



Start a School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

Tennessee

Charter Schools

Charter schools are public schools operated by independent, non-profit governing bodies. In Tennessee, public charter school students are measured against the same academic standards as students in other public schools.

The Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act is contained in [Tennessee Code Annotated Title 49, Chapter 13](#), and [Tenn. Code Ann. 8-35-242](#).

Steps to Start a Charter School

The first step in creating a Charter School is to register as a corporation with the Tennessee [Secretary of State](#). This is usually a non-profit LLC.

Application to Start a New Charter School

On or before 11:59 p.m. CT on February 1 of the year preceding the year in which the proposed public charter school plans to begin operation, the charter school sponsor seeking to establish a public charter school shall prepare and file an electronic copy of the state charter school application with the authorizer and the department.

1. An application will be considered complete if it includes all the contents outlined in the “Application to Create a Charter School” updated annually and available on their webpage.
2. Applicants may be required to submit up to five hard copies, and one electronic copy of the application materials to the authorizer; AND one electronic copy of the complete application to the Tennessee Department of Education, Office of Charter Schools.
3. Charter authorizers may charge a charter school application fee of up to \$2,500 for each charter school application.
4. In addition to the state charter application, each local board of education may ask charter school sponsors to address additional priorities. If provided, this supplementary guidance has been linked below.

Charter School Application Documents and Resources

Charter Creation Application Components

- Charter School Creation Application Guidance – [PDF](#)
- Intent Template – [DOC](#) | [PDF](#)
- Charter School Creation Application Requirements – [PDF](#)
- Charter School Creation Application Template – [DOC](#)
- Charter School Creation Application Operating Budget Template – [EXCEL](#)
- Charter School Creation Application Portfolio and Performance Template – [EXCEL](#)
- Charter School Creation Application Authorizer Priorities and Supporting Materials
 - [Knox County Schools Application](#)
- Charter School Creation Application Evaluation Guidance and Review Tool – [DOC](#) | [PDF](#)

Application to Transition ASD School to Home LEA

- Letter of Intent – ASD School Transition - [DOC](#) | [PDF](#)
- [Application to Transition to an ASD School](#)
- [Charter School Application Budget Template](#)
- [Portfolio Review Template](#)
- [ASD School Transition to Home LEA Application Scoring Rubric](#)

Planning Resources

- Tennessee Charter School Program
 - Review the [Grants page](#) as we post additional information about funding for available for newly authorized Tennessee charter school operators planning and implementation of a new charter school
- Vacant and Underutilized Facilities Reports
 - Per Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-13-136, an LEA having underutilized or vacant properties shall make the underutilized or vacant properties available for use by charter schools operating in the LEA.
 - FY2024 Reports:
 - [Achievement School District](#)
 - Hamilton County - No Current Vacancies Reported
 - Knox County Schools – No Current Vacancies Reported
 - [Memphis Shelby County Schools](#)
 - [Metro Nashville Public Schools](#)
 - Rutherford County Schools– No Current Vacancies Reported

Statutes and Rules

- [Tenn. Code Ann. Title 49, Chapter 10, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)

- Tennessee Code Annotated Title 49, Chapter 13: Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002
 - [49-13-101. Short title.](#)
 - [49-13-102. Purpose.](#)
 - [49-13-103. Application.](#)
 - [49-13-104. Chapter definitions.](#)
 - [49-13-105. Public charter school commission.](#)
 - [49-13-106. Creation or conversion of charter schools.](#)
 - [49-13-107. Application process.](#)
 - [49-13-108. Approval or denial of public charter school application by public charter school authorizers.](#)
 - [49-13-109. Parent representative on governing body — Advisory school council.](#)
 - [49-13-110. Charter agreement.](#)
 - [49-13-111. Compliance.](#)
 - [49-13-112. Allocation of state and local funds and federal funds.](#)
 - [49-13-113. Enrollment.](#)
 - [49-13-114. Transportation.](#)
 - [49-13-115. Authority to open or close public charter school to in-person learning and instruction during state of emergency.](#)
 - [49-13-116. Information on charter schools.](#)
 - [49-13-117. Leaves of absence for teachers.](#)
 - [49-13-118. Artificial intelligence — Adoption and implementation of artificial intelligence policies.](#)
 - [49-13-119. Eligibility to participate in group insurance plans.](#)
 - [49-13-120. Reporting requirements.](#)
 - [49-13-121. Renewal of charter — Voluntary closure.](#)
 - [49-13-122. Revocation of charter.](#)
 - [49-13-123. \[Repealed\]](#)
 - [49-13-124. Charter school powers.](#)
 - [49-13-125. Immunity.](#)
 - [49-13-126. Promulgation of rules and regulations.](#)

- [49-13-127. Audits.](#)
- [49-13-128. Annual authorizer fee.](#)
- [49-13-129. \[Repealed\]](#)
- [49-13-130. Closure of charter school.](#)
- [49-13-131. \[Repealed\]](#)
- [49-13-132. List of student names, ages, addresses, dates of attendance and grade levels completed.](#)
- [49-13-133. Establishment of opportunity public charter schools — Annual evaluations — Establishment of alternative education programs — Compliance with federal requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act.](#)
- [49-13-134. Establishment of non-charter public schools of innovation.](#)
- [49-13-135. Method of calculating all terms and costs related to lease, lease-purchase agreement, or other contract or agreement between LEA and charter school.](#)
- [49-13-136. Use of capital outlay funds — Contracting for goods and services — Underutilized and vacant properties.](#)
- [49-13-137. \[Reserved.\]](#)
- [49-13-138. \[Repealed\]](#)
- [49-13-139. \[Repealed\]](#)
- [49-13-140. \[Repealed\]](#)
- [49-13-141. LEAs sponsoring public charter schools.](#)
- [49-13-142. Oversight and monitoring of charter schools authorized by state board upon appeal from denial of approval of a charter school application by certain LEAs.](#)
- [49-13-143. Performance framework.](#)
- [49-13-144. Public charter schools facilities program.](#)
- [49-13-145. Effective operation of authorizers — Authorizer quality.](#)
- [Tenn. Code Ann. 8-35-242: Teachers and employees of a public charter school.](#)
- [Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 8-44-101 et seq.; 10- 7-503, 504: Open Meetings and Open Records laws](#)

- [Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-19-101](#). Requiring any member of the governing body, employee, officer, or other authorized person who receives funds, has access to funds, or has authority to make expenditures from funds, to give a surety bond.

Rules of the Tennessee Department of Education & State Board of Education

- [Introduction](#) Table of Contents and Administrative History
- 0520-01 State Board of Education Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards for the Operation of the Public School System
 - [0520-01-01](#) Preface
 - [0520-01-02](#) District and School Operations
 - [0520-01-03](#) Academic and Instructional Requirements
 - [0520-01-04](#) School Facilities
 - [0520-01-05](#) Pupil Transportation
 - [0520-01-06](#) Child Nutrition Programs
 - [0520-01-07](#) Career and Technical Education
 - [0520-01-08](#) Creation or Reactivation of City School Systems
 - [0520-01-09](#) Special Education Programs and Services
 - [0520-01-10](#) Repealed (Transferred to [0465-04-01](#))
 - [0520-01-11](#) Individualized Education Accounts
 - [0520-01-12](#) Education of Justice-Involved Students
 - [0520-01-13](#) School and Student Health Services
 - [0520-01-14](#) Course Access Program
 - [0520-01-15](#) Court-Ordered Day Treatment Facilities
 - [0520-01-16](#) Education Savings Accounts
 - [0520-01-17](#) Continuous Learning Plans
 - [0520-01-18](#) Textbook and Instructional Materials Waivers
 - [0520-01-19](#) English as a Second Language Programs
 - [0520-01-20](#) Residential Mental Health Facilities
 - [0520-01-21](#) Civil Rights Compliance
 - [0520-01-22](#) Dyslexia Individualized Learning Plans
 - [0520-01-23](#) Interscholastic Athletics
- **0520-02 State Board of Education Teacher Regulations**

- [0520-02-01](#) Evaluations
- [0520-02-02](#) Career Ladder
- [0520-02-03](#) Educator Licensure
- [0520-02-04](#) Educator Preparation
- [0520-02-05](#) Occupational Educator Scholarship Program
- [0520-02-06](#) Employment Standards
- [0520-02-07](#) LEA Teacher Training Programs
- **0520-03 Repealed**
 - [0520-03-01](#) Repealed
- **0520-04 State Board of Education Teacher Regulations**
 - [0520-04-01](#) Employees of the State Special Schools
 - [0520-04-02](#) Reductions in Force - State Special Schools
 - [0520-04-03](#) Administrative Rules - State Special Schools
 - [0520-04-04](#) Repealed
- **0520-05 State Textbook Commission**
 - [0520-05-01](#) Supplement to Contract - Policies of Tennessee State Textbook Commission
- **0520-06 Repealed**
 - [0520-06-01 through 0520-06-35](#) Repealed
- **0520-07 State Board of Education Non-Public Schools**
 - [0520-07-01](#) Non-Public Schools Administrative Rules
 - [0520-07-02](#) Non-Public School Approval Process
 - [0520-07-03](#) Repealed
- **0520-08 State Board of Education Educational Television**
 - [0520-08-01](#) Repealed
- **0520-09 State Board of Education Board Hearings**
 - [0520-09-01](#) Hearing Procedures and Public Meetings
- **0520-10 Repealed**
 - [0520-10-01](#) Repealed
- **0520-11 Repealed**
 - [0520-11-01](#) Repealed

- **0520-12 Department of Education Office of the Commissioner**
 - [0520-12-01](#) Standards for School-Administered Child Care Programs
 - [0520-12-02](#) Rules of Procedure for Hearing Contested Cases
 - [0520-12-03](#) Public Records
 - [0520-12-04](#) Prohibited Concepts in Instruction
 - [0520-12-05](#) Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA)
- **0520-13 Energy Efficient Schools Council**
 - [0520-13-01](#) Energy Efficient Schools Loan Program
- **0520-14 Charter Schools**
 - [0520-14-01](#) Charter Schools
 - [0520-14-02](#) Charter School Waiver Requests
 - [0520-14-03](#) Achievement School District
- **0520-15 Public Records Requests**
 - [0520-15-01](#) Public Records Requests
- **0520-16 Tennessee Commission on Education Recovery and Innovation**
 - [0520-16-01](#) Public Records Requests
- **0520-17 through 0520-19 Reserved**
 - [0520-17 through 0520-19](#) Reserved
- **0520-20 Repealed**
 - [0520-20-01](#) Repealed

Resources

Charter School Operators & Authorizers

Tennessee law requires each public charter school to report certain information on an annual basis. The required information is submitted to the chartering authority and the State. The information in annual reports should help school operators, chartering authorities, policymakers, and parents make decisions that will lead to improving achievement of all public school students.

Charter school operators may use annual reports to measure progress toward the goals outlined in their charter, adjust operations based on this information, and gauge the likelihood of renewal of their charters. Chartering authorities may use annual reports to provide effective oversight of charter schools, share best practices across all schools in their jurisdiction, and to make renewal, nonrenewal or revocation decisions. Operators, authorizers, and policymakers

may use annual reports to measure the return on investment in schools and programs. They may then use this information to support existing high-performing schools and programs, foster more innovative school models, and decrease the number of low-performing schools.

Important Information

- [Charter Operator Reporting Requirements](#)
- [Interim Review Guidelines](#)
- [Charter School Enrollment and Lottery Procedures](#)
- [Charter Operator Annual Progress & Financial Report Guidance](#)

Charter School Funding

- [Guidance on Significant Expansion](#)
- [Charter School Funding Overview FY18](#)
- [Charter School Funding Overview FY19](#)
- [Charter School Funding Overview FY20](#)

Authorizer Resources

- [Authorizer Fee Guidance](#)
- [Authorizer Fee Report Template](#)
- [Authorizer Reporting Requirements](#)
- [Annual Report Guidance for Charter School Authorizers](#) (Deadline: January 1, 2025)
 - Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-120(c) and the State Board of Education's (State Board) Quality Charter Authorizing Standards, each authorizer shall submit to the Tennessee Department of Education(TDOE) and State Board an annual authorizing report by January 1 of each year. **Note: If the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or state-observed holiday, the required report shall be due on the next business day.**
- [Charter Closure Guidance](#)
- [Interim Review Guidelines](#)
- [Model Charter School Performance Framework](#)
- [NACSA's Principles & Standards for Quality Authorizing](#)
- [Underutilized or Vacant Properties Report Guidelines](#)
- [Underutilized or Vacant Properties Report Template](#)

Contact Information

Send an email to Charter.Schools@tn.gov.