



## **Executive Director’s Recommendation Jackson Museum School Appeal**

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated (“T.C.A.”) § 49-13-108, sponsors proposing to open a new charter school may appeal the denial of its amended application by a local board of education to the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”). On July 10, 2025, the sponsor of Jackson Museum School (“sponsor” or “JMS”) appealed the denial of its amended application by the Jackson-Madison County School System (“JMCCS”) Board of Education to the Commission.

Based on the procedural history, findings of fact, analysis, and Review Committee Recommendation Report, attached hereto, I believe that the decision to deny the JMS amended application was contrary to the best interests of the students, local education agency (“LEA”), or community.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I recommend that the Commission overturn the decision of JMCCS Board of Education to deny the amended application for JMS.

### **STANDARD OF REVIEW**

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-108 and Commission Policy 2.000, Commission staff and an independent charter application review committee conducted a de novo, on the record review of the Jackson Museum School amended application. In accordance with the Tennessee Department of Education’s Charter Creation Application Evaluation Guidance and Review Tool (“rubric”), “[t]o be eligible for approval, an application must receive a “Meets or Exceeds Standard” rating for all applicable sections [(academic plan and design, operations plan and capacity, financial plan and capacity, and portfolio review and performance record)].”<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Commission is required to hold a public hearing in the district where the proposed charter school seeks to locate.<sup>3</sup>

In order to overturn the decision of the local board of education, the Commission must find that the application meets or exceeds the metrics outlined in the Tennessee Department of Education’s application-scoring rubric and that approval of the amended charter application is in

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<sup>1</sup> T.C.A. § 49-13-108.

<sup>2</sup> Tennessee Department of Education’s Charter Creation Application Evaluation Guidance and Review Tool, pg. 3.

<sup>3</sup> T.C.A. § 49-13-108.

the best interests of the students, local education agency, or community.<sup>4</sup> If the local board of education's decision is appealed, then the Commission can approve the application, and thereby authorize the school, or can affirm the local board's decision to deny.

### **PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

1. On December 2, 2024, the sponsor submitted a letter of intent to Jackson-Madison County School System expressing its intention to file a charter school application.
2. The sponsor submitted its initial application for Jackson Museum School to JMCSS on February 1, 2025.
3. JMCSS assembled a review committee to review and score the JMS initial application.
4. On April 8, 2025, JMCSS's Review Committee conducted a capacity interview with representatives of JMS.
5. The JMCSS Review Committee reviewed and scored the JMS initial application.
6. On April 14, 2025, the JMCSS Board of Education received the report from the JMCSS Review Committee and deliberated on the application during its meeting. The board identified concerns around several critical areas within the application, and the board determined that the application did not meet the board's "expectations or the high standards" required for approval.
7. On April 30, 2025, JMCSS Board of Education voted to deny the JMS initial application.
8. The sponsor amended and resubmitted its application for JMS to JMCSS on May 29, 2025.
9. JMCSS's Review Committee reviewed and scored the JMS amended application based on the charter application-scoring rubric.
10. On July 10, 2025, the JMCSS Board of Education voted to deny the amended application of JMS.<sup>5</sup>
11. The sponsor appealed the denial of the JMS amended application in writing to the Commission on July 21, 2025, including submission of all required documents per Commission Policy 2.000.
12. The Commission's Review Committee independently analyzed and scored the JMS

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<sup>4</sup> T.C.A. § 49-13-108.

<sup>5</sup> Jackson-Madison County School System, Signed Resolution Denying Jackson Museum Charter School 7-11-25 Amended Application, pg. 2.

amended application using the Tennessee Department of Education’s charter school application-scoring rubric.

13. On September 5, 2025, the Commission staff held a public hearing at Jackson-Madison County School System Board Room in Jackson, Tennessee. At the public hearing, the Executive Director, sitting as the Commission’s designee, heard presentations from the sponsor and JMCSS and took public comment regarding the JMS amended application.
14. The Commission’s Review Committee conducted a capacity interview with key members of the JMS leadership team on August 25, 2025, via Microsoft Teams.
15. After the capacity interview, the Commission’s Review Committee determined a final consensus rating of the JMS amended application, which served as the basis for the Review Committee Recommendation Report, attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.
16. The Commission staff conducted a full review of the record which includes the initial and amended applications submitted by the sponsor, documentation submitted by JMCSS, and the findings of the public hearing and public comment. The Commission’s General Counsel conducted a full review and legal analysis of the record.

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

### **District Denial of Initial Application**

The Review Committee assembled by JMCSS to review and score the JMS initial application consisted of the following individuals:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Shea Brown	Leaders Credit Union, Community Member
Dr. Ricky Catlett	Deputy Superintendent
Dr. Diane Hicks-Watkins	Associate Superintendent Business and Finance
Todd Humphry	Head Volleyball/Softball Coach, Freed-Hardeman University, Community Member
Dr. Felicia Ingram	Jackson State Community College, Community Member
Dr. Teresa McSweeney	Chief Innovation Officer
Dr. Tiffany Spight	Associate Superintendent Academics & Support
Melissa Spurgeon	Chief of Staff
Paul Taylor	Taylor Investment Company, Community Member
Dr. Vivian Williams	Deputy Superintendent, Internal Facilitator

The JMS initial application received the following ratings from the JMCSS Review Committee:

<b>Sections</b>	<b>Ratings</b>
Academic Plan and Design	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Meets or Exceeds Standard

After completing its review, the JMCSS Review Committee produced a comprehensive rubric reflecting the ratings of each section of the application and assigned an overall rating. This rubric indicated the application met or exceeded standard overall in the Academic Plan and Design, Operations Plan and Capacity, and Financial Plan and Capacity.

However, the scoring summary provided to the JMCSS Board of Education for JMS on April 14, 2025, omitted the overall ratings for each section of the application, as required within the scoring rubric. Instead, the summary detailed only the rating of each specific subsection under the academic, operational, and financial plans within the application. Within this analysis, the JMCSS Review Committee cited a thorough review of the application and the capacity interview, leading to a unanimous recommendation to approve the charter. The team based this finding on the application’s clear alignment with the state’s scoring rubric and approval criteria.

This analysis was presented to the JMCSS Board of Education on April 30, 2025. Despite the positive recommendation to approve the charter application by the JMCSS Review Committee, the board voted to deny the initial application. Within the resolution of denial, the board identified concerns in several key areas, which the board stated did not fully meet its expectations or the high standards required for approval. As a result, the resolution of denial included stipulations for reconsideration, identifying five specific areas requiring clarification, amendment, or supplementation.

### **District Denial of Amended Application**

The Review Committee assembled by JMCSS to review and score the JMS amended application included the same members that reviewed the initial application.

Upon resubmission, the JMCSS Review Committee conducted a review of the amended application, and the amended application received the following ratings from the JMCSS Review Committee:

<b>Sections</b>	<b>Ratings</b>
Academic Plan and Design	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Meets or Exceeds Standard

After the Review Committee completed its review of the amended application, the committee completed a comprehensive rubric and evaluation. The review team’s evaluation was



provided to the board on July 7, 2025.

Although the committee’s comprehensive rubric found that the amended application continued to meet standards overall in each section, the official report provided to the board excluded overall ratings for each section as required within the scoring rubric, presenting only the scores for each subsection of the application. The report included a detailed evaluation of each section, identifying specific areas that met or exceeded standards alongside those that did not. In its evaluation, the review committee downgraded certain subsections of the amended application from the initial review.

Notwithstanding changes to certain subsections, the Review Committee stated that a thorough review showed the amended application met the Tennessee Department of Education criteria outlined in the state’s evaluation rubric. The Review Committee’s evaluation also noted that the application still presents significant concerns with identifiable deficiencies in the academic, operations, and financial plans.

In addition to the Review Committee's analysis, the board was presented with a superintendent’s reflection. This reflection included information related to the current landscape of choice in Tennessee, gaps noted within the JMS application, and existing choice options within JMCSS. The superintendent’s concluding recommendation was to deny approval of JMS as an “independent LEA,” urging the applicant instead to explore a school-within-a-school partnership, like the district’s North Parkway and Northeast Middle School model. It should be noted that this school-within-a-school partnership was not an opportunity presented to the applicant outside of the superintendent’s reflection.

At the July 10, 2025 board meeting, the JMCSS Board of Education voted to deny the amended application of JMS. The resolution of denial stated that the board thoroughly considered the amended application, statute, recommendation from the superintendent, the comments and concerns of the Review Committee, the scoring of the amended application, and the comments of both board members and the public.

### **Commission Review Committee’s Evaluation of the Application**

Following the denial of the JMS amended application and subsequent appeal to the Commission, Commission staff assembled a diverse review committee of internal and external experts to independently evaluate and score the JMS amended application. This Review Committee consisted of the following individuals:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Thomas Branch	External Reviewer
Erin Conley	External Reviewer

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Madison DiVincenzo	External Reviewer
Beth Figueroa	Commission Staff
Claire Seguin	Commission Staff
Hillary Sims	External Reviewer

The Commission’s Review Committee conducted an initial review and scoring of the JMS amended application, a capacity interview with the sponsor, and a final evaluation and scoring of the amended application resulting in a consensus rating for each major section. The Review Committee’s consensus rating of the JMS application was as follows:

<b>Sections</b>	<b>Ratings</b>
Academic Plan and Design	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Meets or Exceeds Standard

The Review Committee recommends the approval of the amended application for JMS because the applicant provided a robust and detailed academic plan and demonstrated a clear understanding of the community’s needs. The school’s experienced governing board, sound organizational practices, and proven ability to secure funding show its capacity to launch this innovative museum school model successfully. This is further supported by proactive planning and a detailed budget that demonstrates the school’s fiscal viability.

The academic plan is comprehensive and presents an innovative model that integrates literacy with a student-centered, project-based curriculum and character development. Its ability to be implemented with fidelity is evident through its commitment to hands-on experiences, its foundation in collaborative community partnerships, and the extensive work done by the proposed school leader, including fellowships and residencies at other museum schools. The school has secured multiple educational partners, reinforcing its strong network of support. A dedicated Response to Instruction and Intervention (“RTI<sup>2</sup>”) block and a rigorous assessment system ensure that student needs are met, and progress is continuously monitored. This approach, coupled with a strong community demand for innovative educational options, reinforces the plan’s viability and its commitment to serving diverse student populations.

The operations plan presents a strong framework for the school’s opening and growth, particularly in areas of governance, facilities, and professional development. The governing board is a strength, composed of diverse community members with relevant expertise. Although the board lacks prior charter school experience, this risk is mitigated by a strategic approach to training and partnerships for the board. The applicant presented a strong facilities plan and has made progress on its proposed implementation, which has been made more realistic by recent

renovations at the top-choice location. A detailed start-up plan with clear milestones and assigned responsibilities also highlights the applicant's preparedness. Furthermore, the professional development plan exceeds state minimums, with topics specific to the museum school model, demonstrating a commitment to fostering a skilled and well-supported teaching staff. The plan also includes a robust human capital strategy to address potential staffing challenges, with proactive plans to partner with local colleges and create a Grow Your Own talent pipeline.

The financial plan presents the school's long-term sustainability strategy. The proposed budget is sound and conservative, purposefully underestimating revenue while overestimating expenses to build a safety net. The team's ability to secure various external funds from organizations such as the Charter School Growth Fund and NewSchools Ventures Fund further validates the applicant's capacity to secure funding and build meaningful partnerships. A clear cash flow contingency plan details how the school will handle potential revenue shortfalls without compromising its core mission. With a strong finance committee and a plan to use a professional back-office provider, the school has put in place a multi-layered system of financial oversight that demonstrates the operator's ability to be a responsible steward of public funds.

For the aforementioned reasons, the Review Committee found that the sponsor did meet or exceed the standard for approval based on the department's scoring rubric.

For additional information regarding the Review Committee's evaluation of the JMS amended application, please see **Exhibit A** for the complete Review Committee Recommendation Report, which is fully incorporated herein by reference.

### **Public Hearing**

Pursuant to statute<sup>6</sup> and Commission Policy 2.000, a public hearing chaired by the Executive Director was held on September 5, 2025. Representatives from JMCSS at the public hearing focused on the review process and concerns noted within the academic, operations, and financial plans. Representatives from JMCSS indicated that the JMS amended application was denied because the application did not meet or exceed the standard in all areas of the rubric. The district raised concerns in all three sections of the application. First, the district cited that project-based learning ("PBL") lacked sufficient research for all students, and the plan for students receiving specialized services was vague. The district also found the intervention and enrichment plan to be unreasonable and that the chosen curriculum is not fully aligned with research-based practices. For operations, the district cited concerns regarding staffing, facilities,

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<sup>6</sup> T.C.A. § 49-13-108.

and overall operations. The district pointed out that the plan relies heavily on the school leader for key areas. The facilities plan also failed to identify a specific facility or a realistic timeline for acquisition, and the budget for improvements was unrealistic. The district also noted that the location of one proposed facility was eleven miles from the targeted population and that a lack of transportation would create a barrier for attendance. The district then focused on the financial plan, which the district found relied on unsecured sources like grants and philanthropic donations. The district cited a tight budget, inaccurate or overstated revenue assumptions, and underestimated costs such as employee benefits and salaries. Additionally, the district stated that the property acquisition and renovation budgets were undervalued.

In the sponsor's opening statement, the founder highlighted her connection to West Tennessee, her experience in public education, her prior entrepreneurial experience, and her experience working with other charter schools. The founder emphasized the current demand for an alternative educational model in Jackson, citing that one in four families opt out of JMCSS for private schools, homeschool, or attend neighboring districts. The sponsor then provided an overview of the school's model, which is built on pillars such as inquiry-based learning, community partnerships, and arts integration. The founder outlined the four core elements of a museum unit, which include an overarching question, expeditions to educational partners, a travel log for reflection, and a culminating exhibit night where students act as docents. She confirmed that the school already has multiple committed educational partners, including the Memphis Zoo, Discovery Park, and the Jackson Arts Council. The founder detailed the school's leadership and operational plans, explaining that she will serve as both CEO and school leader in Year 0. She noted that secured grants will enable the hiring of additional staff to assist with critical pre-opening activities. The plan includes accelerating the hiring timeline for key positions. Specifically, the school will now hire an office coordinator, office manager, and a special education director/academic coordinator by March 2026. To further bolster academic and administrative functions, the school will add a literacy specialist in Year 1, an assistant principal in Year 2, an English learner coordinator in Year 3, and additional academic leadership roles in Years 4 and 5. She also detailed a contingency plan for low enrollment and confirmed the school has secured grants from Build. Excel. Sustain. ("BES"), the Charter School Growth Fund, and the NewSchools Ventures Fund.

During questioning by the Commission, JMCSS was asked to clarify its review process, particularly regarding two different lists of review committee members. The district explained that the list of ten board-approved committee members were the individuals responsible for reviewing and scoring the entire application. The additional names were from subcommittees that were consulted when questions arose, but they did not evaluate or score the application. JMCSS also confirmed that only the ten board-approved committee members participated in the

capacity interview. The Commission then asked why certain ratings of the committee, such as those for Academic Focus and Performance and Budget Narrative, were downgraded from Meets or Exceeds Standard in the initial review to Partially Meets Standard in the amended application. The district explained this was due to their policy of reviewing the amended application with a fresh eyes approach. The downgrades were based on the addition of new information that the district deemed unrealistic. While acknowledging that most sections of the amended application met the standard, the district reiterated that the identified deficiencies were significant enough to justify the final Partially Meets Standard overall rating for the application. The district also shared that while transportation is not a requirement, they believe it would be a significant challenge for students given that the district's students heavily rely on transportation.

The Commission then questioned the sponsor, with questions focused on its partnerships, enrollment targets, contingency plans for under-enrollment, and how it would overcome barriers as the county's first charter school. The founder explained that the many partnerships were in various stages of formalization and that the school would need ten partners to be successful in the first year. The founder stated that the enrollment target of 160 was grounded in data from a market analysis that identified 809 families likely to switch schools. The school had already secured eighty intent-to-enroll forms and had a clear plan to combat potential stigma. The founder also provided details on the school's partnership with Project Play for specialized student services, confirming she had spoken with them to ensure the vendor's availability to serve a school in Jackson. Regarding financial management, the founder detailed a four-layered oversight plan, including her own hands-on involvement, an office manager, a back-office provider for payroll, and a strong finance committee. She also confirmed that the budget was being updated to reflect the influx of recently secured funds from BES, the Charter School Growth Fund, and the NewSchools Ventures Fund.

The public hearing concluded with closing statements by both parties and the receipt of twenty in-person comments, with ten speaking in support of JMCSS and ten speaking in support of JMS. The Commission also accepted written comments, and the Commission received sixty-two written comments, with two writing in support of JMCSS and sixty writing in support of JMS.

### **Analysis**

State law requires the Commission to review the decision of the local board of education and determine if the application "meets or exceeds the metrics outlined in the Tennessee Department of Education's application-scoring rubric and," whether "approval of the application

is in the best interests of the students, LEA, or community.”<sup>7</sup> In addition, pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-108, the Commission adopted the State Board of Education’s Quality Charter Authorizing Standards set forth in State Board Policy 6.111 and utilizes these standards to review charter applications received upon appeal. In making my recommendation to the Commission, I have considered the Review Committee’s Recommendation Report, the documentation submitted by both the sponsor and JMCSS, the arguments made by both parties at the public hearing, and the public comments received by Commission staff and conclude as follows:

The Review Committee’s report and recommendations are thorough, citing specific examples in the application and referencing information gained in the capacity interview in support of its findings. For the reasons explained in the report, I agree that the JMS amended application did rise to the level of meeting or exceeding the standards required for approval.

I agree with the Review Committee that Jackson Museum School's academic plan meets the standard for approval. One purpose of public charter schools is to “encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods...in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance.”<sup>8</sup> I believe that Jackson Museum School has proposed an innovative academic plan that is not currently offered within Jackson, and the plan is thorough, well researched, and has a high likelihood of success. The sponsor intends to use the museum school model to highlight literacy and project-based instruction to reach academic achievement. The academic focus of the Jackson Museum School will use nine-week thematic units to connect content areas and assist students to learn the relationships between disciplines. The sponsor’s academic approach requires expeditions to community partners (e.g., museums and cultural sites) at the end of each thematic unit. To ensure this model can be implemented, the sponsor has secured thirteen educational partners committed ahead of any approval. This intentional work gives me confidence that the academic model can be successful if approved. Additionally, the sponsor’s intention to understand the museum school model is an added strength. The proposed school leader has completed residencies, both statewide and nationally, to have an intentional and deep understanding of the work necessary to create a successful school.

Further, I agree with the Review Committee that the sponsor has demonstrated strong community support for approval of this school. The sponsor has engaged in a variety of outreach to determine interest within the Jackson area for this academic model. The sponsor has had over 3,000 interactions with community members. Those interactions resulted in the support of over 300 individuals. The sponsor added that as of the public hearing, Jackson

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<sup>7</sup> T.C.A. § 49-13-108.

<sup>8</sup> T.C.A. § 49-13-102(a)(3).

Museum School had secured eighty students intending to enroll in grades kindergarten through second. This effect is advantageous as the sponsor works to reach its Year 1 enrollment target of 160 students. The sponsor understands the task of continuing to increase support by educating the community around public charter schools, and there is a plan by the sponsor to host informational sessions and to be a presence in community events. These marketing tactics will be necessary to ensure stable enrollment for the school.

I believe the sponsor has a solid plan for addressing special populations. Utilizing a multi-tiered systems of supports and a dedicated RTI<sup>2</sup> block in its daily schedule, the school has demonstrated a commitment to providing a continuum of services and supports for students. The sponsor demonstrated an understanding of the importance of serving all students and detailed a plan that integrates its academic model with these services. The proposed school leader detailed both in the capacity interview and during the public hearing that Jackson Museum School intends to partner with external vendors to ensure the specialized services are available to meet student needs. The sponsor also spoke to its intention to hire an employee specifically to lead special education, and I agree with the Review Committee that this exhibits a thoughtful approach to meeting the needs of students.

I agree with the Review Committee that the sponsor's operations plan meets the standard for approval. One of the biggest strengths of this sponsor is the proposed governing board. The sponsor's board is diverse and includes community members. The members have varied experience in education, finance, law, and business management, all of which are necessary for a successful governing board. While the board does not have a member with extensive charter school experience, the board has committed to receiving specialized training to better understand its responsibilities in governing a public charter school. Additionally, I believe the proposed school leader's enrollment in charter leader support programs will provide beneficial support to contribute to the success of the school. As the board is with whom the authorizer would contract, it is important that the board has the knowledge and understanding of the requirements to be a successful governing board. I believe that this proposed governing board has shown great commitment to oversight that will lead to operational success.

Another noted strength of the school's operations plan is its facilities plan. Having identified multiple sites, I believe the sponsor has established a realistic timeline for a fall 2026 opening. I appreciated that the sponsor has named that its top selection could support the school at full capacity but also named that the facility requires accessibility compliance and security updates, which would be completed ahead of opening. The named facilities also align with the sponsor's budget, which gives me greater confidence to recommend approval of this application.

Further, serving as the inaugural school leader for a new public charter school comes with many responsibilities. I shared in the Review Committee's concern around the numerous roles initially named as the school leader's responsibility. However, during both the capacity interview and public hearing, the sponsor clarified that the governing board would utilize various committees to share in the responsibilities of the school leader. It will be important, if approved, that the school ensures the proper support is in place for the school leader so that the model can be implemented successfully. I am encouraged by the school's plans for staffing, which include a detailed hiring plan and the use of partnerships through local colleges and universities, as well as creating a Grow Your Own program to build a talent pipeline. The sponsor, understanding the unique nature of its academic model, also stated an intent to offer professional development beyond the state-required minimums to ensure the needs of its student body are met.

Finally, I agree with the Review Committee that the financial plan meets the standard for approval. The sponsor has developed a budget that is aligned with the academic model and reflects its planned enrollment growth and corresponding staffing plans. I appreciate that the budget overestimates expenses while using a conservative enrollment number and associated revenue. I believe the budget projects a realistic five-year plan with clear expenditures and revenue assumptions. Additionally, the sponsor's financial plan is strengthened by having secured philanthropic funding, specifically securing grants from BES, Charter School Growth Fund, and NewSchools Ventures Fund. I appreciate that the sponsor intends to be financially stable via enrollment growth and other revenue streams, but I also believe in the sponsor's ability to continue to raise necessary capital to support its students and implement the academic model. The sponsor also plans to use an external vendor for financial management functions while hiring an operations manager in Year 0 to share in the financial responsibilities with any hired external provider. Additionally, the financial plans are bolstered by the strength of the governing board's members with financial expertise. All these tactics increase my confidence in the sponsor's ability to ensure the success of the charter school, if approved.

Any authorized public charter school is entrusted with the great responsibility of educating students and a significant amount of public funds. For these reasons, the Commission expects that only those schools that have demonstrated a high likelihood of success and meet or exceed the required criteria in all areas will be authorized. My recommendation focuses on the application for Jackson Museum School and its likelihood of being successful if approved. However, I do want to specifically highlight the work of the local school district to expand options within its school system. During the public hearing and review of public comments, it is clear that the Jackson-Madison County School System has options within its school system, such as the Jackson Academic STEAM Academy, Malesus STEM Innovation Center, and the Jackson



Community Montessori School. This demonstrates the district's commitment to expanding options for students, and I see the addition of Jackson Museum School, if approved, as a value-add to the quality options within the school district. I also want to emphasize the importance of a clean and clearly articulated record. As I reviewed the district's record, it was difficult to follow how the reasons for denial aligned or did not align with the work of the JMCSS Review Committee. Instructions within the rubric state that "once all sections have been evaluated, assign an overall rating to the application based on the cumulative ratings of each section." In both the initial and amended applications, the JMCSS Review Committee identified overall section rates, but this information was left off the information provided to the JMCSS Board of Education. The board only received the ratings for each subsection of the application. I appreciate the due diligence conducted by the Committee on the initial and amended applications, and providing overall ratings by section and a clear recommendation of approval or non-approval ensures there is clarity for both the JMCSS Board of Education and the applicant. The applicant can then respond to the feedback within the amended application and/or in an appeal. In this case, the record is not clear on how the work of the Review Committee and its full assessment of the application informed the decision-making process of the JMCSS Board of Education. And while the JMCSS Board of Education is not bound by the recommendation of its review committee, clarity of the board's consideration of its review committee recommendation is only bolstered by a complete review committee record.

The Commission is charged to review charter applications that have been denied by the local board of education and, if they meet or exceed the Tennessee Department of Education's scoring rubric standards and approval is in the best interests of the students, LEA, or community, they are permitted to approve those applications. An approval is not an attempt to usurp the authority of the local board, as there remains the opportunity for the district to reconcile with the charter school and serve as its authorizer. However, if either the district or an approved charter school decide against reconciliation, the Commission welcomes the opportunity to serve as a partner in the work of providing students in Madison County with a new academic option to success.

For the reasons expounded on in this report, I recommend that the Commission approve the JMS amended application.

## **CONCLUSION**

For these reasons, and for the reasons stated in the Review Committee Recommendation Report attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, I do believe that the decision to deny the amended application for JMS was contrary to the best interests of the students, the LEA, or community. Therefore, I recommend that the Commission overturn the decision of the JMCSS Board of



Education to deny the amended application for Jackson Museum School.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tess Stovall". The signature is written in a cursive style.

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Tess Stovall, Executive Director  
Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

October 16, 2025  
Date



**EXHIBIT A:**  
**Charter Application Review Committee Recommendation Report**

October 16, 2025

**School Name:** Jackson Museum School

**Sponsor:** Jackson Museum School

**Proposed Location of School:** Jackson-Madison County School System

**Evaluation Team:**

- Thomas Branch
- Erin Conley
- Madison DiVincenzo
- Beth Figueroa
- Claire Seguin
- Hillary Sims



This recommendation report is based on a template from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.



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## Introduction

Tennessee Code Annotated (“T.C.A.”) § 49-13-108 allows the sponsor of a public charter school to appeal the denial of an application by the local board of education to the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (“Commission”). In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-108, the Commission shall conduct a de novo, on the record review of the proposed charter school’s application, and the Commission has adopted national and state quality authorizing standards to guide its work. As laid out in Commission Policy 3.000 – Core Authorizing Principles,<sup>1</sup> the Commission is committed to implementing these authorizing standards that are aligned with the core principles of charter school authorizing, including setting high standards for the approval of charter schools in its portfolio.

In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-108, the Commission adopted Commission Policy 2.000 – Charter School Appeals. The Commission has outlined the charter school appeal process to ensure the well-being and interests of students are the fundamental value informing all Commission actions and decisions. The Commission publishes clear timelines and expectations for applicants, engages highly competent teams of internal and external evaluators to review all applications, and maintains rigorous criteria for approval of a charter school. In addition, the Commission plans to evaluate its work annually to ensure its alignment to national and state standards for quality authorizing and implements improvement when necessary.

The Commission’s charter application review process is outlined in T.C.A. § 49-13-108, Commission Policy 2.000 – Charter School Appeals, and Commission Policy 2.100 – Application Review. The Commission assembled a charter application review committee comprised of highly qualified internal and external evaluators with relevant and diverse expertise to evaluate each application. The Commission provided training to all committee members to ensure consistent standards and fair treatment of all applications.

## Overview of the Evaluation Process

The Commission’s charter application Review Committee developed this recommendation report based on three key stages of review:

1. **Evaluation of the Proposal:** The Review Committee independently reviewed the amended charter application, attachments, and budget submitted by the sponsor. After an independent review, the Review Committee collectively identified the main strengths, concerns, and weaknesses as well as developed specific questions for the applicant in the

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<sup>1</sup> All [Commission rules and policies](#) may be found on the [Commission's website](#).

three sections of the application: Academic Plan and Design, Operations Plan and Capacity, and Financial Plan and Capacity.

2. **Capacity Interview:** Based on the independent and collective review of the application, the Review Committee conducted a ninety-minute interview with the sponsor, members of the governing board, and the identified school leader to address the concerns, weaknesses, and questions identified in the application, and to assess the capacity to execute the application's overall plan.
3. **Consensus Judgment:** At the conclusion of the review of the application and the capacity interview, the committee submitted a final rubric and developed a consensus regarding a rating for each section of the application.

This recommendation report includes the following information:

1. **Summary of the Application:** A brief description of the applicant's proposed academic, operations, and financial plans.
2. **Summary of the Recommendation:** A brief summary of the overall recommendation for the application.
3. **Analysis of each section of the application:** An analysis of the three sections of the application and the capacity of the team to execute the plan as described in the application.
  - a. **Academic Plan and Design:** school mission and goals; academic focus and performance standards; assessments; school calendar and schedule; recruitment and enrollment; parent and community engagement and support; school culture and discipline; special populations; and the capacity to implement the proposed plan.
  - b. **Operations Plan and Capacity:** governance; facilities; start-up plan; personnel/human capital; professional development; transportation; additional operations; and the capacity to implement the proposed plan.
  - c. **Financial Plan and Capacity:** planning and budget worksheet; operating budget; operating budget narrative; and the capacity to implement the proposed plan.

The Commission's charter application Review Committee utilized the Tennessee Department of Education's Charter Creation Application Evaluation Guidance and Review Tool ("rubric"), which is used by all local boards of education when evaluating an application. The rubric states that authorizers should adopt the State Board of Education's ("SBE") Quality Authorizing Standards, which establishes rigorous decision-making criteria. Specifically, SBE

Policy 6.111 states a “quality authorizer requires all applicants to present a clear and compelling mission, a quality educational program, a demonstration of community support, a solvent and sustainable budget and contingency financial plans, a clear demonstration of the effectiveness of the model for the target student population, effective governance and management structures and systems, founding team members demonstrating diverse and necessary capabilities in all phases of the school’s development, and clear evidence of the applicant’s capacity to execute its plan successfully. An application that merits a recommendation for approval should satisfy each of these criteria.”<sup>2</sup>

The evaluators used the following criteria and guidance from the scoring rubric to rate applications:

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Meets or Exceeds Standard	The applicant’s response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues. It clearly aligns with the mission and goals of the school. The response includes specific and accurate information that shows thorough preparation.
Partially Meets Standard	The applicant’s response meets the criteria in some respects but lacks sufficient detail and/or requires additional information in one or more areas.
Does Not Meet Standard	The applicant’s response is incomplete, demonstrates lack of preparation, does not align with the mission and goals of the school, or otherwise raises significant concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant’s ability to carry it out.

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<sup>2</sup> Tennessee State Board of Education Policy 6.111

## Summary of the Application

**School Name:** Jackson Museum School

**Sponsor:** Jackson Museum School

**Proposed Location of School:** Jackson-Madison County School System

**Mission:** The mission of Jackson Museum School (“JMS”) is to create an innovative, student-centered learning environment that nurtures academic excellence and character development, through inquiry-based and project-based instruction, and shapes students into adaptive thinkers and engaged problem solvers.<sup>3</sup>

**Number of Schools Currently in Operation by Sponsor:** There are no schools currently in operation by the sponsor.

**Proposed Enrollment:**<sup>4</sup>

Grade Level	Year 1: 2026-2027	Year 2: 2027-2028	Year 3: 2028-2029	Year 4: 2029-2030	Year 5: 2030-2031	At Capacity:
K	80	80	80	100	100	100
1	60	80	80	80	100	100
2	20	60	80	80	80	100
3	0	20	60	80	80	100
4	0	0	20	60	80	100
5	0	0	0	20	60	100
6	0	0	0	0	20	100
Totals	160	240	320	420	520	700

## Brief Description of the Application

The sponsor, Jackson Museum School, is proposing to open a charter school in Madison County, Tennessee and serve students in kindergarten through sixth grade when fully built out. The school, Jackson Museum School, is a new-start school and would be the first school for the sponsor. The school intends to operate in the city of Jackson in Madison County to “create an innovative, student-centered learning experience for students in Jackson, Tennessee.”<sup>5</sup> The

<sup>3</sup> JMS Amended Application, pg. 11

<sup>4</sup> JMS Amended Application, pg. 57

<sup>5</sup> JMS Amended Application, pg. 11



school proposes to offer a museum school experience and provide students in the city of Jackson an additional school option.

The proposed school will be governed by a board of directors that consists of community leaders, with standing committees focused on academics, community engagement, fund development, finance, and governance. In Year 0, JMS has budgeted \$787,000 receiving \$750,000 from various state sources and \$37,000 from other grants and contributions and projects \$780,531 in expenses for the school. JMS projects the school will have \$2,255,015 in revenue and \$2,084,348 in expenses in Year 1, resulting in a balance of \$177,136. By Year 5, the school projects to have \$6,070,197 in revenue and \$5,381,081 in expenses, resulting in a positive ending fund balance of \$2,221,847.<sup>6</sup> The school anticipates that 54% of the student population will qualify as economically disadvantaged, 18% of the student population will be students with disabilities, and 10% of the student population will be English learners.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> JMS Amended Budget

<sup>7</sup> JMS Amended Application, pg. 57

## Summary of the Evaluation

The Review Committee recommends the approval of the amended application for Jackson Museum School because the academic, operations, and financial sections of the application all met or exceeded the standard. The applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of the community's needs and presents a robust academic plan. The school's experienced board, sound organizational practices, and ability to secure funding demonstrate the capacity to successfully launch an innovative museum school model school. This is supported by proactive planning and a detailed budget that shows the school's ability to maintain fiscal viability.

The academic plan is a comprehensive and innovative model that seamlessly integrates a strong literacy focus with a student-centered environment that incorporates project-based instruction and character development. The plan demonstrates the ability to be implemented with fidelity through its commitment to personal exploration and hands-on experiences and its foundation of collaborative community partnerships. The proposed school leader has done extensive work to understand the model through fellowships and residencies at other museum schools. The school has secured thirteen committed educational partners, demonstrating a strong network of support for the model. A dedicated Response to Instruction and Intervention ("RTI<sup>2</sup>") block and a comprehensive and rigorous assessment system ensure that student needs are met, and progress is continuously monitored. This approach, coupled with a strong demand for innovative educational options in the community, reinforces the plan's viability. The plan also includes a comprehensive and well-structured approach to addressing student needs, particularly for special populations, outlining a commitment to providing a continuum of services and supports from inclusive classroom models to targeted resource assistance.

The applicant's operations plan demonstrates a strong foundation for a successful launch and sustained growth, particularly in the areas of governance, facilities, and professional development. The governing board is a key strength, composed of a diverse group of community members with relevant expertise. While the team has limited prior experience with charter schools, this risk is mitigated through strategic partnerships and ongoing training, ensuring they understand their roles and responsibilities. The facilities plan is also robust, with the team providing a crucial update during the capacity interview that the top facility choice had recently undergone renovations, making the timeline for a fall 2026 opening realistic. The comprehensive start-up plan, detailing key milestones and ownership of tasks, further instills confidence in the team's preparedness. The professional development plan was also deemed a strength as it exceeds state minimums, with topics tailored to support the unique museum school model and the needs of a diverse student body.

The financial plan provides a solid foundation for the school's fiscal health and sustainability. The proposed budget is thoughtfully aligned with the school's academic model, taking a conservative approach by estimating revenue below projected enrollment while overestimating expenses. During the capacity interview, the team demonstrated the capacity to secure funding by confirming they have been awarded grants from Build. Excel. Sustain. ("BES"), the Charter School Growth Fund, and the NewSchools Venture Fund. The team articulated a clear cash flow contingency plan for if revenue projections are not met, detailing specific adjustments to staffing and discretionary spending. The use of a back-office provider for financial functions, combined with a strong finance committee, demonstrates a multi-layered approach to financial oversight. This, along with the applicant's ability to articulate how day-to-day finances will be managed, provided confidence in the school's long-term financial viability.

### **Summary of Section Ratings**

In accordance with the Tennessee Department of Education's charter application scoring rubric, applications that do not meet or exceed the standard in all sections will be deemed not ready for approval and strengths in one area of the application do not negate weaknesses in other areas. Opening and maintaining a successful, high-performing charter school depends on having a complete, coherent plan and identifying highly capable individuals to execute that plan. The Review Committee's consensus ratings for each section of the application are as follows:

<b>Sections</b>	<b>Ratings</b>
Academic Plan and Design	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Operations Plan and Capacity	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Financial Plan and Capacity	Meets or Exceeds Standard

## **Analysis of the Academic Plan and Design**

*Rating: Meets or Exceeds Standard*

### **Strengths Identified by the Committee**

The applicant's Academic Plan and Design meets or exceeds the standard because it presents a robust and innovative educational model including community partnerships, strong student recruitment plans, and a demonstrated ability to implement the plan with fidelity.

A key strength of the academic plan is its comprehensive approach, which seamlessly integrates a strong literacy focus with a student-centered environment that incorporates project-based instruction and character development. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on foundational literacy skills, which are integrated across all subjects to ensure that reading, writing, research, and communication are integral to every learning experience. The school's philosophy and academic plan are rooted in the belief that children learn best through personal exploration and hands-on experiences. Within this innovative academic plan, students will engage in four nine-week thematic units each year, which are anchored by a driving question to foster curiosity. This inquiry-based approach empowers students to take ownership of their learning by conducting hands-on investigations, documenting their findings in a "travel log," and culminating their work in a museum-style exhibit night. This model also actively promotes character development through its core values, which are woven into daily practices, the curriculum, and a positive behavior interventions and supports framework, creating a supportive culture that nurtures both academic and personal growth.

The sponsor's ability to implement the plan with fidelity is strengthened by its foundation of collaborative community partnerships. The application details a plan for weekly to biweekly expeditions to local museums and cultural sites, which are integral to the curriculum. During the capacity interview, the proposed school leader confirmed that the school has already secured thirteen committed educational partners, including the Carnegie Center for Arts and History, the Memphis Zoo, and the Jackson Arts Council, demonstrating a strong network of support needed to implement the model. This level of community engagement is designed to foster critical thinking and a deeper appreciation for the arts and sciences. Throughout the application process, the sponsor completed extensive work to understand the museum school model through research and fellowships, and the proposed leader completed residencies at other museum schools, both in Tennessee and nationally.

The application also demonstrates a clear plan for community support and student recruitment. During the capacity interview, the proposed leader noted that the team conducted surveys, held focus groups, and engaged in canvassing efforts to identify the community's

demand for their innovative educational model. Furthermore, it was stated that the school has made meaningful traction within the community with over 3,000 contacts through outreach and has secured the support of over 300 individuals, including a little over one hundred families with school-aged children. The school plans to combat potential negative stigma around charter schools by leveraging a strong marketing plan, hosting informational sessions, and maintaining a presence at community events. This multifaceted outreach plan is a strength, ensuring the school can effectively communicate its mission, attract a diverse student body, and meet enrollment targets. Finally, a noted strength of the school's plan is its well-structured projected enrollment for Year 1. The plan anticipates a total of 160 students, strategically distributed with eighty students in kindergarten, sixty in first grade, and twenty in second grade. This demonstrates an understanding of likely enrollment patterns for families. The reasonable enrollment structure, coupled with demonstrated community support, strongly indicates the likelihood of meeting these projections.

The plan also includes a comprehensive and well-structured approach to addressing student needs, particularly for special populations. The school will utilize a multi-tiered system of supports with a dedicated RTI<sup>2</sup> block in the daily schedule. To ensure equitable access and success for all students, the plan outlines a commitment to provide a continuum of services and supports, from inclusive classroom models to targeted resource assistance. The need for specialized expertise in special education was a noted concern identified by the Review Committee during the initial review. In the capacity interview, the proposed school leader detailed the plan to partner with third-party vendors for specialized services, ensuring the school can meet the diverse and potentially intensive needs of its student body. The school will also hire an employee dedicated to leading special education, further demonstrating a thoughtful and flexible approach to meeting student needs.

Finally, the academic plan includes a rigorous assessment system to monitor and evaluate student progress. The school will use a balanced system of assessments, including state-mandated tests and nationally normed tools such as NWEA MAP Growth and i-Ready to identify student needs and track progress throughout the year. The plan outlines how data from these assessments will drive instructional decisions and inform ongoing professional development for teachers through weekly professional learning communities. This systematic and data-driven approach demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and accountability, which ensures that the school will be responsive to student needs and continuously work towards achieving its academic goals.

## **Analysis of the Operations Plan and Capacity**

*Rating: Meets or Exceeds Standard*

### **Strengths Identified by the Committee**

The applicant's Operational Plan and Capacity meets or exceeds the standard because the application demonstrated a strong operational foundation for a successful school launch and sustained growth, particularly in the areas of governance, facilities, and professional development.

The governing board is a strength of the application, composed of a diverse group of community members with relevant expertise in areas such as education, finance, law, and business management. While the team has limited prior experience with charter schools, they have proactively mitigated this risk through strategic partnerships. For instance, the proposed school leader, Dr. Jean Little, has been accepted into various charter leader support programs, which provide intensive coaching and support on a range of topics including governance and operations. The board will also receive specialized training, ensuring they understand their roles and responsibilities within the charter school context. This layered support system, coupled with the board's active approach, demonstrates a strong commitment to effective oversight and operational success. During the capacity interview, the board members further demonstrated their understanding of their roles and responsibilities, detailing how they will work with the school leader and staff to oversee academics, finance, and community engagement. Additionally, the governing board members are located in the community and have deep knowledge of the Jackson area, which is a value add to the school as it begins.

The facilities plan is also determined to be a strength of the application. The applicant has identified multiple potential sites, with the top contenders being large enough to support the school at full capacity, which could eliminate the need for future relocation. During the capacity interview, the applicant provided a crucial update that their top facility choice, which has been vacant for fifteen years, has recently undergone extensive remodeling due to a flood, a factor that makes the proposed timeline for a fall 2026 opening more realistic. The renovations were completed by the church that owns the property, leaving only minimal, non-critical upgrades, primarily related to accessibility and security compliance. This means that the renovation costs will also be reasonable and fit within the proposed budget. The applicant's progress in identifying a location and proactive planning, combined with a detailed start-up timeline and clear ownership of tasks, instills confidence in the team's ability to successfully navigate the complex process of opening a new school.

The start-up plan itself is robust and comprehensive, detailing key milestones for hiring, facility preparation, and student recruitment with clear due dates and identified owners for each task. The plan also includes realistic, actionable strategies for overcoming potential challenges such as charter school stigma, teacher shortages, and facility readiness. This level of detail, along with the team's ability to articulate the rationale and contingency plans for these challenges, provides a strong indicator of preparedness.

The plan also includes robust professional development and human capital structures. Professional development will exceed state minimums, with topics tailored to support the unique museum school model and the needs of a diverse student body. The staffing plan is well-aligned with the school's growth model, detailing key hires for leadership, academic, and support roles. However, the Review Committee did note concerns about the significant responsibilities of multiple roles placed on the proposed school leader in the school's early years. This concern was addressed in the capacity interview, where the proposed school leader and the board members explained that the team would mitigate this by leveraging the expertise of the board's various committees to share oversight responsibilities. The team also provided specific contingency plans for teacher recruitment challenges during the interview, such as partnering with local colleges and universities and creating a Grow Your Own program to build a talent pipeline. This, coupled with the team's ability to clearly articulate the rationale for their staffing model, provided reassurance about the school's capacity to attract and retain high-performing staff.

## **Analysis of the Financial Plan and Capacity**

*Rating: Meets or Exceeds Standard*

### **Strengths Identified by the Committee**

The applicant's Financial Plan and Capacity meets or exceeds the standard because the financial plan provides a solid foundation for the school's fiscal health and sustainability.

The proposed budget was noted as a strength because it is thoughtfully aligned with the school's academic model, staffing projections, and phased enrollment growth. The budget takes a conservative approach, estimating revenue at amounts below the projected enrollment while overestimating expenses. This strategy, along with a planned 5% surplus in the annual budget, is designed to mitigate financial risks and ensure the school can operate sustainably. The budget is detailed, providing a clear breakdown of expenditures and revenue assumptions for the first five years of operation.

An additional strength clarified during the capacity interview is the team's proven ability to secure significant philanthropic funding. While the original budget referenced anticipated grants, the proposed school leader confirmed that the school has been awarded grants from BES, the Charter School Growth Fund, and the NewSchools Venture Fund. This influx of funding demonstrates the team's capacity to raise the necessary capital to support their high-needs student population and the innovative museum school model. Additionally, the team noted that they do not plan to be reliant on grants after the first three years, aiming for financial stability through enrollment growth and other revenue streams. These grants, awarded since the creation of the budget, further bolster the school's financial capacity beyond the projections already provided.

The plan also demonstrates effective financial oversight and clear contingency measures. The board has a strong finance committee led by a financial analyst, which is responsible for reviewing monthly financial reports and ensuring fiscal responsibility. In the capacity interview, the team articulated a clear cash flow contingency plan for if revenue projections are not met. They stated that the bare minimum enrollment for financial viability is 135 students. To maintain stability at this level, they would first reduce staffing, defer non-critical capital expenditures, and pause or reduce external consultants and travel to maintain a balanced budget. The team emphasized that all cuts would be made in a way that would not impact the school's core academic model, safety, or accessibility compliance.

The school will outsource financial management functions like payroll and audits to a back-office provider. The team clarified that while the back-office provider will handle payroll, the proposed school leader will still be hands-on with cash flow and the budget. The office



manager will serve as the day-to-day point of contact for invoices and other items, which will then be shared with the back-office provider. The board, with its treasurer and other members who work in the financial industry, will provide a fourth layer of financial oversight. This multi-layered, proactive, and strategic approach to financial management demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of being fiscal stewards of public funds and provides confidence in the school's long-term viability.



## Evaluation Team

**Thomas Branch** is a seasoned executive with over 15 years of experience in finance and operations leadership, and more than 20 years of managing and coaching successful teams. He currently serves as Chief Operating Officer at Valor Collegiate Academies in Nashville, where he has led the organization's growth from one campus to three and guided over \$28 million in facility acquisitions and renovations. Under his operational leadership, Valor has successfully launched five high-performing charter schools and expanded its Compass Camp program from 3 schools to more than 50 nationwide. Prior to Valor, Thomas was Director of Finance & Operations at KIPP Nashville, where he doubled the school's budget, implemented cost-saving systems, and secured large federal grants. He also spent several years in the banking industry as a Financial Center Manager and Vice President, overseeing multimillion-dollar portfolios. Passionate about community service, Thomas has volunteered with the United Way and served as a board member for Corner to Corner. He is driven by a deep commitment to giving back and creating opportunities for others through both his professional work and civic engagement.

**Erin Conley** serves as an expert reviewer for a number of charter school authorizers across the country. Over the last fourteen years in the field of education, she has served in roles focused on survey development, data analytics and visualization, research, board development, compliance, school operations, and policy analysis. Erin has expertise in charter authorization and laws that impact charters and networks. Erin began her career teaching in the Chicago Public School district. She has a Bachelor of Arts in English and Secondary Education from Michigan State University and a master's in public policy from Vanderbilt University with a focus on K-12 education policy.

**Madison DeVincenzo**, M.A.T., is a Program Specialist with the Diverse Learners Cooperative in Nashville, TN. She brings over 13 years of experience as a special educator, instructional coach, and school leader. In her current role, Madison partners with charter and district schools to strengthen inclusive practices, evaluate instructional systems, and support compliance and quality of services for diverse learners. Her background in program design, educator coaching, and school improvement equips her to provide clear, evidence-based feedback as a charter review committee member.

**Beth Figueroa** is the Director of Authorizing for the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission. She is a Certified Public Accountant and has spent the last 15 years specializing in school finance and charter school oversight. Before working at the Commission, Beth worked as an administrator and charter school authorizer in California. She has also had the opportunity to serve as the Chief Business Officer of a charter school, an Executive Director of Fiscal Services for a school district with an annual budget of over \$500 Million, and an auditor of charter



schools and non-profit organizations. She earned her Master of Business Administration degree from California Baptist University, where she also received her B.S. in Business Administration.

**Claire Seguin** is currently serving as the Federal Programs Coordinator at the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission. Prior to joining the Commission, Claire spent thirteen years working with special populations and school administration in K-8 charter schools in Nashville. Claire holds a B.A. in Sociology and Disaster Science Management from Louisiana State University, a Master of Education with specializations in Special Education and English Language Learning from Lipscomb University, and graduate certificates in Autism Studies and Applied Behavior Analysis. She has contributed to published research on the impact of parental involvement on academic achievement and currently provides advocacy support for families of students with disabilities in public schools.

**Hillary Sims** has operated within Tennessee Charter Sector since shortly after the passing of Chapter 13. Having taught at the high school level in traditional public and private schools as well as served as a school administrator for greater than 20 years, Ms. Sims brings a broad scope of experience. Ms. Sims is a founding team member of two Nashville charter schools and has supported the opening and enrollment of many across the country while working for a global charter management organization. Areas of expertise for Ms. Sims are Special Populations, Operations, Culture, Access and Opportunity for ALL Students, Leadership, Teacher Development, and Community Involvement. Ms. Sims currently serves as an Exceptional Education Coach for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools.