



TENNESSEE

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

**NEW START
APPLICATION REVIEW**

MARCH 28, 2025

QUALITY AUTHORIZER

- Grants charters to applicants that have demonstrated **competence and capacity to succeed** in all aspects of their model, **consistent with the state's scoring rubric criteria**.
- Rigorously evaluates each application through **thorough review of the written proposal**, a substantive **in-person interview** with each qualified applicant, and all **appropriate due diligence** to examine the applicant's experience and capacity, conducted by knowledgeable and competent evaluators.
- Engages, for both written application reviews and applicant interviews, highly competent teams of **internal and external evaluators** with relevant educational, organizational (governance and management), financial, and legal **expertise**, as well as thorough **understanding of the essential principles of charter school autonomy and accountability**.

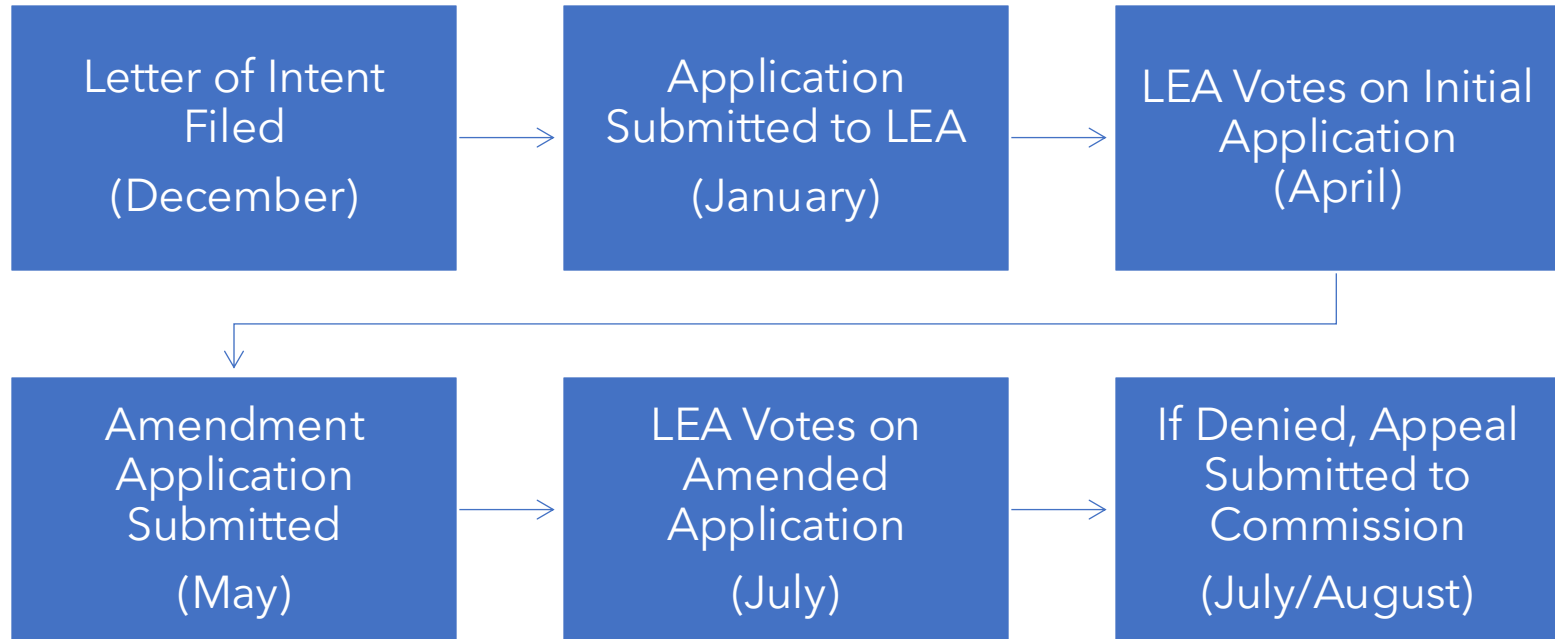


ACTIVE APPLICATIONS

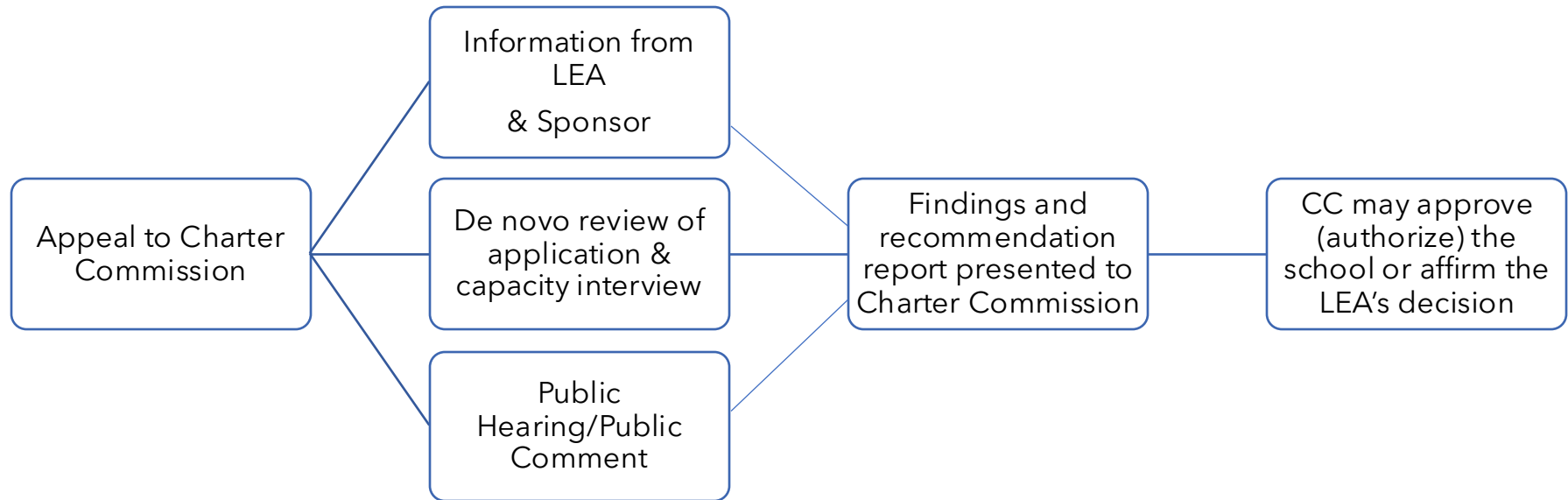
Name of School	District	Type of Application
Little Kings & Queens Charter Academy	Hamilton County Schools	New Start
Tennessee Wildflower Public School	Hamilton County Schools	New Start
Jackson Museum School	Jackson-Madison County Schools	New Start
Dream Catchers Charter School	Memphis-Shelby County Schools	New Start
Hillcrest High School	Memphis-Shelby County Schools	Exit ASD
KIPP Memphis Creative and Performing Arts Elementary School	Memphis-Shelby County Schools	New Start
Kirby Middle School	Memphis-Shelby County Schools	Exit ASD
Still I Rise Academy	Memphis-Shelby County Schools	Opportunity
Rocketship TN 5	Metro Nashville Public Schools	New Start
The Forge School	Metro Nashville Public Schools	New Start
The Rock Academy	Metro Nashville Public Schools	Opportunity
Novus SMART Academy (K-8)	Rutherford County Schools	New Start
Rocketship Rutherford Elementary	Rutherford County Schools	New Start



LEA NEW START PROCESS



APPEALS PROCESS FLOWCHART



A maximum of 75 calendar days



KEY ELEMENTS OF NEW START PROCESS

- **Information Gathering:** Information is gathered from the appellant and LEA, including application details, denial rationale, and LEA's review process.
- **De Novo Application Review:** The Review Committee assesses the amended application and conducts a capacity interview.
- **Public Hearing:** A hearing is held in the proposed school's district. The sponsor and LEA present and answer questions. Public comment is encouraged.
- **Report & Recommendation:** Following the review, interview, and hearing, a committee report and Executive Director's recommendation are drafted.



UPDATES FOR 2025 CYCLE

- **Enhanced Conflict of Interest Procedures:** Review Committee members will provide more detailed information so that Commission can place them on the most appropriate committee.
- **Capacity Interview:** Ensure applicant governing board member(s) attendance at capacity interview.
- **Public Comment:** Continue to refine guidelines to ensure clarity around submitting public comments.
- **Opportunity Charter Schools:** The 2025 new start appeal cycle is the first time the Commission may consider an opportunity public charter school.
- **ASD Transition Schools:** Potential appeals by ASD schools that are at the end of their charter term. ASD schools can apply for a new 10-year term through the new start cycle.



OPPORTUNITY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

- Pursuant to [T.C.A. § 49-13-104](#), opportunity public charter schools are created to serve at-risk students in grades six through twelve (6-12).
- At least seventy-five percent (75%) of the students must be at risk at the time of enrollment.
- Students are considered at-risk if they meet both income requirements and specified criteria related to academic, behavioral, or familial challenges.
- A model school performance framework will be developed by the TDOE to be reflective of this context.



ASD TRANSITION SCHOOLS

- At the end of a ten-year charter, ASD schools can apply for a new ten-year charter term.
- The Commission's decision is focused on the operator's ability to continue operating the school, not whether the school will remain open and operational.
- If an appeal is denied, the Tennessee Department of Education will work with the local district to transition the school and its students back to the local district.
- The Commission's decisions on granting new charter terms to ASD transition schools have varied in the past, with approvals and denials both occurring.





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