



**TENNESSEE**

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

**IMPLEMENTATION OF  
PUBLIC CHAPTER 275**

**JUNE 23, 2025**

# LEGISLATIVE CHANGES



# PUBLIC CHAPTER 275

- Renewal appeal terms
- Streamlining of document development and reporting
- New pathways
  - Higher Education
  - Three denials overturned
  - Replication



# PUBLIC CHAPTER 275

- Renewal appeal terms
  - Allows for term length between five and ten years
  - Applies only to renewal appeals
- Streamlining
  - Applications and rubrics created by the State Board of Education in consultation with the Commission
    - New start, replication, renewal applications
    - Interim review guidance, model performance framework
  - All letters of intent filed with the Commission
  - LEAs must notify the Commission of all application decisions and file a copy of their resolutions; and the receipt of any renewal applications
  - Commission is responsible for posting required information online, such as letters of intent



# PUBLIC CHAPTER 275

- Higher Education
  - Cannot authorize, only sponsor a charter school
  - Can apply directly to the Commission or local LEA
  - Follows existing new start application process and timeline
- Three denials overturned
  - If the Commission overturns three new start decisions by an LEA in a three-consecutive-year period, then sponsors may apply directly for a five-year period
  - Only applies to applications within the geographic bounds of that LEA
  - Not retrospective; timeline begins July 1, 2025



# PUBLIC CHAPTER 275

- Replication
  - New pathway, application, and rubric, effective July 1
  - Intended to replicate an existing charter school with the same academic focus
  - Sponsors who have one charter school open for at least one full school year may apply for replication either to the local LEA or directly to the Commission
  - Must apply to open in the geographic LEA they currently operate in
  - Follows existing new start application process and timeline
  - Commission has rulemaking authority specific to the replication pathway



# OVERVIEW OF PROCESS



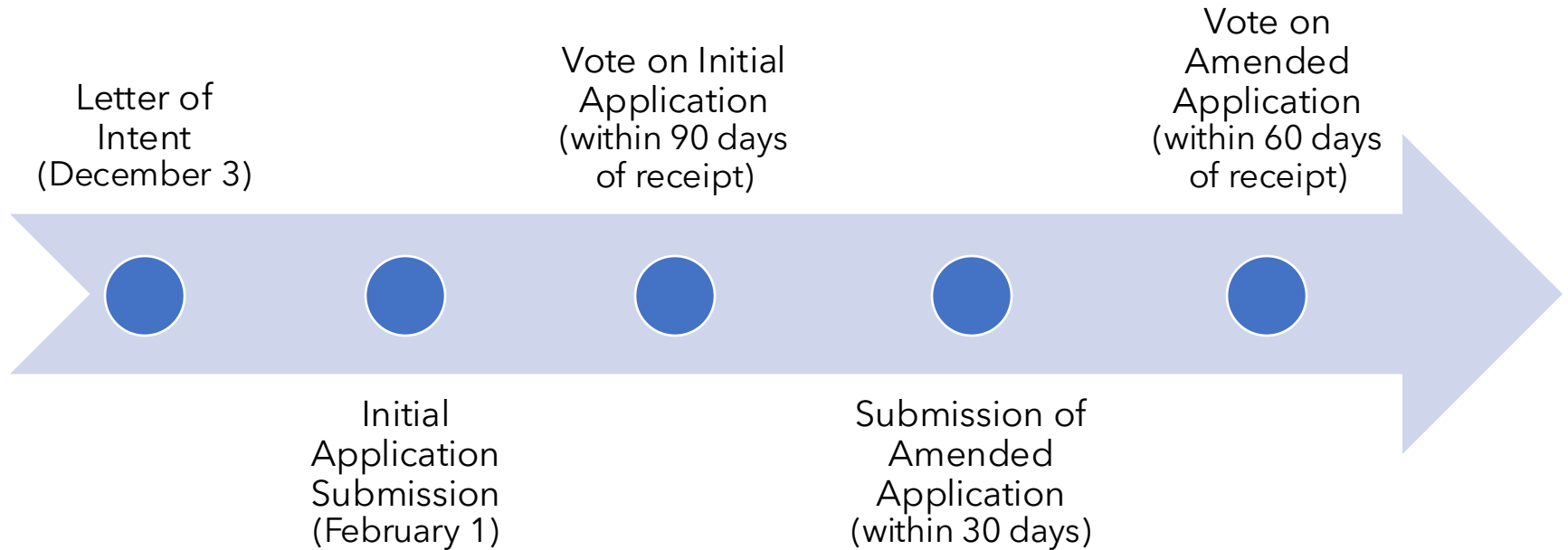
# APPLICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

- Direct application to the Commission is possible under specific circumstances beginning in the 2025-26 cycle.
- T.C.A. § 49-13-108 lays out the timeline for the new start application process which all authorizers, including the Commission, must adhere to.
- All authorizers use the same application and scoring rubrics – now the responsibility of the State Board of Education.





# PROCESS OVERVIEW



# STANDARD OF REVIEW

- Statute and State Board of Education rules set out the broad timelines and expectations for the new start application process.
- All authorizers must use the State Board of Education's Quality Authorizing Standards when reviewing new start applications.
- Key criteria include:
  - Clear and compelling mission
  - Quality educational program
  - Demonstrated community support
  - Solvent and sustainable budget
  - Effectiveness of the model for the target student population
  - Effective governance and management
  - Qualified founding team
  - Capacity to execute the plan
- Applications must meet or exceed the standards in the State Board of Education's scoring rubric to be recommended for approval.
- Authorizers must provide sponsors written reasons for any denial.



# SUBMITTING AN INITIAL APPLICATION

- Notice of intent must be submitted sixty days prior to the application due date (typically December 3).
- Applications are due by February 1 of the year preceding the school's proposed opening.
- Required materials:
  - Application narrative
  - Required attachments
  - Applicable addenda
  - Operating budget template
- Authorizers confirm receipt and notify sponsors of any incomplete item.



# REVIEW COMMITTEE

- Comprised of internal and external experts with diverse backgrounds (academics, operations, finance, legal, etc.)
- Evaluates the application based on the State Board of Education's Application Scoring Rubric
- Conducts a capacity interview with school leaders and governing board
- Develops a consensus rating for each application section
- An application must "meet or exceed the standard" in all sections for recommendation of approval



# INITIAL APPLICATION RECOMMENDATION

- If an initial application is denied, the authorizer is required to provide a written explanation of the objective reasons for the denial.
- This ensures transparency and provides the applicant with clear feedback on the areas that need improvement.



# AMENDED APPLICATION REVIEW

- If an initial application is denied, the sponsor has thirty calendar days from receipt of the denial to submit an amended application.
- The amended application must address the identified deficiencies by using tracked changes or a similar method to clearly show how each deficiency has been resolved.
- This part of the process is not required to include a capacity interview.



# DECISION OF AMENDED APPLICATION

- An authorizer will issue a final decision on the amended application within sixty calendar days of receipt.
- In the case of an application to the Commission, the Commission's decision on the amended application is final and not subject to appeal.
- For applications to the LEA, the sponsor can appeal the denial to the Commission.



# **DEVELOPMENT OF RULES AND POLICIES FOR PC 275**





# RULE V. POLICY

## ■ Rules

- Clear instructions that must be followed
- Require a promulgation process
- Sets forth acts to be performed
  - Application dates
  - Application fees
  - Determination of completeness
  - Application process and timeline

## ■ Policy

- Guidance for decisionmakers
- Provides direction for Commission specific applicants
- Broader in scope
- More adaptable year over year



# TIMELINES AND PROCESSES

- Emergency Rules
  - Requires legal reasoning
  - First and Final Reading - July 2025
  - Attorney General's Office review for constitutionality
  - Effective Dates: August 2025 - January 2026
- Permanent Rules
  - Two Readings - July and October 2025
  - Rulemaking hearing
    - Requires 52 days' notice (45 + 7 notice publication)
    - Held before final reading
- Commission Policy
  - Two Readings - July and October 2025
  - Commission specific considerations
  - Can be revised through Commission action



# STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Application Fee - \$2,500 per initial application
- Notification to local board when replication application is received
- Capacity interviews during the initial application phase
- Public meeting during the initial application phase with notice to local board
- Tracking changes to any corrections to deficiencies



# COMMISSION CONSIDERATION

- Definition of Academic focus
  - “Academic focus” means a distinctive, thematic program such as math, science, arts, general academics, or an instructional program such as Montessori or Paideia (T.C.A. § 49-13-104(1))
  - Does this mean replication of current, approved grade structure and academic focus?
- Public Meeting
  - How do you want to see a public meeting/public comment incorporated in a recommendation? How much does it weigh into the application review?
- Additional Application Considerations
  - Within the replication application, what do Commissioners want to receive for consideration in the review of applications from operators not authorized by the Commission?



# NEXT STEPS

- Commission staff will use considerations to determine what goes into rule and what goes into policy.
- At the July meeting, Commissioners will consider:
  - Emergency Rules – First and Final Reading
  - Permanent Rules – First Reading
  - Policy – First Reading
- Additional stakeholder engagement will occur between first and final reading.
- An external Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will be developed to inform stakeholders of key information related to the new process.



# OTHER UPDATES

- New Start Appeals for the 2025 Cycle
  - The Commission will hold a special-called meeting in late August/early September to handle any MNPS Appeals.
  - This is a result of MNPS voting on amended applications in June rather than July.
  - Staff will poll Commissioner availability to identify a special-called meeting date.
  - Further information regarding meeting dates and logistics will be provided and posted to the Commission's website in the future.





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