherford County Schools is investing in every student every day.

Our **vision** in Rutherford County Schools is to have a collaborative culture, successful students, empowered educators, and proactive planning. We are certain that all district-authorized charter schools, as well as our traditional schools, are focused on every student reaching their full potential.

Section 2

Authorized School Data

Rutherford County has 3 approved Charter Schools

Opened and Operating since 2024-2025 School Year

-American Classical Academy Rutherford

-Springs Public School Tennessee-Empower Academy

Approved in 2025 but not yet opened -Opening fall of 2026

-Novus Smart Academy





AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY RUTHERFORD

American Classical Academy Rutherford (ACAR) provides a tuition-free, classical liberal arts education to students in grades K-6 growing to a K-12, and serving the residents of Rutherford County. Our [mission](#) is to train the minds and develop character in students through a content-rich Classical Education in the liberal arts and sciences utilizing instruction in the principles of moral practices and civic virtues. Rooted in centuries of tradition and dating back to the classical civilization of Greece and Rome, our vision is to develop students who think deeply, act compassionately, ask questions, and engage in thoughtful discourse.

Highlights from the inaugural 2024-2025 school year include multiple outreach opportunities to build strong bonds with families and students and set the standards for year one. Based on initial academic performance reports, ACAR has documented its baseline of year one performance and has strived to make gains in student achievement through its high-performing Hillsdale Classical Education Model. Educational Program Highlights:

- Rigorous Classical Curriculum: Focus on literature, philosophy, and Socratic dialogue to enhance critical thinking.
- Differentiated Instruction: Small group instruction and personalized learning plans.
- Strong Parental Involvement: Family workshops and engagement programs to reinforce learning.

Address	2 Ingram Blvd, LaVergne, TN 37086
Telephone number/email	(615) 675-0498/ https://rutherfordclassical.org/
Head of School	Phil Schwenk pschwenk@rutherfordclassical.org
Operating Status	Opened and Operating beginning in 2024-25



Site Mission & Vision

Our **mission** here at the Empower Academy is to develop motivated and self-aware learners through personalized instruction.

Our **vision** is to encourage the curiosity that is inherent in every student. Within a safe learning environment, students build character and interpersonal skills through group and individual learning objectives. A partnership is developed between the student, the teacher, and the parents to build a foundation for student success.

We value:

- **Parent choice and involvement**
- **Using the community as the classroom**
- **Fostering a child's innate creativity**
- **Collaborating to achieve goals**
- **Building relationships**
- **Personalized Learning**

As a charter school, we are part of the solution to a choice education system. We are dedicated to ensuring that we leave no student behind!

Address	198 Culbertson St. Smyrna, TN 37128
Telephone number/email	(615) 237-7170/ springspstn.org
Head of School	Shane Wickwire shane.wickwire@springspstn.org
Operating Status	Open and Operating beginning in 2024-25



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.



The following waivers were approved on January 23, 2024, and were granted for the 10-year duration of the charter agreement.

T.C.A. Citation or State BoE Rule	Description of Statute, Policy or Rule	Proposed replacement policy, practice, or rule	How will waiver of this statute or rule help student achievement?
T.C.A. § 49-3-306(a); SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.02	Licensed Personnel Salaries	American Classical Education (ACAR) approves salaries during the annual budgeting process. ACAR's payroll system will reflect appropriate use of public funds.	Compensation will reflect the ACAR model approved pay scale which will help to retain high-quality teachers.
T.C.A. § 8-23-206(a)	Longevity Pay	ACAR approves salaries during the annual budgeting process. ACAR's payroll system will reflect appropriate use of public funds. Compensation will reflect the ACAR model approved pay scale.	Teachers may be provided with additional compensation for performance, which will help to retain high-quality teachers.
T.C.A. § 49-5-5002-50 10, 49-5-5206-52 09, 49-5-5301, 49-5-5304-53 06, 49-5-5401, 49-5-5405, 49-5-5406, 49-5-5501, 49-5-5504-55 06; SBE Rule 0520-02-02	Career Ladder	Career Ladder	No funding is currently available for career ladder initiatives.
T.C.A. § 49-5-5205; SBE Rule 0520-01-01-.01	General Requirements for Evaluation	ACAR approves salaries and compensation plans during the annual budgeting process.	The classical model is unique and ACAR must have the ability to design hiring, pay, benefits, promotion and evaluation systems that are aligned with the school's mission and philosophy to deliver a high-performing Classical Education model.

T.C.A. § 49-5-408-409; SBE Rule 0520-02-02-(2)	Evaluation Contracts and Termination of Contracts	ACAR oversees performance evaluations and performance management.	It is important that ACAR can design its hiring process, pay, benefits, promotion and that such are aligned with the model's mission philosophy. Employees who attain the required levels of performance, as outlined in their performance management goals, will be offered a renewal contract
T.C.A. § 49-5-501-513	Tenure	ACAR oversees performance evaluations and performance management of all its employees.	ACAR employees are evaluated annually and will be at-will employees. Flexibility and high standards for teaching staff facilitate strong student outcomes
SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.03	Employment Standards	ACAR will ensure that all school employees are qualified for their roles through its hiring and onboarding process.	ACAR desires the flexibility needed to properly staff the school with the most qualified candidates to provide an effective Classical Education for its students.
T.C.A. § 49-5-101(a); SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.03 (6)	Licensed Principals	ACAR will ensure that school leaders are qualified for their roles through its hiring, leadership training, and onboarding process.	ACAR will recruit the most qualified principal experienced in Classical Education, regardless of administrative licensure status, to fulfill its mission.
SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.04	Leave for Teachers	ACAR will adopt its own personnel policies including leave in compliance with all state and federal laws and approved by the Board.	ACAR leave policies will be compliant with laws, meet the needs of teachers and minimize disruptions to student learning.

SBE -01-03-.07	Library Information Center Personnel	ACAR will provide students with access to libraries and maintain library personnel.	A substantial library will be available to students as soon as practical. The school desires flexibility on implementation and staffing.
T.C.A. § 49-3-316	Local Fiscal Accounting	ACAR approves the budget through the annual budgeting process. ACAR will ensure that public dollars will be used properly, and financial processes and audits will comply with the requirements applicable to all Tennessee public charter schools.	The school's fiscal management systems will reflect the school's mission and philosophy.
T.C.A. § 49-6-4012(b)	Formulation and Administration of Behavior and Discipline Codes	ACAR reviews and approves the family handbooks and discipline policies annually to ensure compliance with applicable State and federal laws, including the protection of the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary matters.	It is important that the school's discipline practices ensure a safe and effective learning environment for all students, aligned with the Classical Education program.
T.C.A. § 49-6-2206	Use of Unapproved Textbooks	ACAR approves use of curricular materials as detailed in this application.	The ACAR curriculum and instructional approaches will be linked to the school's mission and philosophy. ACAR will use curricular materials as detailed in this application, aligned to the outcomes it seeks for its students.
T.C.A. § 49-3-311	Capital Outlay	ACAR contracts and leases its facilities.	Preparing a charter school facility is a challenge. It is important that ACAR has the ability to select a school site. Having the autonomy to use facility funding allows the resources to be used most effectively for the mission and philosophy of the school.
SBE Rule 0520-01-03-.05	Health, Physical and Wellness Education Curriculum	ACAR develops an annual calendar and school schedule including time for student health and physical activity. The principal will oversee these classes and work to ensure that the PE curriculum meets state content standards.	Students will be involved in physical education activities each week.
T.C.A. § 49-6-303; State Board School Counseling Model and Standards Policy 5.103	School Counseling	ACAR will have access to student services in all needed areas through contracted or hired services.	The school desires the flexibility to use a social worker in place of a counselor to best serve student needs.

***The following waivers were approved on January 25, 2024,
and were granted for the 10 -year duration of the charter agreement.***

T.C.A. Citation or State BoE Rule	Description of Statute, Policy or Rule	Proposed replacement policy, practice, or rule	How will waiver of this statute or rule help student achievement?
T.C.A. 49-5- 101(a)	Staffing Requirements – Licensed Principals	SPSTN strives to hire highly qualified leaders for all of our schools. We require that all of our Principals have a credential; however, since our leaders may come from out of state, it may take them time to obtain a Tennessee credential. We therefore would like to waive this requirement for those leaders while they obtain their license in the early years of joining a school.	Having a highly effective leader at our schools leads supports more highly effective teaching, which ultimately drives higher student achievement. Allowing our leaders in California the opportunity to work in Tennessee ensures that we have leaders who ingrained in the Springs culture and have experience with the Springs model, making it more likely they will be able to implement it with fidelity
T.C.A. 49-6- 2206	Curriculum – Use of Unapproved Textbooks	SPSTN will use both state-approved textbooks and other unapproved instructional materials.	To meet the needs of our personalized learning mission, it is essential that we tie our curriculum and instructional approaches to our individual school’s mission and goals.
SBR 0520-1-3-05	Curriculum – Health, Physical, and Wellness Education	The Principal will oversee these classes and work to ensure that the PE curriculum meets state content standards, despite the use of noncertified instructional personnel	Students will be involved in physical education activities each week.

SBR 0520-1-3-07(2)	Staffing Requirements – Library Information Center Personnel	A substantial library is available to students at the nearest public library. Once a school location is identified, families will be informed of their nearest local public library	SPSTN students will have continuous access to a substantial classroom library and the local branch of the public library.
T.C.A. 49-5- 501-513	Tenure – Tenure	As a charter school, SPSTN will be results-driven. Accordingly, SPSTN’s employees will be “at-will.”	A major element of student success will be SPSTN’s ability to attract and retain a staff that is committed to our vision.
T.C.A. 49-6- 4012(b)	School Management /Operational Waivers – Formulation and Administration of Behavior and Discipline Codes	A comprehensive discipline plan has been outlined in Section 1.10 and will ensure due process in instances of student discipline.	While parent(s)/guardian(s) and students will undergo due process, it is important that the discipline practices of SPSTN provide a safe and effective learning environment for all students.
T.C.A. 49-3- 316	School Management/ Operational Waivers – Local Fiscal Accounting	While we will ensure that public monies will be used properly, that all regulations will be met, and that our operations will stand up to a financial audit; it is critical to our program that our management systems reflect our individual school’s purpose and philosophy.	All school operations are aligned for the single purpose of developing students to positively impact the future while maintaining fiscal responsibility.
T.C.A. 49-3- 311	Capital Outlay	Because we finance our own buildings and do not have the power to raise taxes to fund capital outlay, it is critical that we gain freedom from non- health and safety standards for the school site and have control of the facility vested in our board, rather than the county board of education.	Having this freedom will allow us to use our school site resources most effectively and efficiently and align our building choices with our mission and goals.
T.C.A. § 49-6-303	School Counseling	SPSTN will have access to student services in all needed areas through contracted or hired services.	SPSTN desires the flexibility to use a social worker in place of a counselor to best serve the student’s needs.

SBE Rule 0520-01-02	Administrative Rules and Regulations	SPSTN will operate the school in accordance with applicable laws and policies	Having responsibility and autonomy of the school's administrative practices allow the school to focus more of its limited time and resources on increasing student achievement
SBE Rule 0520-01-02- .04	Leave for Teachers	SPSTN will adopt its own personnel policies including leave in compliance with all state and federal laws and approved by the board.	SPSTN leave policies will be compliant with laws, meet the needs of teachers and minimize disruptions to student learning.
SBE Rule 0520-01-02- .03	Employment Standards	SPSTN will ensure that all school employees are qualified for their roles through its hiring and onboarding process.	SPSTN desires the flexibility needed to properly staff the school with the most qualified candidates for the role.
T.C.A. § 49-5-5002- 5010, 49-5-5206- 5209, 49-5-5301, 49-5-5304-53 06, 49-5-5401, 49-5- 5405, 49-5-5406, 49-5-5501, 49-5- 5504-5506; SBE Rule 0520-02- 02	Career Ladder	SPSTN approves salaries during the annual budgeting process.	No funding is currently available for career ladder initiatives.
T.C.A. § 49-3-306(a); SBE Rule 0520-01-02- .02	Licensed Personnel Salaries	SPSTN approves salaries during the annual budgeting process. SPSTN's payroll system will reflect appropriate use of public funds.	Compensation will reflect the SPSTN model approved pay scale which will help to retain high-quality teachers.
T.C.A. § 8-23-206(a)	Longevity Pay	SPSTN approves salaries during the annual budgeting process. SPSTN's payroll system will reflect appropriate use of public funds. Compensation will reflect the SPSTN model approved pay scale.	Teachers may be provided with additional compensation for performance, which will help to retain high-quality teachers.
T.C.A. § 49-5-5205; SBE Rule 0520-01-01- .01	General Requirements for Evaluation	SPSTN approves salaries and compensation plans during the annual budgeting process.	The personalized learning is unique and SPSTN must have the ability to design hiring, pay, benefits, promotion and evaluation systems that are aligned with the school's mission and philosophy.

Section 4 Portfolio

Academic Performance

Using the scoring rubric from the Tennessee Charter School Performance Framework, the school scores in **academic performance are in the table on the following page.**

The Academic Performance framework is made up of four key areas, which are outlined below. Additional details and explanations around these areas are included in the pages that follow.

1. **Student Outcomes (25%-35%)**
2. **Mission-Specific Goal (10%)**
3. **Comparative Performance (40%)**
4. **Overall TVAAS Composite Index (15%-25%)**

Student Outcomes (25%-35%)

*Student Achievement for New Schools (Applicable for schools with only one year of data)

In addition to receiving a State Report Card rating of A-F from the TDOE, new schools will be evaluated in the following areas in student outcomes. The weight of the following areas makes up 25%- 35% of the final academic performance score, just as the 30%- 40% weight from the A-F letter grade. Each of the below indicators scoring weights align to the scoring weights used for each indicator in the A-F letter grade.

1. **Absolute Achievement:** Absolute achievement will be measured by the percentage of students scoring “meet or exceeded expectations” on the Tennessee state assessments in the subject areas of ELA, math, science, and social studies. The total scoring weight for absolute achievement is 45%, with each subject area consisting of 11.25% of the total 45%. If a school is not being tested in a certain area, the total of 45% will be reallocated equally among the total tested subject areas.
2. **Growth:** Growth in achievement will be measured by TVAAS overall composite index for the one-year trend. The total scoring weight for growth is 35%.
3. **Chronic Absenteeism:** Chronic absenteeism is defined as the percent of students missing 10% or more of enrolled school days. The total scoring weight for chronic absenteeism is 10%.
4. **English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA):** ELPA will be measured by the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the growth standard based on prior English proficiency. The total scoring weight for ELPA is 10%

Academic Performance - Student Outcomes (25-25%)

Following the **RCS Framework for Evaluation**, the following data is ranked with the scoring scale and color key.

- 1 = Falls Far Below Standard** (Indicated by Red)
2 = Does Not Meet Standard (Indicated by Orange)
3 = Meets Standard (Indicated by Yellow)
4 = Exceeds Standard (Indicated by Green)

School	English (Abs. Ach)	Math (Abs. Ach)	Science (Abs. Ach)	School Wide TVASS (Growth)	Chronic Absenteeism	ELP	Overall-Subscore	State Report Card Grade
American Classical Academy Rutherford	2	2	3	1	1	4	1.9	1.7 D
Springs Empower	2	2	3	1	2	4	2	1.5 D

Academic Performance - Mission-Specific Goal (10%)



Mission Specific Goal		School Rubric
10%		3

The 2024-25 School Year was used to gather qualitative and quantitative data on ACAR student behavior and character development to establish a school-specific baseline. This data will be used to identify trends and inform instructional planning and assist the school leadership to work collaboratively with faculty to develop the character/virtue rubric scoring criteria. The rubric will be calibrated across grade levels to ensure consistency and reliability in evaluating student character development. The language provided below with the listed virtues is the language that will be used to inform the rubric.

The qualitative data was collected through teacher observations and classroom-based evidence. The quantitative evidence utilized is the percentage of students who were suspended (4%) and the chronic absenteeism rate (15%). If we use discipline data and absenteeism data to mark the baseline year as it relates to positive character traits, more than 80% of ACAR students demonstrated such behavior and thus met the 'Meets' proficiency rate.

Academic Performance - Mission-Specific Goal (10%)



AMERICAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY

RUTHERFORD

Courage | “I will do the right thing, even when it is unpopular or difficult.”

- Assume best intentions then ask clarifying questions
- Assertiveness
- Using mistakes as learning opportunities
- Able to face adversity
- Moderation | “I will exercise self-control in all of my actions.”
- Intellectual and emotional balance
- Self-management
- Thoughtful and patient conflict
- Reflective
- Justice | “I will treat everyone with the fairness and respect they deserve.”
- Communicate with understanding
- Problem solving
- Be conscious of your actions and others and hold accountable
- Promote consequences

Moderation | “I will exercise self-control in all of my actions.”

- Intellectual and emotional balance
- Self-management
- Thoughtful and patient conflict
- Reflective
- Justice | “I will treat everyone with the fairness and respect they deserve.”
- Communicate with understanding
- Problem solving
- Be conscious of your actions and others and hold accountable
- Promote consequences

Responsibility | “I will do my duty and accept the consequences of my actions.”

- Maintain high expectations
- Promote positive intent
- Instill a power of acceptance
- Making responsible decisions
- Trustworthy
- Friendship | “I will treat others with respect and seek friends who make me better.”
- Communicate with compassion
- Develop the heart
- Check assumptions, observe and question
- Promote empathy and love
- Seek relationship
- Trustworthy, able to admit when wrong

Prudence | “I will make wise, well thought-out decisions before acting.”

- Self-awareness
- Consider difference of thought, experience
- Make decisions based on Truth and Goodness
- Wisdom | “I will seek those things which are good, true, and beautiful.
- Living well and happiness
- Uniquely Human
- Worthy of emulation, imitation and praise
- Actively seeking learning and cultivating understanding

Academic Performance - Mission-Specific Goal (10%)



Mission Specific Goals		School Rubric
10%		4

Academic Performance - Mission-Specific Goal (10%)



<p>Goal's Connection to Mission</p>	<p>Based on the focus of personalized learning, student growth will be measured and celebrated based on the individual growth of students. We believe that i-Ready assessments clearly show us where students compare on grade level standards, providing us with vital information on their proficiency in Language Arts and in Math. Working with a specific focus on increasing Math and/or Language Arts scores (based on the student's proficiency), Springs Public Schools TN (SPSTN) Empower Academy will review, set goals, and then work towards increasing scores based on individual students.</p>								
<p>Targets and Rationale</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="615 500 872 624"> <p>Meets</p> </td> <td data-bbox="872 500 1742 624"> <p>Based on student stretch growth scores, the median amount of I-Ready stretch growth per student would meet that of other students in TN.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="615 624 872 743"> <p>Exceeds</p> </td> <td data-bbox="872 624 1742 743"> <p>Based on student stretch growth scores, the median amount of I-ready stretch growth per student would exceed that of other students in TN</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="615 743 872 862"> <p>Does Not Meet</p> </td> <td data-bbox="872 743 1742 862"> <p>Based on student stretch growth scores, the median amount of I-Ready stretch growth per student would be slightly below that of other students in TN.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="615 862 872 981"> <p>Falls Far Below</p> </td> <td data-bbox="872 862 1742 981"> <p>Based on student stretch growth scores, the median amount of I-Ready stretch growth per student would be far below that of students in TN.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Meets</p>	<p>Based on student stretch growth scores, the median amount of I-Ready stretch growth per student would meet that of other students in TN.</p>	<p>Exceeds</p>	<p>Based on student stretch growth scores, the median amount of I-ready stretch growth per student would exceed that of other students in TN</p>	<p>Does Not Meet</p>	<p>Based on student stretch growth scores, the median amount of I-Ready stretch growth per student would be slightly below that of other students in TN.</p>	<p>Falls Far Below</p>	<p>Based on student stretch growth scores, the median amount of I-Ready stretch growth per student would be far below that of students in TN.</p>
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<p>Falls Far Below</p>	<p>Based on student stretch growth scores, the median amount of I-Ready stretch growth per student would be far below that of students in TN.</p>								
<p>Assessment Details How will data be collected and how frequently is data collected?</p>	<p>Data will be collected from the IReady diagnostic assessment tool to monitor student growth. This is a program that is used already in both Rutherford County Schools, as well as many other school districts in TN. The diagnostic will be taken midyear to monitor growth, but will be evaluated annually based on the first baseline data and end of year benchmark data.</p>								
<p>Results Summary</p>	<p>The results of any one assessment won't tell us the whole picture but it will give a strong indication on how well personalized learning is supporting student growth. i-Ready results are excellent tools for tracking growth over time, so that we can see what strategies are effective and what areas still need to be addressed to help support student success</p>								

Academic Performance - Mission-Specific Goal (10%)



Our results on iReady:

Reading Proficiency, Fall 2024 - 33%

Reading Proficiency, Spring 2025 - 59%

Growth was +26%

Math Proficiency, Fall 2024 - 16%

Math Proficiency, Spring 2025 - 49%

Growth was +33%

Progress to Annual Typical Growth:

Reading, Fall 2024 - 18%

Reading, Winter 2025 - 32%

Reading, Spring 2025 - 82%

Overall growth was +64%

Math, Fall 2024 - 12%

Math, Winter 2025 - 31%

Math, Spring 2025 - 83%

Overall growth was +71%

Comparative Data to Tennessee Elementary Students -

Reading proficiency TN Overall - 52%; Empower Academy - 59%

Reading proficiency TN Overall for students in RED - 24%; Empower Academy - 7%

Math proficiency TN Overall - 48%; Empower Academy - 48%

Math proficiency TN Overall for students in RED - 20%; Empower Academy - 7%

“Based on the amount of growth our students made from the fall to the spring, I conclude our results to Exceed our goal in both reading and math. Although there is still a lot of work to be done, and a lot of improvement that can be made, we need to examine where the students were when we initially assessed them. Also, keep in mind that we were not able to assess our students on IReady until mid-September, which means that the beginning of the year results would have been even lower in August. The growth our students made definitely exceeded what I would have expected in our start-up year. Our data compared to other Tennessee elementary students also was impressive for our first year. The proficiency in reading was seven points higher, but just as important, our percentage in red was significantly less by thirteen points. This would EXCEED our goal in reading proficiency, as well as reducing the percentage of students scoring in red. Our math proficiency compared to the state was the same at 48%. However, the percentage in red was much lower for Empower Academy by seventeen percentage points. This would MEET our goal in math, but EXCEED in at least getting a large percentage of our students out of red.” - Shane Wickwire, Head of School

Academic Performance - TVAAS Composite Index (15%-25%)



TVAAS		Comp. Index	1	Falls Far Below
Total Score for Academic Program			Avg total rating: 1.4	Falls Far Below



TVAAS		Comp. Index	1	Falls Far Below
Total Score for Academic Program			Avg total rating: 1.9	Does Not Meet Standards

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. Any financial performance outcomes not yet finalized by January 1 may be reported as “pending”. Authorizers shall be responsible for resubmitting the annual report with completed financial performance outcomes no later than March 1. If fiscal outcomes are not finalized by March 1, due to extenuating circumstances beyond authorizer control, extensions to this deadline may be granted by State Board Staff.



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

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. Any financial performance outcomes not yet finalized by January 1 may be reported as “pending”. Authorizers shall be responsible for resubmitting the annual report with completed financial performance outcomes no later than March 1. If fiscal outcomes are not finalized by March 1, due to extenuating circumstances beyond authorizer control, extensions to this deadline may be granted by State Board Staff.



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

Organizational Performance



1. Education Program:		2025
a. Charter Terms		DNM
b. Compliance w/Ed. Requirements		DNM
c. Enrollment in Alignment w/ Agreement		FFB
d. Student Retention Rates	FirstYear of Operation	N/A
d. Student Retention Rates/Subgroup	FirstYear of Operation	N/A
f. Students w/Disabilities Rights		MEETS
g. English Learner Rights		FFB
2. Financial Mangement & Oversight		2025
a. Financial Reporting & Compliance Reporting		DNM
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles		MEETS
3. Governance and Reporting		2025
a. Governance Requirements		MEETS
b. Accountability of Management		N/A
c. Reporting Requirements		MEETS

* Meets= Meets Expectations

*DNM = Does Not Meet

*FFB= Falls Far Below

4. Students and Employees			2025
a. Rights of Students			MEETS
b. Suspension Rate Goals		4% vs. rcs 5%	MEETS
c. Attendance		23.6% Chron. Abs.	DNM
d. Credentialing			DNM
e. Employment Rights			MEETS
f. Background Checks			MEETS
g. Teacher Retention		First Year of Operation	N/A
5. School Environment			2025
a. Facilities and Transportation			MEETS
b. Health and Safety			FFB
c. Information Handling			MEETS
6. Additional Obligations			2025
a. other obligations			DNM

*** Meets= Meets Expectations *DNM = Does Not Meet *FFB= Falls Far Below**

1. Education Program:		2025
a. Charter Terms		MEETS
b. Compliance w/Ed. Requirements		MEETS
c. Enrollment in Alignment w/ Agreement		MEETS
d. Student Retention Rates	First Year of Operation	N/A
e. Student Retention Rates/Subgroup	First Year of Operation	N/A
f. Students w/Disabilities Rights		DNM
g. English Learner Rights		MEETS

2. Financial Mangement & Oversight		2025
a. Financial Reporting & Compliance Reporting		PENDING
b. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles		PENDING

3. Governance and Reporting		2025
a. Governance Requirements		MEETS
b. Accountability of Management		N/A
c. Reporting Requirements	81% On-time reporting	DNM

*** Meets= Meets Expectations *DNM = Does Not Meet *FFB= Falls Far Below**

4. Students and Employees			2025
a. Rights of Students			MEETS
b. Suspension Rate Goals		12.4% vs. RCS 5%	DNM
c. Attendance		13.4% Chron. Absent	DNM
d. Credentialing			DNM
e. Employment Rights			MEETS
f. Background Checks			MEETS
g. Teacher Retention		First Year of Operation	N/A

5. School Environment			2025
a. Facilities and Transportation			MEETS
b. Health and Safety			MEETS
c. Information Handling			MEETS

6. Additional Obligations			2025
a. Other Obligations			MEETS

*** Meets= Meets Expectations *DNM = Does Not Meet *FFB= Falls Far Below**

Section 5 Performance

The Rutherford County Schools (RCS) Office of Choice and Charter Schools is committed to its mission of authorizing high-quality charter schools:

The mission for authorization of charter schools in Rutherford County is to offer innovative, high-quality, and diverse school choice options that meet the needs of a rapidly growing district and advance academic achievement for all learners.

During the 2024-2025 school year, RCS engaged with two new-start charter schools in their initial opening year. American Classical Academy Rutherford and Springs Empower Academy opened their doors to students in August of 2024, serving students in grades K-5. As both operators were new to the state of Tennessee, and RCS was new to the world of operating charter schools, year one was a positive learning experience for this authorizer. In addition, 2 new charter school applications were received from Rocketship Schools TN and Novus SMART Academy (K-8), resulting in an ultimate approval for Novus to tentatively open in August of 2026.

As new authorizers, the RCS Charter Schools Office engaged in significant learning and professional development opportunities to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively provide support and monitoring to current and future charter schools within the authorizing district. The RCS coordinator of choice and charter schools participated in monthly Webex “Authorizer Connect” meetings provided by the TN State Board of Education and the National Network 4 District Authorizers (NN4DA). Membership in the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) was obtained, and the RCS coordinator successfully completed their “Authorizing 101” training immediately upon moving into this role in November of 2023 to prepare for the opening of new charter schools in the upcoming year. In October of 2024, the coordinator attended the NACSACON annual conference to continue to strengthen authorizer practices and connect with fellow authorizers across the country to serve as valuable resources for collaboration.

Participation in significant learning and collaboration has enabled RCS to develop effective and appropriate policies and procedures designed to fulfill our commitments to the following practices delineated in the RCS Charter School Handbook:

1. Commitment and Capacity
2. Application Process and Decision-Making
3. Performance Contracting
4. Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation
5. Revocation and Decision-Making

As an authorizer, RCS holds charter schools accountable for student outcomes while preserving the autonomy granted to them under Tennessee charter law. We do this through our new school application and renewal processes, as well as through ongoing progress monitoring and annual feedback. While RCS has not yet been officially evaluated by the State Board of Education, feedback from the initial evaluation will be utilized to develop stronger authorizing practices and policies, as well as set new goals for the 26-27 school year.

The Non-Eval Year Self-Assessment was analyzed to determine progress on identified goals. As a result, key targets were identified as Performance Evaluation & Compliance Monitoring and Respecting School Autonomy. The RCS Charter Office met with both currently operating charter schools in August 2025 to review the current Performance Frameworks and provide a preliminary report of each school's success in meeting designated performance targets. The monthly reporting calendar was reviewed and updated in June of 2025 to reduce the number of required items in order to alleviate some of the administrative burden placed upon schools in our portfolio. To improve compliance and further ease administrative burdens, RCS sets a goal to increase communication via scheduled monthly update meetings to provide clarity and support for meeting reporting requirements.

In conclusion, the RCS Office of Charter Schools prioritizes learning and growth as chief goals for operating charter schools. As a result, improvements in authorizing and operating RCS Charter Schools are focused on ensuring that all students in Rutherford County succeed academically, regardless of what type of school they attend in our community.

