

Charter School Authorization Handbook



METRO
NASHVILLE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Exceeding Great Expectations

Office of Charter Schools
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General Application/Authorization Process

The vision of the MNPS Office of Charter Schools is a world where all children and communities are empowered through exemplary public schools, and our mission is to authorize excellent public schools that change lives.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to enhance the clarity and utility of critical information for potential applicants. We strongly recommended that applicants read all the guidelines and use them in developing their responses to the charter application. The Office of Charter Schools staff and review teams consider all elements of the guidance when assessing the quality of proposals.

MNPS seeks charter school applications to cultivate strong school capacity in order to provide high quality academic instruction for all students. The purpose of MNPS charter schools is to advance the district's vision for excellence and diversity while meeting the needs of a growing city for new school capacity. Therefore, this call for proposals is shaped by analysis of the academic performance of schools, and the diversity goals of the MNPS Diversity Management Plan.

The analysis of these factors suggests that MNPS seek new school proposals that offer one or more of the following:

1. Advance academic achievement for students currently enrolled in schools that underperform (Review and Target) over multiple years on the Academic Performance Framework (APF).
2. Add to and do not diminish the number of schools with student enrollment diversity in Nashville.
3. Demonstrate a strong record of success in improving academic achievement in literacy.
4. Demonstrate a strong record of success in improving academic achievement for English Language Learners.
5. Demonstrate a strong record of success in improving academic achievement for students with disabilities.



Background

MNPS is the 41st largest urban school district in the nation. The consolidated city-county district covers Nashville and Davidson County, an area of about 525 square miles.

MNPS is a vast and diverse school system, serving students from more than 120 different countries, speaking almost as many languages. MNPS has evolved into one of the most racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse school districts in the country. The district is comprised of 171 schools, serving more than 85,000 students.

A nine-member elected Board and its appointed Director of Schools leads the school district. The Board provides leadership and policy direction to MNPS. As the Board has no taxing authority, the Metropolitan Nashville City Council approves and provides the funding for the school system. Based on a solid foundation of excellence, MNPS has taken public education into the 21st Century with zeal, integrity, creativity, and with growing support of, and collaboration with, city leaders and stakeholders.

The MNPS charter schools serve approximately 13% of the District's students. In the past seven years, growth in charter capacity has been rapid and of high quality. During this important initial phase of the district's high-performing schools strategy, the Office of Charter Schools has developed consistent and strong authorizing practices aligned with the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) Principles and Standards, found at www.qualitycharters.org/publications-resources/principles-standards.html. MNPS has demonstrated the ability to cultivate strong new schools, support their integration into district strategy and facilities, and deploy them to meet the district needs for capacity, quality, and academic excellence. Tough decisions, whether to deny popular but incomplete applications, or revoke charters when schools do not meet ambitious academic performance targets, have also been a part of this important work. The stage is set for deeper strategic integration of new schools through this approach to quality authorizing.

Application Cycle

The Application Cycle comes at the nexus of important work to define and compare academic performance across schools, the value of highly effective instruction in diverse and personalized settings, and the maturation of several high performing start-up schools. MNPS seeks, and will authorize, new schools with the capacity to operate excellent organizations that drive significant academic gains for all students.

The ambitious goals are supported by the common performance measures that apply equally across all schools in the district regardless of type. The Academic Performance Framework

(APF), which has balanced benchmarked results in student growth, achievement, gap closure, school culture, and college/career readiness to report on annual school performance will be replaced with a new academic framework begin developed in conjunction with the State Board of Education and the Tennessee Department of Education. The new framework will align with the new ESSA requirements from the federal and state government.

MNPS views school performance and diversity of enrollment as critical factors of success flowing from its vision. Schools are also assessed according to the diversity of their enrollment using the framework adopted in the MNPS Board's Diversity Management Plan. The diversity framework promotes equity and excellence by analyzing racial diversity as well as socioeconomic needs, special needs, and English Learner enrollments in each school. Nashville's diversity is an asset that our schools strive to embrace alongside our pursuit of academic excellence. We believe that neither the full value of academic excellence nor diversity is realized in the absence of the other.

MNPS charter schools must develop and implement diversity plans that are consistent with the goals and measures in the District's plan, and applications are reviewed for the quality of their plans as well as the impact of those plans on the overall district diversity strategy. Proposals must be specific concerning recruiting and enrollment strategies that will result in a diverse school as outlined in the district's Diversity Management Plan. As of 2017-18, according to the MNPS definition of diversity, 66% of our charter schools are diverse.

Since 2009, charter school growth in MNPS has been strong. Charter schools operate under strict accountability and are recommended to the Board of Education for revocation any time their three-year status on the Academic Performance Framework is in "Falls Far Below Standard" status. Recommendation for revocation may also occur if a school is included on the State of Tennessee's Priority List for schools performing in the bottom 5% of achievement statewide (based on the state-calculated success rate composed of a 3-year average of Reading/Language Arts, Math, and Science proficiency rates). Likewise, charter schools are expected to maintain exemplary and transparent financial practices, sound organizational policies and processes, and compliance with applicable health and safety laws. Charter schools in MNPS are expected to provide equal access to students with disabilities and English Language Learners just the same as district-run schools. Because of this expectation and commitment, the rates of inclusion in Nashville's schools have remained strong.

MNPS issues this guidance for new schools in order to advance the best interests of the students of Davidson County, thus expanding the accessible opportunities for academic excellence and diversity available to families and students. Decisions regarding location, facility plans, and transportation plans represent formal commitments that are evaluated for their ability to contribute to the clear and ambitious goals set by the MNPS Board of Education. All applications are evaluated according to:

- the quality of the academic plan, and
- the quality of the financial management/business plan, and
- the quality of the operational plan, and
- the overall capacity of the sponsor as demonstrated by the application that offers clear evidence of its ability to deliver high quality educational opportunities, build a sustainable institution capable of serving students as outlined in its application, and is of clear and compelling benefit to the community.

Applicants who demonstrate this strong capacity for success will also be evaluated on their ability to advance the best interests of students, the district, and the community of Nashville.

The Tennessee Charter Law provides that districts may authorize charters that are in the “best interests of the pupils, school district, or community”, (TCA §49-13-108). MNPS issues this annual guidance for quality schools in order to clarify and define what the MNPS strategic vision seeks to advance. Our expectation is that **Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools will provide every student with the foundation of knowledge, skills, and character necessary to excel in higher education, work, and life. We embrace and value a diverse student population and community. Different perspectives and backgrounds form the cornerstone of our strong public education system.**

Additional Guiding Indicators

MNPS encourages all charter school applicants who wish to open schools in 2019 to **identify independent facilities**. Regardless of where applicants propose to locate, all applicants responding to this guidance will address how their proposed school will directly benefit the students and families in the community(ies) they seek to serve. It is the responsibility of a successful new school to actively draw on local assets and contribute to the life of the community in which they locate. Successful applicants will demonstrate strong ties to the particular community in which their proposed school will be located and provide evidence of parent and community demand and support. Partnerships with parents, community and faith-based organizations, local residents, and other stakeholders are a valuable component of the new school development process. Prioritizing community engagement enables new school developers to effectively provide the most comprehensive and relevant educational opportunities to their respective student populations.

Schools that do not serve the best interest of the students, the district, or the community, or that lack a strong facility plan and commitment deadline will be recommended for denial. The district may utilize its facility capacity to attract and support strong school operators to develop, but such discussions do not constitute a right to occupy a particular facility, and we reserve the right to seek additional capacity through the charter application process in order to meet the needs of a growing district enrollment.



Process and Requirements for Charter School Applicants

Letter of Intent

Applicants are required to submit a letter of intent (LOI) to both MNPS and the State of Tennessee 60 days prior to submitting a completed application on **February 1** each year (unless February 1 falls on a weekend or holiday, and then submission can occur on the next business day). The deadline for the letter of intent is **December 3** (unless December 3 falls on a weekend or holiday, and then submission can occur on the next business day). Only those applicants submitting a complete letter of intent on or before **December 3** will be eligible to submit full proposals for the 2020 application cycle. **(see the state website for details concerning what is to be included in the LOI).**

All letters of intent become public record after submission to MNPS. Submission of a proposal is an official waiver of confidentiality, notwithstanding any statements to the contrary that may be contained within the proposal, or in any other notifications submitted by the proposer.

Application Logistics

The proposal must follow the Charter School Application as found on the State of Tennessee website (<https://www.tn.gov/education/school-options/charter-schools/charter-school-application.html>). The application clearly describes the sections that apply to new starts and replications. Applicants should look closely at the application scoring rubric, also found on the State of Tennessee website. The scoring rubric clearly outlines the criteria under which each section will be evaluated by reviewers.

Full application proposals are due on February 1 by no later than 4:30 p.m. CT. MNPS will not accept any proposals received before or after this date. Late or incomplete applications will be returned at the applicant's expense or will be destroyed after 30 days. Applications must be accompanied by a \$2,500.00 application fee made out to the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. In the event an application is insufficient and returned to the applicant without review, the fee will be returned.

All submitted proposals become public record after submission to MNPS. Submission of a proposal is an official waiver of confidentiality, notwithstanding any statements to the contrary that may be contained within the proposal, or in any other notifications submitted by the proposer.

- Applications must include sections and numbering that align with and correspond to each set of questions found on the application. Full proposals should include a table of contents noting the page number on which each section and each appendix begins.
- **One electronic copy (pdf) and five (5) hard copies of the application are required.** The electronic copy is considered the master copy in the event of discrepancies, and may be submitted through e-mail, flash drive, or Drop Box. E-mailed proposals should be submitted to Dr. John Thomas at john.thomas@mnps.org. Hard copies should be submitted to Dr. John Thomas at this address:

Dr. John Thomas
Metropolitan Nashville Board of Public Education
Office of Charter Schools
2601 Bransford Avenue
Nashville, TN 37204

- Applicants should copy each question as posed on the application at the beginning of each section, and sub-sections should be clearly referenced in the answers. The questions may be in smaller font if preferred to save space. Each section, sub-section and appendix should be tabbed, labeled, and inserted into a three-ring binder. **(NOTE: Loose applications, or those not in binders, will be sent back to the applicant without review).**
- Applications must be typed with at least 1-inch page margins and no smaller than 11 point font (suggested fonts are Times New Roman, Ariel, or Calibri).
- Applications must not exceed 350 pages including appendices, but excluding the budget document and the diversity plan.
- Pages should be numbered consecutively.
- Appendix items should be clearly labeled at the top and bottom of the page citing the title of the appendix and the section of the proposal to which it corresponds.
- Applicant must be a 501(c)(3) non-profit, or submit evidence that they have applied for such status as per Tennessee Charter Law.
- Each governing body resume should be labeled with the individual's affiliation with the proposed school (e.g. design team, founding Board member, treasurer, etc.) **Note: It is suggested that resumes be no more than 1-2 pages so the page restrictions can be observed.**
- If a specific question does not apply to the proposed school, please respond "Not Applicable" , with a rationale explaining why that particular question does not apply to your organization.
- Spell out all acronyms the first time they are mentioned in the application.
- Do not assume that reviewers are familiar with all of the organizations, programs, service providers, curricula, vendors, etc., referenced in your

application. Please provide descriptions either in the text or in a footnote.

- When citing research studies, or articles, please include full citations in a footnote or separate reference section. **Research should be current and relevant to the premises outlined in the application.**
- Replicators should provide links to their original applications. It is highly likely that the reviewers who are evaluating the application to expand an existing school are not the same ones who reviewed the original application. Providing access to the original application gives some context to the current one.

Proposals will be checked for completeness to ensure all components of the application have been thoroughly addressed and all required attachments have been provided. **Applications missing components or required attachments may not be considered for further review.**

The following constitutes a complete submission:

- All required questions in the state charter application have been addressed
- All attachments have been provided
- Required financial documents on the correct forms provided by the state have been attached
- Diversity Plan is included
- Required formatting as described in this application guidance has been followed
- Required application fee is attached
- Required number of bound copies have been submitted

Application Review

The application review consists of an evaluation of the application as submitted and an interview with the prospective applicant and their proposed governing board. The district has 90 calendar days from February 1 to submit recommendations to the MNPS Board of Education and for the Board to vote on those recommendations. Please note the exact timeline outlined in this guidance.

The application review will include the following steps:

- 1) Each application will be reviewed by the Executive Director of Charter Schools, Director of Charter Schools, and the Coordinator of Charter Schools independently using the appropriate forms. The applications will be reviewed for:
 - Academic Plan Capacity
 - Operational Plan Capacity
 - Financial/Business Plan Capacity
 - Evidence of overall capability to open and sustain long-term a high quality learning environment that offers opportunities to all students
- 2) Each charter application will also be reviewed by a team lead. Each reviewer will complete a separate evaluation report and submit it to the Office of Charter Schools that represents the consensus of the evaluation team.
- 3) Legal/technical review of specific sections will be undertaken by qualified reviewers with the appropriate expertise. Discipline, finance, special education, 504, and ELL will be reviewed by thoroughly trained application evaluators with expertise in those areas. Facilities, transportation, and insurance will similarly be reviewed by reviewers with expertise in those areas.
- 4) The Office of Charter Schools, team leads, and review teams will review the independent reviewers' reports and prepare questions and develop a scenerio to elicit further specific information during a capacity interview with each applicant and their governing board.
- 5) The purpose of the interview and scenerio phase is to evaluate the capacity of the leadership team, governing board members, and others in the proposed organization as they address specific questions and/or concerns that have arisen during the review process. Both internal and external reviewers may be added to the interview team as needed. During the interview, the Executive Director of Charter Schools, the Director of Charter Schools, the Coordinator of Charter Schools, the team lead, and team members

will ask specific questions to draw out further information and may record sound bites, conclusions, objective strengths, weaknesses and questions for further consideration when making a recommendation to the MNPS Board of Education.

- 6) At the conclusion of both the written application review and the capacity interview with each applicant, the Office of Charter Schools and the team leads, in conjunction with the expert satellite reviewers, will reach a consensus recommendation for each applicant.
- 7) The recommendation report will be compiled from the combined analysis of this entire process and presented to the MNPS Board of Education for their review and vote on each application presented.

It is important for applicants to remember that strength in one area of the application does not negate weaknesses in other areas. Every area (Academic Plan, Operational Plan, Financial Plan, and Evidence of Capacity) must meet or exceed standard to be recommended for approval to the MNPS Board of Education. The standards are specifically outlined in each section of the scoring rubric.

- 8) Tennessee law authorizes consideration of “substantial negative fiscal impact” in decisions to deny charter applications (TCA §49-13-108 (b). “An authorizer may consider whether the establishment of the charter school will have a substantial negative fiscal impact on the LEA such that authorization of the charter school would be contrary to the best interests of the pupils, school district or community.”

In order to assist the MNPS Board of Education with consideration of “substantial negative fiscal impact,” the Office of Charter Schools will make its presentation of the work of the review teams to the Board in the following manner:

- Schools which do not meet or exceed quality thresholds will be recommended for denial on objective grounds, and those grounds will be provided to the Board for its consideration in approving or rejecting those recommendations.
- Administration will continue to articulate the per school fiscal impact of all new schools proposed so the Board may consider the possibility that new schools, if approved, would carry substantial, negative fiscal impact (be unaffordable).
- Administration will rank order applications recommended for approval so Board members may take potential approvals one-by-one in descending order of need and determine, as a Board, the threshold beyond which further approval constitutes substantial negative fiscal impact.



Timeline for submission of new application for a Charter School Opening in 2021

Due Date:	Item:
December 3, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters of Intent (LOI) Deadline to MNPS and TN Department of Education Office of School Choice
February 1, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed charter applications are due in the Office of Charter Schools with MNPS no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications will be checked for completeness
February 2, 2020 – February 21, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Application Review Upload independent rubrics
February 24, 2020 – February 28, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative Analysis of Independent Evaluation Reviewers and charter office staff prepare for capacity interview
March 2, 2020 – March 6, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Capacity Interview
March 9, 2020 – March 13, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charter Review Team meet to develop consensus rubric
March 27, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charter Team Leads turn in completed consensus rubric
March 30, 2020 – April 17, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Office of Charter Schools staff complete recommendation report
April 21, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation Reports due to the MNPS Board of Education
April 28, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MNPS Board of Education vote on Charter School Recommendation

Process for Amending Applications Denied in the First Application Round

TCA 49-13-108(3) provides applicants 30 days from the date of receipt of grounds for denial to submit an amended application to correct the deficiencies. The MNPS Board of Education then has 60 days after the receipt of the amended application to either deny or approve the application based on the recommendation of the review teams.

The same review team that read and made recommendations on the initial application will evaluate the amended applications to determine if the deficiencies have been corrected and make a recommendation to the MNPS Board of Education to either approve or deny the application.

The following guidelines apply to the resubmissions:

- Amended applications will be due to the Office of Charter Schools on 30th day after the MNPS Board of Education vote to deny an application. **Amended applications will not be accepted prior to or after that date.**
- Corrections may be made only to those areas of the application that the review teams have deemed deficient. A **complete re-write of the application will not be accepted.**
- One electronic copy and five (5) written copies will be submitted – these should be the same applications submitted previously with changes outlined or shaded so the review team will be able to see all corrections easily.
- A table of contents should be submitted with page numbers so corrected work can be found quickly. It should be clear to reviewers the changes made, where they are located, and which area of the application they replace.
- Additional information will not be accepted unless the review team specifically requests it.
- The same review team that evaluated the application during the first round will evaluate the amended application.

Resubmission Timeline

Due Date:	Item:
April 29, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Office of Charter Schools will send letter to the application regarding denial
May 29, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amended application due to the Office of Charter Schools with MNPS no later than 4:30 p.m.
June 1, 2020 – June 19, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Review of Amended Application Independent rubric to be uploaded
June 22, 2020 – June 26, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charter Review Team meet to develop consensus rubric
June 29, 2020 – July 2, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charter Team Leads turn in completed consensus rubric
July 2, 2020 – July 14, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Office of Charter Schools staff complete recommendation report
July 21, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation Report due to the MNPS Board of Education
July 28, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MNPS Board of Education vote on Charter School Recommendation
July 29, 2020 – August 7, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the MNPS denies the Amended Application, the applicant will have 10 days to appeal to the State Board



Charter School Renewal

Pursuant to the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002, the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) has adopted this policy for considering applications for renewal of public charter schools operating under the jurisdiction of MNPS.

As a charter school authorizer, MNPS is responsible for evaluating current charter schools' performance and achievement levels in the process of deciding whether to renew a school's charter. A strong renewal process is critical to protect charter school autonomy, students, and stakeholders and ensures schools are held to high standards.

In the following pages, we provide guidance around and outline the timeline for the renewal process with the hopes of making the process as seamless and smooth for schools and our Authorization team.

Please read through the renewal application and guideline carefully and reach out to Dr. John Thomas, Coordinator of Charter Schools at John.Thomas@mnps.org or (615) 259-8228 with any questions.

Purpose and Goals

A charter school trades greater autonomy granted by charter law for greater accountability to which it is held by MNPS. The original charter contract is for a period of ten (10) years, during which the charter is held to academic, organizational and financial goals yearly. In setting out and using this policy, a charter school and/or its management corporation, will know well before renewal what the MNPS Board of Education expects it to accomplish, along with the evidence which must be compiled to demonstrate the school has earned renewal status.

Overview of Guidelines for Renewal Application

Instructions

- It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the content is complete, detailed, and easily understood and followed by reviewers.
- All narrative elements of the application must be typed with 1-inch page margins and 11-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced.
- All headings must be in 11, 12, or 14-point Times New Roman font.
- Tables may be in either 11- or 10-point Times New Roman font.
- Each major section (Executive Summary, Academic, etc.) must begin on a separate page.
- All pages must be consecutively numbered in the footer, including all attachments.
- The table of contents must identify the page number of each major section of the narrative.
- References and citations should be placed in the footer.
- Review all elements of your application for completeness before submitting.
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted.
- The application should be no more than 50 pages in length.
Page length is not a consideration.
- The executive summary will not count in the page limit.
- A renewal application fee of \$1,500.00 must accompany the application.

Application Layout

Executive Summary (2-page limit)

Provide a brief overview of your school, including;

- An overview of the current mission and vision and any proposed changes.
- The key components of your current educational model.
The executive summary will not count toward final page limit.

Section I- Academic Success

- a. Describe the school's academic achievement and growth results over the course of the current charter term. Include tables, charts, or graphs, as applicable, to illustrate cumulative and/or yearly assessment results.
- b. Address progress toward meeting academic goals outlined in the current charter agreement. Were any amendments made to academic goals? If so, explain.
- c. Outline the school's assessment system and explain how assessments are used to inform instructional practice, evaluate teacher effectiveness, and design and implement professional development.
- d. We will be reviewing all state recorded summative data. Describe how the school will use this data along with other data (qualitative and quantitative) to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program. You will need to include an explanation for any decreases in the data and measures taken to correct the decreases.
- e. Discuss progress made toward closing achievement gaps.
- f. Outline leader and teacher professional development and its impact on student achievement.
- g. Explain how the school supports for diverse learners.
- h. Discuss areas of academic concern and changes made to address any deficiencies.

Section II – Operational Stability

- a. Address progress toward meeting operational goals outlined in the charter agreement.
- b. Discuss student enrollment over the course of the current charter term. Is the school operating at maximum capacity? How many students are currently on the wait list and at what grade level?
- c. Describe trends in student attrition rates and how leaders have addressed any concerns in attrition.
- d. Explain how the school provides a safe environment and addresses the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of students.
- e. Describe the trend in students' discipline data and any changes made to address areas that have increased over time.
- f. Explain how the school has made community connections and developed working relationships with parents and families.
- g. Explain how the school sustains a well-functioning organizational structure and provides for personnel stability and effective teacher retention.
- h. Explain the governing board's oversight and how are they involved in making decisions for the school and how they provide oversight?

Section III - Financial Health

- a. Address progress toward meeting financial goals outlined in the charter agreement.
- b. Report on the fiscal management of the school during the current charter term, based on previously submitted audits and financial reports.
- c. Address the alignment between expenditures and the school's mission and plans for student academic growth and staff professional development.
- d. Review how any significant fiscal challenges were addressed during the current charter term.
- e. Describe efforts to operate the school in a financially sound and transparent manner.

Section IV – Future Plans/Projections

- a. Provide an overview of the charter school’s future goals and plans for goal achievement.
- b. Include the plan for:
 - Academics and updated academic benchmarks (TNReady Scores and TVAAS)
 - Achievement first
 - Organizational changes (if applicable)
 - Projected financial security
 - Operational management
 - Enrollment Projections over the next 5 years. Are you planning to present an amendment application?



Filing Instructions

Please provide MNPS one (1) electronic copy and five (5) hard copies of the renewal E-mailed proposals should be submitted to Dr. John Thomas at john.thomas@mnps.org. **Renewal applications must be accompanied by a \$1,500.00 application fee made out to the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. In the event an application is insufficient and returned to the applicant without review, the fee will be returned.**

Hard copies should be submitted to Dr. John Thomas at this address:

**Dr. John Thomas
Metropolitan Nashville Board of Public Education
Office of Charter Schools
2601 Bransford Avenue
Nashville, TN 37204**

The governing body must also submit one electronic copy to the department of education, division of charter schools. Email or submission via online file transfer service (e.g., box.net) is preferred, but electronic copies may also be submitted via CD, USB drive, etc. Please use the contact information below:

Director of Charter Schools
charter.schools@tn.gov
Tennessee Department of Education
9th Floor – Andrew Johnson Tower
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0379
Phone: 615-532-6274
Fax #: 615-532-4791



Charter Renewal – Applicant Information Sheet

Year current charter expires: _____

Name of Charter School:

Name of Sponsor/Sponsoring Agency (if different from governing body)

Primary Contact Person: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Mailing Address:

Proposed Grade Levels and Student Enrollment for next charter term:

First year of new charter term:		
	Grade Levels	Total Student Enrollment
Year One		
Year Two		
Year Three		
Year Four		
Year Five		
Year Six		
Year Seven		
Year Eight		
Year Nine		
Year Ten		

Signature of Primary Contact Person _____ Date _____

Assurances

As the authorized representative of the sponsor, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for a charter for [name of school] is true to the best of my knowledge and belief;
and if awarded a charter, the school:

1. will operate as a public, nonsectarian, non-religious public school, with control of instruction vested in the governing body of the school under the general supervision of the chartering authority and in compliance with the charter agreement and the Charter School Act;
2. will follow all federal, state and local laws and regulations that pertain to the operation of a public school, unless waived according to T.C.A. § 49-13-105;
3. will provide special education services for students as provided in Tennessee Code Annotated Title 49, Chapter 10, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
4. will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students who are limited English proficient (LEP), including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, that are applicable to it;
5. will follow all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services;
6. will comply with all provisions of the Charter Schools Act, including, but not limited to
 - a. employing individuals to teach who hold a license to teach in a public school in Tennessee
 - b. complying with Open Meetings and Open Records laws (T.C.A. §§ 8-44-101 et seq.; 10-7-503, 504) (guidance is available from the [Office of Open Records Counsel](#))
 - c. not charging tuition, except for students transferring from another district to the school pursuant to the local board's out-of-district enrollment policy and T.C.A. § 49-6-3003
 - d. following state financial (budgeting and audit) procedures and reporting requirements according to T.C.A. § 49-13-111, 120 and 127



- e. 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 in the form prescribed by T.C.A. § 8-19-101; and

7. Will, at all times, maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.

Signature

Name and Title of Authorized Signer

Renewal Application Chart

School	Term expires (June 30)	Renewal Application Due (April 1)	Decision (February 1)
East End Prep	2021	2020	2021
STEM Prep	2021	2020	2021
Nashville Prep	2021	2020	2021
Liberty Collegiate	2021	2020	2021
Cameron College Prep	2021	2020	2021
Knowledge Academy	2022	2021	2022
LEAD Southeast	2022	2021	2022
KIPP High School	2022	2021	2022
Brick Church College Prep	2022	2021	2022
Intrepid Academy	2023	2022	2023
Purpose Prep	2023	2022	2023
Nashville Classical	2023	2022	2023
KIPP Nashville College Prep	2023	2022	2023
Explore Community School	2024	2023	2024
Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary	2024	2023	2024
Valor Flagship	2024	2023	2024
KIPP Elementary	2024	2023	2024
Academy of Computer Science	2024	2023	2024
Knowledge HS	2025	2024	2025
STEM HS	2025	2024	2025
Rocketship United	2025	2024	2025
Valor Voyager	2025	2024	2025
KIPP Academy Nash @Kirkpatrick	2025	2024	2025
Strive Collegiate	2025	2024	2025
KA @ The Crossings	2026	2025	2026
East End Prep (6-8) (see above)	2026	2025	2026
KIPP Academy	2026	2025	2026
LEAD Academy	2027	2026	2027
Smithson Craighead Academy	2028	2027	2028

Timeline

No later than **April 1** of the year prior to the year in which the charter expires, the governing body must submit a renewal application to the authorizer. The authorizer must rule by resolution by the following **February 1** whether to approve or deny the renewal application. Decisions not to renew charters may be appealed to the State Board of Education. Any appeal must be filed within 10 days of the chartering authority's denial. The state board must rule on any appeals within 60 days of receipt of the appeal.

Materials must be received by the close of business on the date specified. Tennessee law provides that when the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or State observed holiday, the letter of intent and application materials are due to the State on the next business day. The MNPS school renewal process is designed to be open and rigorous.

We follow the Tennessee State Charter Law 49-13-121, from which we developed the following process:

On or before April 1 of the year prior to the year in which the charter expires, the governing body of the charter school shall submit a renewal application to the Office of Charter Schools. **Renewal applications must be accompanied by a \$1,500.00 application fee made out to the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. In the event an application is insufficient and returned to the applicant without review, the fee will be returned.**

- The extent of information needed in the application is listed below:
- The Office of Charter Schools will convene a review team which will analyze and evaluate the renewal application. The review team will make a recommendation to the Office of Charter Schools based on measurable, evidentiary criteria.
- By February 1 of the following year, MNPS will issue a written decision on whether to renew the charter school and deliver that recommendation to the MNPS Board of Education for a ruling by resolution on the renewal application.
- If the decision is to approve, MNPS and the charter school will immediately enter into a new ten (10) year contract.
- If the decision is to deny renewal, the charter school governing board has ten (10) days to appeal to the state board of education. If the state board of education upholds the denial, that decision is final and there is no appeal.
- If the state board of education does not uphold the denial, the school will continue to operate under authorization of the State Board of Education.

Timeline for submission of renewal application

Due Date:	Item:
February 1, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters of Intent (LOI) Deadline to MNPS and TN Department of Education Office of School Choice
April 1, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed renewal charter applications are due in the Office of Charter Schools with MNPS no later than 4:30 p.m. Renewal applications will be checked for completeness
September 1, 2020 – October 16, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Review of Renewal Application Independent rubric to be uploaded
October 16, 2020- October 23, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charter Review Team meet to develop consensus rubric
October 23, 2020 – November 20 ,2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Office of Charter Schools staff complete recommendation report
December 1, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendation Reports due to the MNPS Board of Education
December 8,2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MNPS Board of Education vote on the recommendation from the Office of Charter Schools
December 9,2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant will receive a letter of the MNPS Board decision
December 9, 2020 – December 19, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If MNPS denies the renewal application, the applicant will have 10 days to appeal to the State Board

❖ Note: dates are subject to change.

Charter School Closure and Revocation

Narrative

The Office of Charter Schools recognizes that starting and managing a charter school is hard work, and requires tremendous commitment and determination, all within an often-uncertain environment full of significant challenges.

All of those who embark on this journey deserve our deepest respect for embracing the challenge of educating the next generation of students. The power of charter schools to drive broader change is dependent on their ability to rise above the prevailing mediocrity. If charter schools serve only to expand parental choice without significantly raising the bar on student achievement, this innovative and ambitious reform will have little or no impact on the wider landscape of public education and it will only serve to ensure the neediest and most at-risk students will fall farther behind.

While it is the policy of the Office of Charter Schools to be collaborative with the charter schools and to encourage their success, charter schools exist to achieve meaningful results for their students as demonstrated by a sound body of evidence. Charter schools that cannot deliver results showing significant student achievement gains must be closed. The Office of Charter Schools has a responsibility to the students, parents, stakeholders and the broader public to ensure a school that is not performing is closed and those students affected are transferred to schools where they can be successful. The Conceptual Timeline below outlines the procedures the Office of Charter Schools may take when a school is clearly not meeting standards, up to and including a closure recommendation.

There are three ways a charter school can be closed: it can voluntarily surrender its charter, the MNPS Board of Education can choose not to renew a charter, or the charter can be revoked.

As outlined in the Accountability Framework, the Office of Charter Schools looks at many factors when exercising oversight of charter schools. In broad terms, the factors include:

- Academic Performance
- Operational Performance
- Financial Stability

A charter school in the bottom 5% of the state's academic accountability system and labeled as a priority school will be automatically closed at the end of the school year.

Besides poor academic outcomes, a charter school may have their charter revoked for the following reasons:

- Serious violations of law
- Material and substantial violation of the charter contract
- Fiscal mismanagement

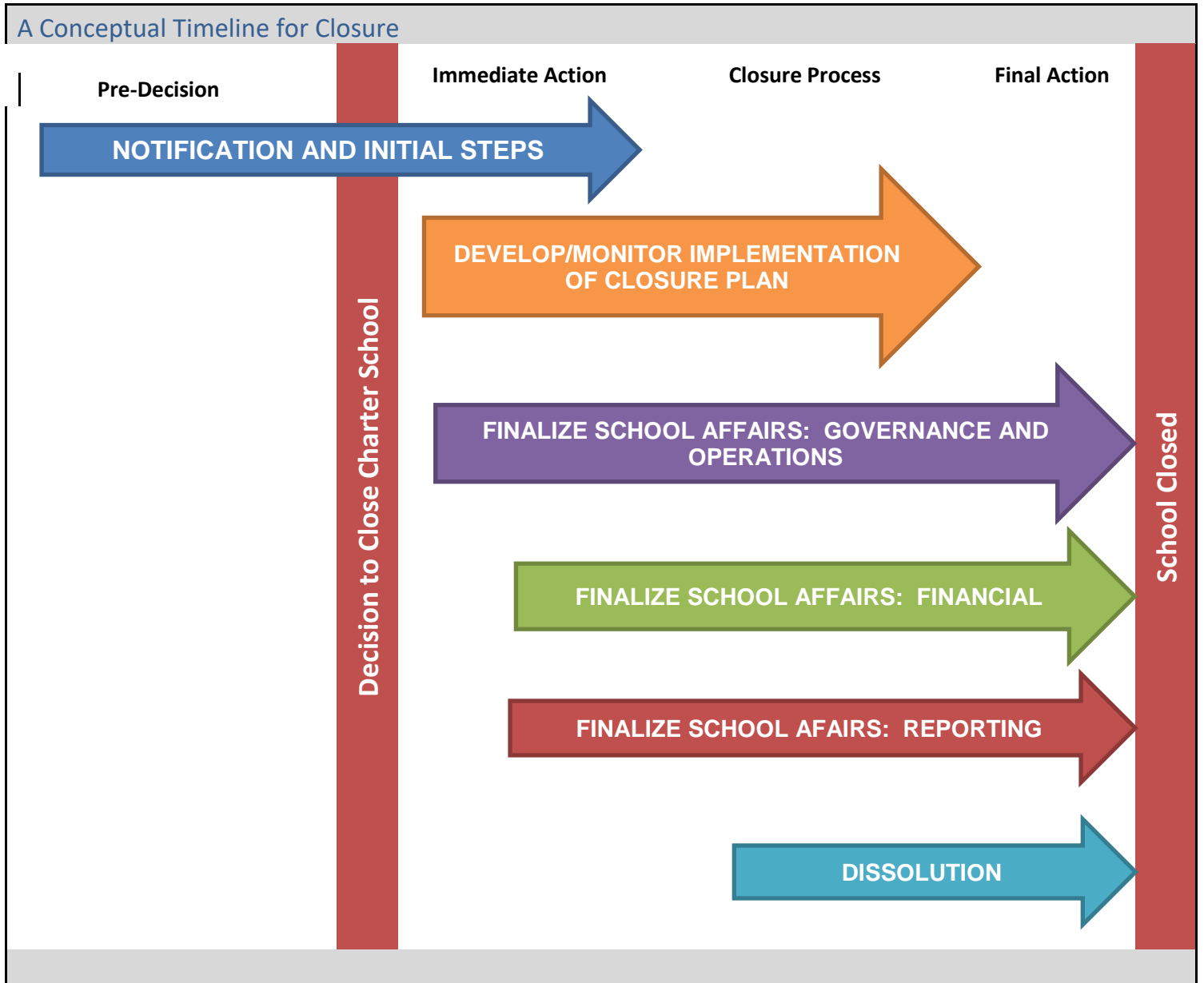
Closure Procedure

Each October, the Office of Charter Schools prepares an annual report on the state of charter schools for the MNPS Board of Education which includes recommendations of closure when necessary, with supporting documentation and evidence so the MNPS Board of Education has the necessary information to make a decision. A decision to revoke a charter, or not renew a charter, takes place at the end of the school year unless a school meets the criteria outlined in Tennessee Charter Law that allows immediate closure. TCA §49-13-122(4) states.”

“Nothing in this sub-section (a) shall prohibit a chartering authority from revoking or denying renewal a charter agreement of a charter school that fails to meet minimum performance requirements set forth in the charter agreement.” (b) A public charter school agreement may be revoked at any time or not renewed by the final chartering authority if the chartering authority determines that the school:

1. Committed a material violation of any conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter agreement
2. Failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward the performance expectations set forth in the charter agreement
3. Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.”

When it becomes evident that a school must be closed for any reason, the following tables and guidelines will apply:



Upon reaching the decision to close a charter school has been made, the Office of Charter Schools has three primary goals to be accomplished:

- Providing educational services in accordance with the charter contract until the end of the school year, or the agreed upon date when instruction will cease.
- Reassigning students to schools that meet their educational needs.
- Addressing the school's financial, legal and reporting obligations.

These goals are given the highest priority during the closure process. The attached framework and timeline will be followed as it applies. Some tasks will not apply, depending on the particular school being closed. The Office of Charter Schools will work closely with the school's governing board prior to the beginning of closure proceedings to agree on which tasks are necessary and outline how the Office of Charter Schools intends to supervise the closure. Responsible parties and completion dates will be agreed upon to ensure a transparent and smooth closure, and the Office of Charter Schools will attend parent and community meetings to explain not only the mechanics of the closure process, but exactly why the school is being closed. See action step plan that will include the closure protocol.

Procedures for Sub-Standard Performance of a Charter School

Status*	Possible Triggers	Possible Actions/Consequences
Notice of Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of weak performance in any of the three key areas (academic, operational, and/or financial) identified through routine monitoring, implementation, compliance, or performance reviews, or through any other means identified by the Charter Authorizer. • Signs of financial weakness identified through an annual financial audit and/or internal review. • Achievement of “falls far below standard” in one area of the performance frameworks or achievement of “does not meet standard” in multiple areas of the performance frameworks. • Repeated failure to submit required documents on a timely basis. 	<p>Letter to the school’s governing board and CEO detailing areas of concern.</p>
Notice of Deficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of weak performance in any of the three key areas (academic, operational, and/or financial) identified through routine monitoring. • Achievement of “falls far below standard” in multiple areas of the performance frameworks or achievement of “does not meet standard” in a significant number of areas of the performance frameworks. • Signs of significant financial weakness identified through an annual financial audit and/or internal review. • Failure to comply with applicable state laws, district policies, and/ or State Board rules/policies, or other regulations. • Failure to comply with terms of charter agreement with LEA. 	<p>Letter to the governing board detailing areas of deficiency with a requirement that a Performance Improvement Plan is developed and implemented (with specific improvements, objectives, timelines, measures). The Performance Improvement Plan must be approved by the Office of Charter Schools.</p> <p>The following MNPS individuals will be cc’d on all communication: Director of Schools Chief of Innovation Chief of Staff Director of BOE Relations and Management Director of BOE Members Director of Charter Schools Coordinator of Charter Schools</p>

<p>Notice of Probation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of weak performance in any of the three key areas (academic, operational, and/or financial) identified through routine monitoring. • Continued failure to meet performance targets (state accountability, charter contract, or performance frameworks). • Failure to meet objectives set forth in the Plan of Correction. • Continued or significant signs of financial weakness identified through annual financial audits or other means. • Continued or significant failure to comply with applicable state laws, State Board rules/policies, or other regulations. • Continued or significant failure to comply with conditions of the charter agreement. 	<p>Letter to governing board to serve as notification of probationary status and outlining terms of probation; Office of Charter Schools creates a Corrective Action Plan with the charter school that addresses deficits and has measurable outcomes, a timeline and very specific improvement expectations.</p> <p>The following MNPS individuals will be cc'd on all communication: Director of Schools Chief of Innovation Chief of Staff Director of BOE Relations and Management Director of BOE Members Director of Charter Schools Coordinator of Charter Schools</p>
<p>Charter Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of weak performance in any of the three key areas (academic, operational, and/or financial) identified through routine monitoring. • Pattern of failure to comply with or meet performance targets (state accountability, charter contract, or performance frameworks). • Three consecutive years of achieving “falls far below standard” on the performance frameworks in the same category. • Failure to successfully address the terms of the probationary status, including the Plan of Correction. • Flagrant disregard of the charter agreement (T.C.A. § 49-13-122); fraud, misappropriation of funds (T.C.A. § 4913-122); extended pattern of failure to comply with the terms of the charter; failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. • Performed any of the acts that are conditions for non-approval of 	<p>Recommendation to revoke, or not to revoke, the charter, or impose lesser sanctions (at this, or any point in the process, a school can voluntarily surrender its charter). Decision by the MNPS Board of Education to commence or not commence revocation proceedings.</p> <p>The following MNPS individuals will be cc'd on all communication: Director of Schools Chief of Innovation Chief of Staff Director of BOE Relations and Management Director of BOE Members Director of Charter Schools Coordinator of Charter Schools</p>

	a charter school under T.C.A. § 49-13-108.	
Charter Revocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of weak performance in any of the three key areas (academic, operational, and/or financial) identified through routine monitoring. • Charter Review results in recommendation to revoke. • The school has done any of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pattern of failure to comply with or meet performance targets (state accountability, charter contract, or performance frameworks). 2. Three consecutive years of achieving “falls far below standard” on the performance frameworks in the same category. 3. Failure to successfully address the terms of the probationary status, including the Plan of Correction. 4. Flagrant disregard of the charter agreement (T.C.A. § 4913-122); fraud, misappropriation of funds (T.C.A. § 49-13-122); extended pattern of failure to comply with the terms of the charter; failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. 5. Inclusion on the TDOE’s Priority School List of the bottom 5% of schools in the state (T.C.A. § 4913-122). 6. Performed any of the acts that are conditions for non-approval of a charter school under T.C.A. § 49-13-108. • Except in the cases of fraud, misappropriation of funds, flagrant disregard of the charter agreement, or similar misconduct, a decision to revoke shall become effective at the close of the academic year (T.C.A. § 49-13-122). 	<p>Letter stating reasons for proposed revocation to governing board.</p> <p>Charter timeline (attached to this policy) goes into effect immediately.</p> <p>The following MNPS individuals will be cc’d on all communication: Director of Schools Chief of Innovation Chief of Staff Director of BOE Relations and Management Director of BOE Members Director of Charter Schools Coordinator of Charter Schools</p>
*NOTE: The outlined procedures are <i>not</i> a step by step process. The Office of Charter Schools reserves the right to put schools		

at any status without going through the steps if more immediate actions are warranted.		
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Closure Action Plan

(see attached plan)



Application for Contract Amendment

Introduction

On behalf of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), we thank you for your interest in amending your written charter or charter contract to expand a high-performing school in Nashville, TN. We understand the tremendous amount of work and commitment required to operate a quality school and achieve operational excellence while maintaining fidelity to your mission, vision, and academic model.

We have designed this process to allow governing bodies and leadership teams to assist in this process through an evaluation of their own capacity and determine where they will need to invest additional resources to ensure success. As with all submissions to MNPS, this amendment request is intended to be a document which is the result of deep, thoughtful engagement by the governing body and staff employed by the school. It is important to emphasize that the sole legal accountability for the promises and commitments made by the school to students, parents, families, the surrounding community, and to the people of Nashville, TN and their authorized representative, MNPS, lies with the governing body of the school and its direct, authorized employees.

MNPS is committed to quality in every aspect of our operation, and we firmly believe that quality authorizing leads to quality schools. We are committed to granting amendments only to those schools who clearly demonstrate the academic track record and financial and operational capacity necessary to govern and operate high-performing schools. We particularly welcome amendment requests from schools that bring a strong benefit to various areas of the district and meet the needs of all students, especially those in special population subgroups.

Our responsibility compels us to provide our students and families with the very best options the charter community can provide. We are confident that we have created a demanding, thorough, and transparent amendment request and review process.

As you complete your amendment request, please feel free to contact Dr. John Thomas at John.Thomas@mnps.org with any questions. Again, thank you for your interest in recommitting to this vital work and investing more of your time and talents in our effort to build and deliver a high-quality public-school option to every student in Nashville, TN.

Instructions

- It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the content is complete, detailed, and easily understood and followed by reviewers; external experts; and parents, families, and the general public.
- All narrative elements of the application must be typed with 1-inch page margins and 11-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced.
- All headings must be in 11, 12, or 14-point Times New Roman font.
- Tables may be in either 11- or 10-point Times New Roman font.
- Each major section (Executive Summary, Academic Plan, etc.) must begin on a separate page.
- All pages must be consecutively numbered in the footer, including all attachments.
- The table of contents must identify the page number of each major section of the narrative and each required attachment.
- References and citations should be placed in the footer.
- If a particular question does not apply to your team or application, simply respond with an explanatory sentence identifying the reason this question is not applicable to your school AND including the term “not applicable” within the sentence.
- A letter signed by the Board chair formally requesting the amendment and identifying each of the elements must be submitted in support of the request.
- Agenda for board meeting where board voted to request an amendment to add additional grades or expand enrollment must be submitted.
- Draft or approved minutes for board meeting where board voted to request an amendment to add additional grades or expand enrollment must be submitted.
- Letters of community support/partnership must accompany application.
- Review all elements of your request for completeness before submitting. Incomplete requests will not be accepted, and schools are not able to amend, revise, or supplement their request after it has been submitted.

Application Review

- Notice of Intent to apply for an amendment is due August 1, 2019.
- The completed application is due to Dr. John Thomas by email john.thomas@mnps.org and 5 hard copies in the Office of Charter Schools no later than 4:30 pm on September 1, 2019.
- The district has 90 calendar days from September 1 to submit recommendations to the MNPS Board of Education and for the Board to vote on those recommendations.
- Each Charter Amendment Application will be reviewed by a core team of at least three (3). Each reviewer will complete a separate evaluation report and submit it to the Office of Charter Schools.
- A recommendation report will be compiled from the combined analysis of the entire process and presented to the MNPS Board of Education for their review and voted on each individual contract amendment application.

Timeline

Date	Item
August 1	Letters of Intent (LOI) Deadline to the MNPS Office of Charter Schools.
September 2	Completed charter amendment application is due to the MNPS Office of Charter Schools no later than 4:30 p.m.
September 2	Application will be checked for completeness.
September 3	Independent application review begins.
October 8	Review team will complete an upload completed rubrics.
October 17	Review team will meet and develop an outline for recommendation report.
October 31	Recommendation report developed for MNPS Board of Education.
November 12	Present to the MNPS Board of Education during the MNPS board meeting.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to submit an amendment in the Fall 2019 amendment cycle, a school must be in years 4 through 8 and in good standing for a period of three years in all three domains of the Authority's academic, financial, and organizational performance frameworks and it must not be considered a low-performing school. Ineligible schools include, but are not limited:

- school rated below the district's achievement level in ELA, Math, Science, and/or their Success Rate
- schools that are considered a focus school or federally identified as an ATSI school
- schools with graduation rates below district average percent
- schools rated at the Does Not Meet Standards or Falls Far Below Standards on one or more of the Authority Performance Framework, Operational Performance Framework and/or the Financial Framework
- schools that have received a letter of deficiency or been placed on probation during the previous three school years
- schools which does not have at least three years of independent financial audits

Overview

MNPS views the granting of a charter as an investment of public dollars and the public trust in the service of public schoolchildren. The evaluation of each application and each applicant revolves around the same essential question: will this school be an academic, organizational, & financial success? The amendment request is evaluated based on the strength of the plan in each of those domains, while applicants are evaluated based on their capacity to execute the program, they've proposed both based on the coherence, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness of each element of the application.

Application for Amendment

Please submit an amendment request that addresses the following questions / issues. The proposed amendment 25-page limit does not include items in the attachment portion of the application.

Please keep in mind that your amendment request is a professional document. The quality of the document that you submit should reflect the quality of the school that you propose to expand. Review teams will be able to navigate well-organized, effectively edited documents easily, thereby focusing their energy on reviewing the content of each application. Responsive answers are critical: ensure that you have fully answered the question and have thoroughly researched the relevant section of law, regulation, and policy.

The purpose of this Amendment Request is to assess the potential of existing charter school boards to produce high-quality student outcomes and function as highly effective, accountable, and transparent providers of public education as they add new students and demonstrate the capability and maturity to achieve at consistently high levels in all domains while continuing to scale their impact in their communities.

Executive Summary

Provide a brief overview of your school, including;

- Identify the type of amendment being requested.
- An overview of the current mission and vision and any purposed changes.
- A current enrollment count and request changes.
- The key components of your current educational model.

The executive summary will not count toward final page limit.

Section I- Academic Success

- a. Describe the school's academic achievement and growth results over the course of the current charter term. Include tables, charts, or graphs, as applicable, to illustrate cumulative and/or yearly assessment results.
- b. Address progress toward meeting academic goals outlined in the current charter agreement. Were any amendments made to academic goals? If so, explain.
- c. Outline the school's assessment system and explain how assessments are used to inform instructional practice, evaluate teacher effectiveness, and design and implement professional development.
- d. Describe how the school uses other data (qualitative and quantitative) to evaluate the effectiveness of the academic program.
- e. Discuss progress made toward closing achievement gaps.
- f. Outline leader and teacher professional development and its impact on student achievement.
- g. Explain how the school supports for diverse learners.
- h. Discuss areas of academic concern and changes made to address any deficiencies.
- i. Explain why the school's academic outcomes merit an amendment to the current charter contract.

Section II – Operational Stability

- a. Address progress toward meeting operational goals outlined in the charter agreement, if applicable.
- b. Discuss student enrollment over the course of the current charter term. Is the school operating at maximum capacity? How many students are currently on the wait list and at what grade level?
- c. Describe trends in student attrition rates and how leaders have addressed any concerns in attrition.
- d. Explain how the school provides a safe environment and addresses the physical, social, emotional, and health needs of students.
- e. Explain how the school has made community connections and developed working relationships with parents and families.
- f. Explain how the school sustains a well-functioning organizational structure and provides for personnel stability and effective teacher retention.
- g. Describe the development of the board members and school leadership during the current charter term.
- h. Describe any facility changes/improvements and their impact on achieving school goals.
- j. Explain why the school’s operational condition merits an amendment to the current charter contract.

Section III - Financial Health

- a. Address progress toward meeting financial goals outlined in the charter agreement, if applicable.
- b. Report on the fiscal management of the school during the current charter term, based on previously submitted audits and financial reports.
- c. Address the alignment between expenditures and the school’s mission and plans for student academic growth and staff professional development.
- d. Review how any significant fiscal challenges were addressed during the current charter term.
- e. Describe efforts to operate the school in a financially sound and transparent manner.
- k. Explain why the school’s financial condition merits an amendment to the current charter contract.



Section IV – Future Plans/Projections

- a. Provide an overview of the charter school’s future goals, plans for goal achievement and reason for the amendment request.

Include the plan for:

- a. Academics and updated academic benchmarks
- b. Organizational changes (if applicable)
- c. Facility improvements (if applicable)
- d. Projected financial security



Charter School Waiver Request Form

Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-13-105, a sponsor of a charter school may apply to either the local education agency or to the Commissioner of Education for a waiver of any state board rule or statute that inhibits or hinders the charter school's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission statement.

Waivers may not be granted by the charter school authorizer for requirements related to:

- Federal and state civil rights
- Federal, state, and local health and safety
- Federal and state public records
- Immunizations
- Possession of weapons on school grounds
- Background checks and fingerprinting of personnel
- Federal and state special education services
- Student due process
- Parental rights
- Federal and state student assessment and accountability
- Open meetings
- At least the same equivalent time of instruction as required in regular public schools; or
- Requirements in the charter school statute, T.C.A. 49 Chapter 13 or State Board of Education rules and regulations specific to charter schools



Charter School Information:

Charter School Name: _____

Charter School Contact Name: _____

Contact Title: _____

Phone: (____)-____-____ EXT. _____

Email address: _____

Term of the charter contract: __/__/__ (MM/DD/YY) through __/__/__ (MM/DD/YY)

Effective date of waiver being requested: _____



Waiver Information: (Please complete in detail the information below and/or attached to this request.)

1. Please list the statute(s) and/or board rule(s) for which waiver is being requested
2. Mission and goals of the charter school as contained in the application filled with the local board of education pursuant to § 49-13-107
3. Explanation of how the statute(s) and/or state board rule(s) inhibits or hinders the charter school's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission statement

Waiver Process:

MNPS Office of Charter Schools will review the requests and either grant or deny the request within 30 days of receiving the request. All waivers approved by the chartering authority shall be effective for the term of the charter contract unless stated otherwise. **INCOMPLETE REQUESTS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

If a waiver is incomplete, a resubmission maybe allowed 30 days after the original submission. Please submit this waiver request to the Coordinator of Charter Schools via email or mail:

Dr. John Thomas, Coordinator of Charter Schools
2601 Bransford Avenue
Nashville, TN 37204
John.Thomas@MNPS.org

Print Name:	Charter School Contact (Signature):	Date:
_____ Approved	_____ Denied	

Reason for Denial:

Enrollment Cap Process

Each year the Office of Charter Schools works in conjunction with the Student Assignment Office to create student projections for the following school year. There are several aspects that must be taken into consideration when providing projections to each charter school. The Office of Charter Schools relies on the information in the contract signed by both the charter school and the district and the approved application. We look at:

- Enrollment of students in the previous year
- Enrollment numbers based on the current year in the contract
- Enrollment trends
- Trajectory toward enrollment cap
- Building capacity *if* it hinders the progress toward total enrollment

Beginning in SY 18-19 the Office of Charter Schools will conduct enrollment audits based on the 20th and 40th day enrollment counts. The charter school will receive an email from the Office of Charter Schools indicating the following:

- Projected enrollment number
- Actual enrollment number
- Enrollment cap number
- 20-day enrollment number
- 40-day enrollment number
- Difference between the yearly enrollment cap and the 40-day count

At the end of each quarter, after the 40th day count, the Office of Charter Schools will conduct an audit to project each charter school's trajectory toward that year's end enrollment cap. If the trajectory indicates the school will exceed the enrollment cap, the Office of Charter Schools will contact the charter school and work to develop a plan of action to stay below that year's enrollment cap.

Tier Level Support

MNPS Office of Charter Schools has adopted NASCA's three core principles to guide all aspects of the work used for charter authorizing. The three core principles are maintaining high standards for all schools, upholding high performing school's autonomy, and protecting student and public interest. By maintaining high standards beginning at the application process, the Office of Charter Schools will ensure schools are meeting the needs of all students throughout the implementation of their contract. The Office of Charter Schools will ensure high performing schools' autonomy is protected while providing support to schools in areas they are experiencing challenges.

In order to provide the needed support, the Office of Charter Schools will use a three-tier model to identify schools based on their individual needs in academics, operational, and/or financial. The Office of Charter Schools reserves the right to change the identified tier level throughout the school year based on the school needs.

Identification

Tier 1: Model School

- Student Success Rate, ELA, and Math at or above the district averages and
- No financial findings in the year audit and
- Submit required information and reports in a timely manner

Tier 2: Average School

- Student Success Rate, ELA, and Math at or near the district averages and/or
- Missing one performance target including individual subgroup targets and/or
- Signs of financial weakness through the audit process and/or
- Continuously not meeting deadline and/or
- Continuously not entering data in a timely manner

Tier 3: Low Performing School

- Student Success Rate, ELA, and Math below the district averages and/or
- Signs of financial instability identified through the annual audit and/or
- Continuously not meeting deadline and received a notice of concern or letter of deficiency and/or
- Failure to meet contract expectation

Support

Each school can expect the following support according to the tier model they have been identified by the Office of Charter Schools.

Tier 1: Modified Support

- One Milestone Meeting will be conducted each semester in conjunction with Federal Programs.
- Each quarter, the Office of Charter Schools will review the charter school board minutes.
- School visits as needed.
- Actively engaged in sharing of best practices.
- End of year review meeting at the district office.

Tier 2: Standard Support

- One Milestone Meeting will be conducted each semester in conjunction with Federal Programs.
- A formalized walkthrough will be conducted each month to review progress toward meeting the school's academic and non-academic goals. These visits will include:
 - Classroom visits
 - Reviewing data with the leadership team
 - Identifying success
 - Identifying challenges
- End of year review meeting at the district office.

Tier 3: Intensive Support

- A needs assessment will be conducted at the beginning of each school year with charter office support.
- Goals and actions steps will be developed based on the outcome of the needs assessment.
- One Milestone Meeting will be conducted each semester in conjunction with Federal Programs.
- A formalized walkthrough will be conducted each month to review progress toward meeting the school's academic and non-academic goals. These visits will include:
 - Classroom visits
 - Reviewing data with the leadership team
- A meeting to review subgroup data will be conducted by the extended core team: EE, EL, and Federal Programs.
- End of year review meeting at the district office.

Five Year Review Process

Introduction

Under TCA section § 49-13-121(k) The authorizer shall conduct an interim review of a public charter school in the fifth(5th) year of a public charter school’s initial period of operation and in the fifth year following renewal of a charter agreement under guidelines developed by the department of education. The guidelines must require a public charter school to submit a report to the authorizer on the progress of the public charter school in achieving its goals and objectives, including student performance and other terms of the approved charter agreement.

Guidelines for Charter School Operators

Charter school operators should use interim reviews 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. Tennessee law requires that the interim review include a report from the charter school on the progress of the school in achieving the goals, objectives, pupil performance standards, content standards and other terms of the approved charter agreement.

The charter school may use information from annual reports, performance frameworks, or other instruments to complete the interim review.

Interim Review Submission Instructions

Each charter school shall complete each section below adhering to maximum page limitations. Charter schools should check with the chartering authority to determine any additional LEA requirements for the interim review. An electronic copy of the completed interim review report shall be submitted to Dr. John Thomas in the MNPS Office of Charter Schools (John.Thomas@MNPS.org) and the TDOE (charter.school@tn.gov) no later than December 1 of the charter school's fifth operational year.

The interim review report must include the following:

Cover page

Provide a cover page that includes the school name, address, phone number, school contact information, (name, title, email address, phone number), year school was authorized, year school opened, and date of report.

Section I Cumulative progress toward the charter school's goals (including academic achievement) (2 pages maximum)

1. Summarize the progress toward achieving the charter school's goals, objectives, pupil performance standards, and content standards.
2. Include academic achievement, illustrated by the information provided in annual reports for the years since the charter was granted or renewed.
3. Provide goal and academic achievement projections for the next five years.

Section II Operations and finance (10 pages maximum, including any attachments)

1. Explain how you have developed or plan to establish a pipeline of potential teachers and leaders for the school for the next several years (as applicable).
2. Provide current student enrollment numbers and enrollment projections for the next five years.
3. Explain how the organization anticipates making up any gap between actual expenses and anticipated recurring per pupil state, local and federal revenue during the next five years.
4. If the school has moved or plans to move to a different facility since authorization or renewal, describe how that move has or will affected school operations.

Section III Leadership succession (2 pages maximum)

1. Describe how the board membership has changed since authorization or renewal. Explain how these changes are or will contribute to the operational stability of the school, and the academic achievement of students.
2. Explain what the school has done to ensure organizational stability even if one or more founders or other key leaders leave.

School	Start of Contract	5 Year Review
East End Prep	2011	2016
STEM Prep	2011	2016
Nashville Prep	2011	2016
Liberty Collegiate	2011	2016
Cameron College Prep	2011	2016
Knowledge Academy	2012	2017
LEAD Southeast	2012	2017
KIPP High School	2012	2017
Intrepid Academy	2013	2018
Purpose Prep	2013	2018
Nashville Classical	2013	2018
KIPP Nashville College Prep	2013	2018
Explore Community School	2014	2019
Rocketship Nashville Northeast Elementary	2014	2019
Valor Flagship	2014	2019
KIPP Nashville Collegiate Prep EL	2014	2019
Nashville Academy of Computer Science	2014	2019
Knowledge Academy HS	2015	2020
STEM High School	2015	2020
Valor Voyager	2015	2020
Rocketship United	2015	2020
KIPP Academy Nashville @Kirk	2015	2020
STRIVE Collegiate	2015	2020
KA@ The Crossing	2016	2021
KIPP Academy Nashville	2016	2021
LEAD Academy	2017	2022
Smithson Craighead Academy	2018	2023