



# Start·a·School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

## Alabama

### Charter Schools

The Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act enacted as Act No. 2015-3, was effective March 19, 2015, to provide for public charter schools as a part of the public education system of the state of Alabama. A public charter school shall not be established in Alabama unless authorized by the Act and the rules and regulations of the Alabama State Board of Education.

For more information regarding Alabama Charter Schools or Charter School Authorizing, please contact (334) 694-4720.

### Steps to Start a Charter School

**Step One:** The process for starting a charter school begins with understanding the two types of charter schools that can be created in Alabama: conversion charter schools and start-up charter schools.

A conversion charter school is one in which a traditional school system identifies one of its existing schools to be converted into a charter school that will operate with an independent school board but will remain a school within the system. Local school systems must register with the Alabama Department of Education to become authorizers of conversion and start-up charter schools. The Alabama Public Charter School Commission (APCSC) does not serve a role in the conversion charter school process since the local school system serves as its authorizer.

A start-up charter school is a new public school established by a nonprofit organization to operate independently from any other school system. Start-up charter schools can have one of two possible authorizers: a local school system authorizer or the APCSC serving as an authorizer. If an applicant chooses to locate the school in the geographic location of a local authorizer, the applicant must apply to that school system. If the local school system is not an authorizer in that area, the applicant applies to the APCSC. If an applicant is denied by a local school system authorizer, the applicant can appeal to the APCSC. The APCSC cannot be the authorizer of a conversion charter school.

Local school systems that serve as authorizers are Athens City School System, Birmingham City School System, Choctaw County School System, Dothan City School System, Elmore County School System, Fairfield City School System, Greene County School System, Houston County School System, Macon County School System, Montgomery County School System, Russellville City School System, and Selma City School System. All authorizers must release the request for proposal by November 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

[Click here to start the application process.](#)

**Step Two:** Obtain federal 501(c)3 nonprofit status for your organization, identify a geographic location, and engage the community in the process.

**Step Three:** Find a facility. Although this step is not required for the application, it is strongly recommended.

**Step Four:** Understand funding for charter schools: local, state, federal, and philanthropic.

**Step Five:** Access to the application can be found at the following link:

<https://application-hub.anvilar.com/my-applications/initiate/659ed8ff74c3bf00122d3dd0/organization/6500d523553ace00118d8318>

The APCSC has two application cycles. One application is released in September and due in December. The second application is released in January and is due in March. Decisions are made within 60 days of the submission date.

### **The Appeals Process:**

**Step One:** A local authorizer that denies a charter school applicant must send a report with findings, the denied application, and all other submitted documents to the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). The local authorizer has thirty days from the date of the denial to submit the report.

**Step Two:** The denied charter school applicant files an appeal with the Alabama Charter School Commission (APCSC). The appeal should contain the denied application and other documents submitted to the local authorizer. It should explain the reasons for the appeal.

**Step Three:** The APCSC informs the local authorizer that an appeal has been filed. The local authorizer appoints an eleventh member from the local school system to serve on the Commission through board action.

**Step Four:** The APCSC must receive a letter of intent to appeal from the denied applicant within 30 days of the local authorizer's vote to deny. The APCSC will strive to work within 60 days of the submitted materials; however, the APCSC reserves the right to modify dates for full and thoughtful consideration.

**Step Five:** The APCSC will hold an open community hearing opportunity for public comment within the local school system where the application was denied.

**Step Six:** The APCSC will hold a capacity hearing for clarifying questions.

**Step Seven:** The APCSC will meet for the consideration of the appeal.

**In order to overrule the decision of the local authorizer, the APCSC must do the following:**

- Find evidence of a thorough and high-quality application from the applicant based on authorizing standards.
- Hold an open community hearing within the local school system where the application was denied.
- Find that the local authorizer's denial was not supported by the application and exhibits.
- Take into consideration (1) the existing charter school applications (2) the quality of school options in the affected community (3) the existence of other charter schools, and (4) any other factors considered relevant to ensure the establishment of high-quality charter schools.

## **Statutes and Rules**

- [CHAPTER 290-3-6 CHARTER SCHOOLS](#)

## **Resources**

### **Application Process Resources**

- [Alabama Aerospace and Aviation High School Charter Application to Bham City](#)
- [Final I Dream Big Academy Charter School Application](#)
- [Alabama Public Charter School Appeals Process](#)
- [Charter School Application Process](#)
- [Empower Application 3 12 21](#)
- [Charter School Application](#)
- [APCSC Application Rubric 6 2020](#)
- [Breakthrough Charter Application July 2020](#)
- [Ivy Classical Academy July 2020 Application](#)
- [Knowledge Unlimited Application July 2020](#)
- [Magic City Acceptance Academy Application July 2020](#)
- [Breakthrough Charter School Application Evaluation-August 2020-Final](#)

- [Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School Application Evaluation August 2020 FINAL](#)
- [Ivy Classical Academy Application Evaluation August 2020 FINAL](#)
- [Magic City Acceptance Academy Application Evaluation August 2020 FINAL](#)
- [AAHS Approved Charter School Application](#)
- [Budget Format 1 File Upload Format Updated 2018](#)
- [Budget Format 2 OUTLINE OF THE ACCOUNTING MANUAL](#)
- [Budget Format 3 Accounting and File Upload Information](#)
- [Budget Format File Format for LEAPS Financial Updated trs](#)
- [State Guide to Allocations 2020 21](#)
- [Timeline For Charter School Applications for A 2024 Opening](#)
- [Timeline For Charter School Applications for A 2025 Opening](#)

### **Charter School Appeal and Application Spring Submissions 2021**

- [Alabama Aerospace and Aviation High School - Birmingham](#)
- [Alabama Aerospace and Aviation High School with Attachments](#)
- [I Dream Big Academy - Montgomery](#)
- [Empower Community School - Bessemer](#)

### **Charter School Appeal and Application Submissions 2022**

- [Covenant Academy Application](#)
- [Covenant Academy Review](#)
- [Floretta P Carson Application](#)
- [Floretta P Carson Review](#)
- [Freedom Prep Application/Appeal](#)
- [Freedom Prep Review](#)
- [Red Tails Preparatory Application/Appeal](#)
- [Red Tails Preparatory Review](#)
- [Barnabas School of Leadership](#)
- [Barnabas School of Leadership 1](#)
- [Barnabas School of Leadership 2](#)

## Resolutions

- [Breakthrough Charter School Resolution](#)
- [Ivy Classical Academy Resolution](#)
- [Knowledge Unlimited Resolution](#)
- [Magic City Acceptance Academy Resolution](#)
- [Covenant Academy Resolution](#)
- [Freedom Prep Resolution](#)
- [Floretta P Carson Resolution](#)
- [Red Tails Preparatory Resolution](#)