



TENNESSEE
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

AUTHORIZER EVALUATIONS

FEBRUARY 9, 2023

EVALUATION HISTORY AND PROCESS

EVALUATIONS IN TENNESSEE

- In 2019, the General Assembly amended T.C.A. § 49-13-145, charging the State Board with the responsibility of ensuring the effective operation of authorizers in the state and evaluating authorizer quality.
- Beginning in July 2019, the State Board gathered feedback from operators, authorizers and stakeholders, conducted focus groups, and established a task force to develop the evaluation process.
- In Fall 2020, the State Board implemented a pilot of its evaluation process with Metro Nashville Public Schools and the Achievement School District.
- In February 2021, the State Board finalized its rule on charter school authorizer evaluations and the rule became effective in July 2021.
- The 2022 evaluations complete our first full evaluation cycle.

EVALUATION COHORTS

Tennessee authorizers are evaluated in the following sequence:

Cohort 1 beginning in Fall 2021:

- Hamilton County Schools
- Knox County Schools
- Memphis-Shelby County Schools

Cohort 2 beginning in Fall 2022:

- Achievement School District
- Metro Nashville Public Schools
- Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

NOTE: Cohorts will not change regardless of evaluation outcomes.

2022 FULL TIMELINE

- **August 24:** Orientation for authorizers
- **Sept. 1 – Oct. 14:** Document submission window
- **October 19-20:** Evaluator Training
- **October 31:** Evaluation #1 began
- **November 14:** Evaluation #2 began
- **November 28:** Evaluation #3 began
- **December 19:** Draft reports shared with authorizers
- **January 3:** Non-Evaluation Year Self-Assessment due
- **Mid-January:** Evaluation reports finalized
- **February 10:** Ratings approved at State Board meeting

EVALUATION TEAMS

Evaluators spent an average of 20 hours per evaluation reviewing and scoring authorizer documentation plus several more hours conducting interviews and determining the consensus ratings.

Metro Nashville Public Schools	TN Public Charter School Commission	Achievement School District
Ali Reid, State Board Staff	Elana Feinberg, National Consultant for SchoolWorks	Ali Reid, State Board Staff
Elana Feinberg, National Consultant for SchoolWorks	Tom Franta, National Consultant for SchoolWorks	Elana Feinberg, National Consultant for SchoolWorks
Brittany Monda, Memphis-Shelby County Schools		Kelly Coffelt, Hamilton County Schools

EVIDENCE BASE

During the evaluation, the Evaluation Team considers evidence that occurred during the two-year review term:

- **Documents** and **Narrative** explanations submitted by the authorizer during the submission window;
- Clarifications and additional context provided by the authorizer during the **Document Debrief**;
- Supporting narrative shared during the **School Leader Interview**; and
- **Appeals history**, as applicable.

EVALUATION RUBRIC

- The evaluation is based on the 24 standards within State Board Policy 6.111 – Quality Charter Authorizing Standards.
- The standards are organized into 6 categories:
 1. Agency Commitment and Capacity
 2. Application Process and Decision Making
 3. Performance Contracting
 4. Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation
 5. Revocation and Renewal Decision Making
 6. Advanced Standards

OVERALL RATINGS

Score	Rating
3.5 – 4.0	Exemplary
3.0 – 3.49	Commendable
2.0 – 2.99	Satisfactory
1.0 – 1.99	Approaching Satisfactory
0 – 0.99	Unsatisfactory/Incomplete

2022 EVALUATION OUTCOMES

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (MNPS)

About the Authorizer:	MNPS is a district authorizer in Davidson County. MNPS's first charter school opened in 2007 and its charter schools currently serve approximately 17% of the district's students.
Operational Schools:	27 schools in the 2021-22 school year
Students Enrolled:	13,014 students in the 2021-22 school year
Approved School(s) in Development:	1 school in development
Closed Schools:	2 schools closed since September 1, 2020

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Identified Areas of Strength:

- Implements a charter application process that is aligned with state guidelines, allows sufficient time for each stage of the process, and follows a rigorous process that includes a thorough review of the application and a capacity interview with each applicant.
- Provides technical guidance to schools through on-going exceptional education support, optional professional development opportunities, and an annual charter school meeting at the start of the school year.
- The authorizer's charter agreement outlines the material and non-material terms and allows charter schools to amend the material terms of the agreement through an amendment application process.

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Identified Areas for Growth:

- Lacks a comprehensive performance accountability and compliance monitoring system that is defined in policy, clearly communicated to schools, aligned to its charter agreement, and provides key outcomes to inform renewal, revocation, and intervention decisions.
- Implements an informal intervention process that is not aligned to the intervention process stated in its handbook, is not clearly communicated to schools, and does not clearly engage in strategies that preserve school autonomy while stating possible consequences for noncompliance.
- Has not established or communicated the criteria needed for renewal and inconsistently provides schools with a cumulative report summarizing their performance over their charter term, as required by law.

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Overall Rating: 2.2 Satisfactory

Required Follow-Up Actions:

- Submission of a self-assessment in the 2023-24 school year, as required for all authorizers in a non-evaluation year.

TN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

About the Authorizer:	The Charter Commission is a state agency established in 2019 by Public Chapter 219 of the 111th General Assembly ("PC 219") to serve as the state's charter school appellate body and authorizer for any charter school that it approves upon appeal.
Operational Schools:	4 schools in the 2021-22 school year
Students Enrolled:	1,775 students in the 2021-22 school year
Approved School(s) in Development:	5 schools in development
Closed Schools:	0 schools closed since September 1, 2020

TN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

Identified Areas of Strength:

- Enlists expertise and competent leadership for all areas essential to charter school oversight and implements a rigorous process to select review committee members with expertise in all the key areas of authorizing.
- Has a clear, comprehensive, and detailed performance accountability and compliance monitoring system that is defined in policy, clearly communicated to schools, and provides key outcomes to inform renewal, revocation, and intervention decisions.
- Makes authorizing decisions that will result in positive student outcomes, in accordance with state law.

TN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

Identified Areas for Growth:

- Requests for compliance, documentation, and meetings are not always streamlined and create some administrative and reporting burdens on schools.
- Although the authorizer periodically reviews compliance requirements, it is unclear how and to what extent the outcomes of these reviews are used specifically to increase school autonomy.
- Lacks transparency and clear descriptions for its use of funds to demonstrate adequate resources are allocated to supporting authorizing work.

TN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

Overall Rating: 3.9 Exemplary

Required Follow-Up Actions:

- Public recognition and highlighting authorizer best practices by the State Board.
- Submission of a self-assessment in the 2023-24 school year, as required for all authorizers in a non-evaluation year.

TN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION: BEST PRACTICES

- Conducts a rigorous, transparent, and thorough new start appeals process with added resources and supports designed by the authorizer to ensure applicants understand each stage of the process.
- Developed a comprehensive reporting calendar that's well-communicated to schools and aligned to school performance accountability.
- Maintains ongoing communication with its schools and regularly engages in feedback conversations to ensure its schools are supported and heard.
- All major functions of authorizing are defined in policy, published on its website, and communicated in advance to schools.
- Developed a strategic plan for authorizing with priorities, goals, and timelines and provides its decision-makers with quarterly progress updates.

ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (ASD)

About the Authorizer:	The ASD is a state-level authorizer within the Tennessee Department of Education that was established by law in 2011 to serve as an intervention for some of the state's lowest performing schools. While the ASD is considered an authorizer in Tennessee pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-104, the ASD operates under additional legal provisions that do not apply to other authorizers.
Operational Schools:	26 schools in the 2021-22 school year
Students Enrolled:	8,462 students in the 2021-22 school year
Approved School(s) in Development:	0 schools in development
Closed Schools:	0 schools closed since September 1, 2020

ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Identified Areas of Strength:

- Executes charter agreements with a legally incorporated governing board that defines the material terms of the agreement and allows occasional material changes to a school's plans through amendments to the charter agreement.
- Respects its schools' authority over the day-to-day operations and refrains from directing or participating in decisions within a school's purview.
- As of July 2022, the authorizer has hired new staff members who are working to put new practices in place, including consistent communication with its schools as well as comprehensive oversight and monitoring systems.

ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Identified Areas for Growth:

- Charter agreements lack clearly defined rights and responsibilities of the school, annual performance standards, and the criteria for renewal, non-renewal, and revocation decisions.
- Lacks consistent compliance and performance monitoring systems, such as a formal site visit with stated purposes and direct alignment to performance outcomes and a comprehensive accountability and performance monitoring system to ensure student rights are protected and the terms of the charter agreement are followed.
- Has not established an intervention policy that outlines and clearly communicates a problem-solving process, states the conditions that may trigger intervention, allows reasonable time for remediation, and preserves school autonomy and responsibility.

ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Overall Rating: 1.5 Approaching Satisfactory

Required Follow-Up Actions:

- Submission of a corrective action plan approved by the State Board's executive director prior to implementation.
- Submission of a self-assessment in the 2023-24 school year with documentation demonstrating completion of the required follow-up actions outlined in the approved corrective action plan.

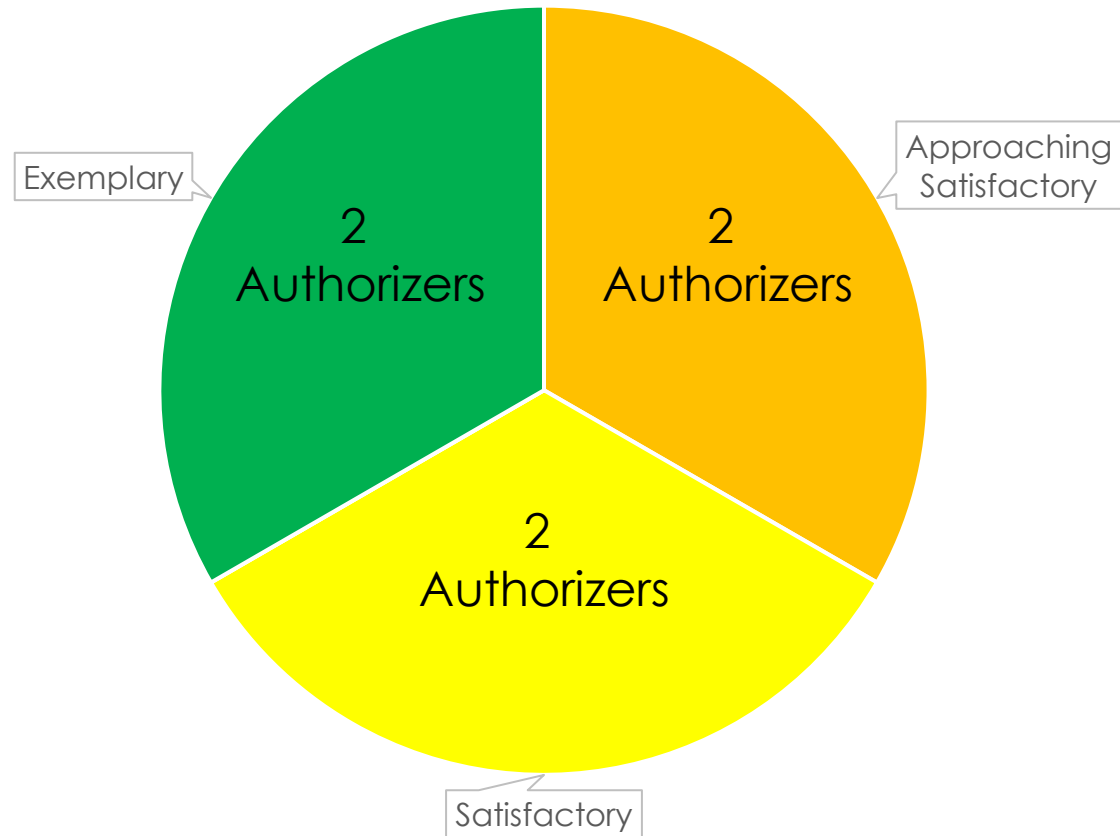
2022 CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS' 2021 EVALUATION

- As a result of their 2021 authorizer evaluation, Hamilton County Schools was required to create and complete a Corrective Action Plan in 2022.
- Hamilton County Schools developed a plan that included 7 action items aligned to evaluation outcomes, including amendments to its charter agreements, the development of a performance framework, and a renewal policy.
- The authorizer worked on its action items between March and December and has completed all required items.
- Hamilton County Schools will be evaluated again this Fall. If the authorizer earns a score of “Approaching Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory” in this evaluation, a reduction in its authorizer fee may be recommended.

EVALUATION REFLECTIONS

2021-2022 Evaluation Cycle



■ Unsatisfactory ■ Approaching Satisfactory ■ Satisfactory ■ Commendable ■ Exemplary

PROPOSED CHANGES

- **State Board Rule 0520-14-01-.08**
 - Timeline for adding new authorizers to the evaluation cycle
 - Additional flexibility for the evaluation team to avoid conflicts of interest
- **Policy 6.113 – Authorizer Evaluations**
 - Updating evaluation rubric to align with changes to the standards
- **Policy 6.111 – Quality Charter Authorizing Standards**
 - Re-organization to remove duplicate/similar standards, group by topic, and eliminate “free points” for use of required state materials
 - Updating language to clarify meaning
 - Require authorizers to document key authorizing responsibilities in policy
- **Evaluation Timeline and Additional Guidance**

AUTHORIZER RESOURCES

- **Bi-Monthly Authorizer Connect meetings**
 - Authorizers choose topic for discussion
 - Professional development opportunity for authorizing staff
 - Relationship building
- **Charter authorizer contacts on State Board's website**
- **Access to SchoolWorks' charter school authorizer video module library**
 - Valuable resource for new authorizers and new authorizing staff
- **Quality Authorizing Series**
 - Designed for districts receiving applications for the first or second time
- **Engagement with TOSS and TSBA**
 - Building additional superintendent and school board member buy-in and engagement with our evaluations



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