



TENNESSEE

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

SY25-26
PRE-OPENING UPDATE

JULY 24, 2025

PRE-OPENING PROCESS

- The pre-opening process begins in November for all schools.
- Commission staff has individual monthly check-ins with pre-opening schools, focused on the deliverables for that month.
- Commission staff host monthly training sessions to prepare schools on best practices.
- School walkthroughs are completed in late July before school begins.



READY TO OPEN CRITERIA

Item	Deliverables
Startup Plan	Updated timeline for “Ready to Open” items.
Facility	Identify suitable facility; submit construction scope & timeline (if needed); submit final lease/purchase agreement.
Staffing	Hire head of school; Adequate teachers per plan/enrollment.
Enrollment	Submit preliminary enrollment projections; 75% enrolled by April 15, 100% by June 15.
Financial Plan	Complete & board-approved operating budget; notify Commission if enrollment is off-track; Submit final approved budget.



ENROLLMENT TRENDS

- Most new schools are approximately 75% enrolled
 - Some schools experienced initial difficulty in generating momentum.
 - In anticipation of the next pre-opening cycle, we will evaluate how enrollment is tracked and reflect on lessons from the current year.
- Memphis schools increased enrollment over the summer months.
- Purposeful school location and model led to higher enrollment numbers.



STAFFING TRENDS

- Finding licensed staff remains a challenge for many schools.
 - Some schools are working with external partners to aid in staffing appropriately.
 - Common difficult positions to staff are licensed special populations (SPED/EL) positions as well as high school positions.
- Schools that are not fully staffed are meeting with staff weekly to provide updates.
- Schools with lower than projected enrollment have adjusted staffing.



FACILITY TRENDS

- All pre-opening schools have a facility and are on-track with renovations to open on time for SY25-26.
- Commission staff will complete walkthroughs of all new and renovated facilities before the school year begins.
- Facility cost and availability continue to be a challenge, despite our pre-opening schools opening on time.



GOVERNING BOARD ENGAGEMENT DURING PRE-OPENING

- Board engagement is crucial for schools during pre-opening process and is encouraged for all schools.
- Commission staff ensured that boards remained aware of staffing, facility, and enrollment challenges as they arose.
- Active participation and attendance by the board are highly encouraged throughout the pre-opening process.



MADISON CLASSICAL ACADEMY

- Staff have met regularly with the governing board since the school's approval in October 2023.
- Pre-opening meetings focused on progress with "Ready to Open" criteria and the timelines outlined in the most recent request to delay (approved by the Commission in January 2025).
- In a notice to the Commission in June 2025, the governing board elected to prioritize the Rutherford County campus and surrender the Madison Classical Academy charter.



UPDATES FOR NEXT YEAR

- A pre-opening guidebook is in development for new schools that will have helpful resources, exemplars, and FAQs.
- Commission staff are soliciting feedback from pre-opening schools as we wrap up this year's pre-opening process.
- Implemented trainings to support schools during Year 1 of operation in the upcoming school year.





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