

TENNESSEE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION	
CORE AUTHORIZING PRINCIPLES	4.200

Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to affirm the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission’s (“Commission”) mission with regard to its authorizing functions as set forth in Commission Policy 4.100. The State Board is committed to implementing national and state authorizing standards as outlined in Commission Policy 4.110 and aligning with the core principles of charter school authorizing set forth below.

Policy Sections

1. Core Authorizing Principles
2. Maintaining High Standards
3. Upholding School Autonomy
4. Protecting Student and Public Interests

1. **Core Authorizing Principles.** The Commission will in all of its endeavors be guided by the following three (3) core authorizing principles: maintaining high standards for charter schools; upholding charter school autonomy; and protecting student and public interests.

2. **Maintaining High Standards.** To maintain high standards, the Commission will:

- a. Set high but attainable standards for the approval of charter schools in its portfolio.
- b. Maintain high standards for the charter schools it oversees.
- c. Hold charter schools accountable for, over time, meeting the performance standards and targets on a range of measures and metrics set forth in their charter agreements.
- d. Close all charter schools in its portfolio that fail to meet the standards and targets set forth in law and under their charter agreements.

3. **Upholding School Autonomy.** To uphold school autonomy, the Commission will:

- a. Honor and preserve the independence of its charter schools’ governing boards.
- b. Preserve core school autonomies related to educational programming, budgeting, personnel, school vision and culture, and scheduling decisions.
- c. Assume responsibility not for the success or failure of individual charter schools in its portfolio, but for holding schools accountable for their performance.
- d. Focus on school accountability for outcomes rather than inputs and processes.
- e. Minimize, within state and federal law, administrative burdens on charter schools in its portfolio.

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4. **Protecting Student and Public Interests.** The well-being and interests of students will be the fundamental value informing all Commission actions and decisions.
- a. The Commission will hold its charter schools accountable for fulfilling fundamental public education obligations to all students, including:
 - i. Non-selective, nondiscriminatory access to all eligible students;
 - ii. Prioritizing the state’s most academically vulnerable students so they can thrive academically and social-emotionally;
 - iii. Fair treatment for all students in admissions and disciplinary actions; and
 - iv. Appropriate services for all enrolled students in accordance with the law.
 - b. The Commission will hold its charter schools accountable for fulfilling fundamental obligations to the public, including that schools provide the following:
 - i. Sound governance, management, and stewardship of public funds; and
 - ii. Public information and operational transparency in accordance with the law.
 - c. When granting a charter and providing oversight to a Commission authorized charter school, the Commission will:
 - i. As part of its mission, focus on chartering high-quality charter schools;
 - ii. Demonstrate clarity, consistency, and public transparency in authorizing policies, practices, and decisions;
 - iii. Maintain effective and efficient public stewardship of its public resources;
 - iv. Comply with all applicable laws and regulations; and
 - v. Employ ethical conduct in all activities.
 - d. The Commission will support parents’ and students’ ability to make informed choices about educational options by providing clear, accurate, and timely information related to performance of the charter schools in the Commission’s portfolio.