

Instructions for Completing and Submitting an Application to Amend a Charter Agreement

In accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § [49-13-110\(d\)](#), the governing body of a charter school may petition its authorizer to amend its charter agreement. Timelines for approval and the appeals process are defined by Charter Commission rule [1185-01-01-.04](#).

Below are the steps that a charter school shall follow to complete and submit an application to amend a charter agreement:

1. **All applicants must complete Part I, General Information**, including:
 - a. Selecting the amendment petition category, as indicated in the submitted Letter of Intent;
 - b. Providing the requested School Background information;
 - c. Providing the Background Statements and related attachments for each amendment that is requested; and
 - d. Signing of the completed application by both the Contact Person and Board Chair.
2. **In Part II, Specific Amendment Requests, applicants shall ONLY complete the Subpart that applies to the category of amendment the school is seeking.** The Subparts contain more specific questions relevant to the identified category. If a school is seeking multiple amendments, the school shall complete the applicable Subpart for each requested amendment category. A school should include any attachments requested by the applicable Subpart.
3. An application for a single amendment, including Parts I and II, must not exceed 15 single-spaced pages, with one-inch margins and 12-point font, excluding attachments. The maximum page limit increases by 5 pages for each additional amendment sought by the applicant. For example, if a school is applying for 2 amendments, the maximum page limit (excluding attachments) is 20 pages.
4. The completed application form and all attachments shall be submitted in PDF form to the school's authorizer and the Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Choice, at Charter.Schools@tn.gov.
5. Failure to submit a complete application to the authorizer, including attachments, by the deadlines listed below will result in the amendment application not being reviewed by the authorizer.

Deadlines:

If the Letter of Intent was submitted by **September 1**, the application is due by **October 1**.

If the Letter of Intent was submitted by **January 15**, the application is due by **February 14**.

If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or state-observed holiday, the due date shall be the next business day.

Emergency Amendment Applications:

A charter school may submit an emergency amendment application at any time if good cause exists for an amendment due to unanticipated extraordinary circumstances. In addition to the category of amendment, the school should check "EMERGENCY Petition" at the bottom of the first page of Part I and briefly describe the circumstances constituting the emergency. In accordance with Charter Commission rule [1185-01-01-.04](#), an emergency application may not be used to add grade levels or increase enrollment. The Background Statements shall include detailed written findings explaining the unanticipated extraordinary circumstances giving rise to the emergency amendment application.

Timeline for Review:

The authorizer must rule on an amendment application within 60 days of its due date, or within 60 days of the date of submission of an emergency application. If the authorizer fails to do so, the school’s amendment application shall be deemed approved. If the school’s application is denied, the school may appeal the decision to the Charter Commission. See the Charter Commission rule [1185-01-01-.04](#) for more details regarding the appeals process for more details regarding the appeals process.

Ratings and Criteria

Charter Commission rule [1185-01-01-.04](#) requires the Tennessee Department of Education to develop a scoring rubric for use in evaluating petition applications to amend charter agreements. Evaluators will use the following criteria to rate each amendment for which an application is received:

Rating	Criteria
Meets or Exceeds the Standard	The response thoroughly addresses key issues. The proposed amendment clearly aligns with the mission and goals of the school. The response includes specific, evidence-based information that shows thorough preparation and viability of the plan.
Does Not Meet Standard	The response is substantially incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; is unsuited to the mission and goals of the school; or otherwise raises significant concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant’s ability to implement it.

Recommendations for approval or denial of each amendment requested in an amendment application will be based on the materials submitted as well as the authorizer’s independent due diligence.

Amendment Petition
<p>Characteristics of a strong response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear, evidenced-based rationale for the proposed amendment that is aligned with the school’s mission and goals, and supports the best interest of students. ▪ Academic results provide compelling support for the proposed amendment. <i>(For Subparts B, C, F, G, and H only)</i> ▪ Realistic and detailed budget that explains the financial impact of the proposed amendment and clear evidence that the financial outlook of the school supports the costs associated with the proposed amendment. ▪ Thoughtful and realistic facility plans that accommodate the proposed amendment. <i>(For Subparts B, C, and E only)</i> ▪ Detailed implementation plan with a realistic timeline that addresses the operational impact of the proposed amendment. ▪ Clear evidence of support for the proposed amendment from parents, staff and community partners. ▪ FOR EMERGENCY PETITIONS ONLY: Compelling evidence of unanticipated extraordinary circumstances supporting the filing of an emergency amendment application.

Application Review	
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets or Exceeds Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Standard
Strengths	Page
Concerns/Questions	Page

Charter Agreement Amendment Application Checklist

The following components make up a complete amendment application and shall be submitted to the school's authorizer and to the Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Choice, at Charter.Schools@tn.gov:

- X Letter of Intent (unless an Emergency Petition)
- X Part I of the application (fill in the blanks, check the applicable box(es) and provide the Background Statements)
- X Most recent audit*
- X Balance sheet for the fiscal quarter ending thirty (30) or more days prior to submission of the application*
- X Budgets for the current fiscal year and two (2) succeeding fiscal years, assuming approval of the amendment
- n/a Written communications with stakeholders regarding the proposed amendment
- X Minutes of Board meeting approving the amendment and vote results
- X Executed Signature Page
- X Responses to questions in the applicable Subpart(s) of Part II

* This is not required if the amendment application is submitted prior to the charter school's first year of operation.

APPLICATION TO AMEND A CHARTER AGREEMENT

Part I: General Information

All Applicants Must Complete This Section

Name of Charter School: Cornerstone Prep School

Amendment Petition Category identified in the Letter of Intent:

Check the box for the category under which this Amendment Petition falls:

- Change in governance structure (including, but not limited to, a change in the nonprofit entity governing the school), or addition of or changes to the charter management organization
- The addition or removal of a grade level or levels
- Changes in student enrollment which fall outside of the minimum or maximum enrollment thresholds set forth in the charter school's charter agreement
- The addition or removal of a plan to provide transportation to students attending the charter school
- Changes to the charter school's location, if outside the geographic area set forth in the charter agreement
- Changes to the charter school's academic focus set forth in the charter agreement
- Changes identified in the charter agreement as material modifications or amendments. Please specify: _____
- Other material changes not covered by any of the above categories. Please specify: _____

- EMERGENCY Petition. Please briefly describe the emergency: _____

[Continue to School Background on next page]

SCHOOL BACKGROUND

Provide the following information about your school:

- a) Campus address: N/A Capstone Education Group address is 320 Carpenter Memphis TN 38112.
- b) First school year in operation: Planned for Aug 2022
- c) Grade levels and enrollment currently serving: not open yet
- d) Grade levels and maximum enrollment to be served at maturation of charter agreement, if different: k-8 and 675 students
- e) End of current charter term: May 2032

BACKGROUND STATEMENTS

This is an application to amend a school's charter agreement by changing the item selected above. Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below:

1. Provide details on the selected amendment above and describe the requested change, including the school's rationale for the proposed change. Describe any planning that is already underway to prepare for the proposed amendment.

Cornerstone Prep School (CPS) originally applied to open with two grades in year 1, kindergarten and first grade. The application was submitted prior to the start of the pandemic and therefore assumed our school leader would be able to spend year 0 going to parent homes and community events to meet and recruit students. The plan also assumed that renovating a facility would take the normal amount of time and cost.

Our school leader has had a great deal of difficulty engaging future parents due the fear related to COVID. The rising cases, especially among children, have created a high level of fear and concern among parents of young children.

In addition, most community meetings and group gatherings have been cancelled or postponed as people wait to see how COVID results will continue to change. This decreases the opportunity for the school leader to continue to build relationship and partnerships in the community.

COVID and economic uncertainty have also negatively impacted the procurement of a location. An offer was extended for an existing, available school building located in the selected neighborhood several months ago. After further deliberation, the owner of the building chose not to sell the building.

This required CEG to quickly look for other available property in the Parkway Village/Sherwood neighborhood. The list of possibilities was narrowed down to one finalist. Architects and contractors walked through the facility several times and created a plan whereby the facility would be renovated and ready to open in August. Subsequently, an offer was made three weeks ago for this property. The owner has not accepted this offer and has been unwilling to respond with a counteroffer and therefore we are seeking both a short term and long-term solution to our facility need.

Therefore, given the effects of COVID on parent communication and student recruiting, as well as the impact on finding and renovating a facility with the current building and supply chain issues, CPS seeks to open in Year 1 with just kindergarten. CPS would add one additional grade each year thereafter, as

was stated in the original application.

CPS is currently working with an architect, real estate broker and contractor to identify and design a space in Parkway Village that would be renovated and ready to open in August to serve 75 kindergarten students, either as a short-term solution or a permanent solution.

2. How will the proposed amendment support or enhance the school's mission and goals?

This proposed amendment would have no permanent effect on the school's missions and goals. However, in the short term, this change will increase the likelihood of reaching the budgeted enrollment by grade in year one and allow the building to be ready based on the smaller number of students to be served in year one. The amendment would also allow for teachers and leaders to ensure the success of all scholars in year one. Therefore the proposed amendment could positively enhance the outcomes in year one.

3. Describe how the proposed amendment will impact the school's finances. Explain any anticipated revenues or expenses arising from the proposed change. If expenses are anticipated, explain how the school will finance them. Please **attach** the school's (i) most recent audit, (ii) balance sheet for the fiscal quarter ending thirty (30) or more days prior to submission of the application, and (iii) budgets for the current fiscal year and two (2) succeeding fiscal years assuming the proposed amendment is approved.

The proposed amendment will decrease both the revenue and the expenses in year one. CPS will have 75 fewer students and 4 fewer teachers in the inaugural year. This will cause a shortfall in net income of approximately \$400,000 in year one. This will be funded by current working capital reserves.

There may be a reduced construction costs in year zero should the organization choose to build out only required space to meet the lower year 1 enrollment. The organization will eventually build out all of the space needed to meet the planned enrollment stated in the application, so the long term construction costs will be relatively unchanged.

Overall, there will be no ongoing negative financial impact on the school or organization after year one.

4. How has the school informed its external stakeholders (e.g. local school board representatives, neighbors, community partners) and internal stakeholders (e.g. staff, parents) of the proposed amendment? Please **attach** any written communication (e.g., meeting minutes). Describe any notable support for or opposition to the proposed amendment. If concerns have been brought to the school or governing board's attention, what is the plan to address them?

At this point CEG has not begun recruiting students or communicating specific enrollment plans to community stakeholders and therefore we have not communicated anything regarding our first-year classroom openings to any stakeholders outside of our board of directors. Therefore, the organization does not foresee any issues opening with kindergarten as no plans have been communicated externally to anyone regarding first year enrollment. It is not atypical for schools to open with just kindergarten so CEG believes like there would be no significant issues or concerns with external stakeholders.

5. When did the school's governing board approve the proposed amendment? Please **attach** minutes from the meeting and vote results.

The board approved this change at the August 31, 2021, board meeting.

6. FOR EMERGENCY PETITIONS ONLY: Explain the unanticipated extraordinary circumstances giving rise to the emergency amendment application. Identify when these circumstances were first discovered and brought to the attention of the governing board. Why did the governing board determine that the circumstances constituted an emergency that warranted the filing of an emergency petition?

[Continue to Signature Page]

**Application to Amend a Charter Agreement
Signature Page**

By our signatures below, we hereby certify that the governing body of the charter school identified herein has approved the submission of this application to amend a charter agreement.



Contact Signature

See attached signature page
Board Chair Signature

Drew Sippel, Executive Director
Contact, Printed Name & Title

Scott Walker
Board Chair, Printed Name

dsippel@cornerstoneprepmemphis.org

Contact Email Address

swwalker@firsttennessee.com

Board Chair Email Address

09/30/2021
Date

09/30/2021
Date

This completed and signed form and all attachments shall be saved as a PDF and submitted to the applicant's authorizer as well as to the Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Choice, at Charter.Schools@tn.gov.

[Continue to Part II]

Part II: Specific Amendment Requests

Only Complete the Applicable Subpart for the Amendment the School is Seeking

Subparts:

- A. Change in governance structure (including, but not limited to, a change in the nonprofit entity governing the school), or addition of or changes to the charter management organization
- B. The addition or removal of a grade level or levels
- C. Changes in student enrollment which fall outside of the minimum or maximum enrollment thresholds set forth in the charter school's charter agreement
- D. The addition or removal of a plan to provide transportation to students attending the charter school
- E. Changes to the charter school's location, if outside the geographic area set forth in the charter agreement
- F. Changes to the charter school's academic focus set forth in the charter agreement
- G. Changes identified in the charter agreement as material modifications or amendments
- H. Other material changes not covered by any of the above categories

Subpart A – Governance Structure

ONLY complete this section if applying to amend governance structure

Amendments Covered by this Subpart: A charter school should use this Subpart A to apply for an amendment to the governance structures established in its Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and rules and policies for governance and operation of the school. These changes range broadly and may include, but are not limited to, a change in then on-profit entity governing the school or engaging or severing a relationship with a charter management organization (CMO). Note: A charter school does not need to amend its charter when hiring a new school leader or board chair, unless specifically required by its charter agreement.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below:

1. What is the school's current governance structure?
2. What is the proposed governance structure?
3. How will the proposed governance structure improve oversight of the school and benefit students?
4. If the governing body is proposing to change CMOs or hire a CMO to oversee the day-to-day operations of the school, describe the following:
 - a. An explanation of how and why the CMO was selected;
 - b. A term sheet setting forth the proposed duration of the contract; roles and responsibilities of the school governing board, the school staff, and the CMO; scope of services and resources to be provided by the CMO; performance evaluation measures and mechanisms; detailed explanation of compensation to be paid to the CMO; financial controls and oversight; methods of contract oversight and enforcement; investment disclosure; and conditions for renewal and termination of the contract;
 - c. A draft of the proposed management contract;
 - d. Disclosure and explanation of any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the school governing board and proposed CMO or any affiliated business entities; and
 - e. Documentation of the CMO's non-profit status and evidence that it is authorized to do business in Tennessee.
5. How will the school ensure that parent participation and input is protected within the proposed governance structure?
6. Describe the school's plan for implementing and transitioning to the proposed governance structure, including timelines.
7. Attach the most recent non-profit certification for the proposed governing body.

Subpart B – Grade Levels

ONLY complete this section if applying to add or remove grade level(s)

Amendments Covered by this Subpart: A charter school should use this Subpart B to apply for the addition or removal of one or more grade levels to or from the grade levels set forth in its charter agreement.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below. If a question is inapplicable, mark it N/A.

1. What is the school's current grade structure?

N/A. The school has not opened yet. The authorized structure is k-8, opening in year one with kindergarten and first grade and then adding one grade per year until reaching full capacity. CPS does not seek to change the permanent grade structure.

2. What is the proposed grade structure?

The proposed grade structure would remain as approved by the application: k-8. The change proposed would simply delay starting first grade by one year, subsequently delaying reaching full capacity by one year. CPS requests a change to beginning with only kindergarten in year one rather than kindergarten and first grade.

3. Describe and attach documentary evidence of the community need for the proposed change in grade structure.

N/A. We believe this is not applicable since there is no permanent change to the grade structure.

4. How will the addition or removal of the grade level(s) improve the school's existing program and benefit students?

Since there is no permanent change in the grade structure, there will be no detriment or benefit in the long run. In year one, students will get more support from the principal, support teachers and interventionists, which should increase student achievement and emotional and social support in year one.

5. How will the school adapt its physical space to accommodate the addition or removal of grade level(s)?

CPS may reduce the first-year space plan requirements, eliminating the need for 3 general education classrooms and one support classroom in year one as compared to the plan. After year one, there will be no impact on the physical space as planned in the application other than pushing the physical space planned needs back by one year throughout the charter agreement.

6. How will the school adapt its staffing (e.g., teachers, educational aides, special population staff, other support staff, etc.) to accommodate the addition or removal of grade level(s)?

CPS will hire three fewer general education teachers and one less special classroom teacher in year one. These teachers will be hired in year two. The staffing of each subsequent year will

decrease accordingly as there will be one less grade each year compared to the plan. Total staffing at full capacity will be unchanged from the application.

7. How does the school’s record of achievement support the approval of this amendment? For purposes of this question, the authorizer will review various metrics of success, including but not limited to the school’s scores on TVAAS, TN Ready and the authorizer’s school performance framework, as well as the school’s financial information and duration of operations.

This is not applicable as the school has not yet opened.

CEG’s existing schools have been among the best in the current district, the ASD, for the past nine years. Some highlights include:

- CEG moved each one of the CEG schools off the Priority List
- CEG moved the lowest performing school in the state past more than 150 schools in TN Ready achievement
- CEG have shown dramatic and consistent growth for 9 years as measured by the NWEA MAP national assessment, with network lifetime growth averages of more than 1.4 years of growth annually across the network in math, 1.5 years of growth annually in language, 1.3 years of growth in reading and 1.4 years of growth annually in science
- CEG frequently earned TVAAS 5 scores, including 3 consecutive years at two campuses
- Outperformed every other organization operating in the Achievement School District (ASD)

8. Complete the proposed enrollment summary for each grade level and each year remaining in the charter agreement in the table below:

Enrollment Table

Number of Students

Grade Level	Year 1: 2022- 2023	Year 2: 2023- 2024	Year 3: 2024- 2025	Year 4: 2025- 2026	Year 5: 2026- 2027	At Capacity: 2030-31
K	75	75	75	75	75	75
1		75	75	75	75	75
2			75	75	75	75
3				75	75	75
4					75	75
5						75
6						75
7						75
8						75
Totals	75	150	225	300	375	675

<u>Anticipated Demographics</u>		
% of Economically Disadvantaged Students	% of Students with Disabilities	% of English Language Learners
100%	15%	15%

Subpart C – Student Enrollment

ONLY complete this section if applying to amend enrollment

Amendments Covered by this Subpart: A charter school should use this Subpart C to apply for a change in student enrollment outside of the minimum or maximum enrollment thresholds set forth in its charter agreement.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below. If a question is inapplicable, mark it N/A.

1. What is the school's current enrollment by grade level and by year of the charter agreement?

N/A. The school has not yet opened so there is no current enrollment.

2. How will a change in enrollment improve the school's existing program and benefit students?

N/A.

Since there is no permanent change in the grade structure, there will be no detriment or benefit in the long run. In year one, students will get more support from the principal, support teachers and interventionists, which should increase student achievement and social and emotional support in year one.

3. Describe and attach documentary evidence of the demand for this enrollment change. How does the scope, pace, and need for this enrollment change align with current demographic and growth projections in the city?

CEG does not think the delay of opening the first grade has any implications to the approved charter nor does it pertain to the current demographic and growth projections for the city. COVID's impact on students, families, and building materials is the single driver of the requested change. The rationale from the original charter regarding the scope and pace based on the current and projected demographics remains intact.

4. Describe the school's post-lottery enrollment/waiting list process.

Cornerstone Prep School will enroll students who submit their applications within the enrollment time frame. If CPS receives more applications than available slots, an enrollment lottery will be conducted in compliance with the Tennessee Public Charter L, TCA 49-13-113. Students who are not selected through lottery will be on CPS waitlist. As students transfer/withdraw, parents will be notified of the vacant seat and will have 48 hours to respond to accept the seat. If the parent declines or does not meet the 48-hour deadline, CPS will move on to the next student on the waitlist.

5. Discuss the school's enrollment trends over the past three (3) years, including any waitlist information.

N/A

6. How will the school adapt its physical space to accommodate a change in enrollment?

CPS may reduce the first-year space plan requirements, eliminating the need for 3 general education classrooms and one support classroom in year one as compared to the plan. After year one, there will be no impact on the physical space as planned in the application other than pushing the physical space planned needs back by one year throughout the charter agreement.

7. How will the school adapt its staffing (e.g., teachers, educational aides, special population staff, other support staff, etc.) to accommodate the change in enrollment? special population staff, other support staff, etc.) to accommodate the addition or removal of grade level(s)?

CPS will hire three fewer general education teachers and one less special classroom teacher in year one. These teachers will be hired in year two. The staffing of each subsequent year will decrease accordingly as there will be one less grade each year compared to the plan. Total staffing at full capacity will be unchanged from the application.

8. Describe ways that the school ensures recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students with disabilities and English language learners, along with the school's target population.

Cornerstone Prep School is open to all eligible students. CEG will execute the recruitment plan as described in the application, which will include the following strategies for specific subgroups:

Students with Disabilities:

In all recruitment materials, CEG will explicitly state the school serves all students, including those with existing IEPs and 504 plans, as well as those who have struggled academically in other school environments.

CEG will meet with community organizations that serve child clients with disabilities (and their parents) to make them aware of our capacity to serve students with disabilities (e.g., the Parent Academy, the Department of Children and Families, Early Intervention Centers).

CEG has 10 years of experience serving special education students, typically averaging 15-20% of the total students served. CEG has many systems in place, in addition to a special education director and assistant director, to support the work at the school.

English Language Learners:

All promotional materials and applications will be printed in Spanish. Spanish-speaking members of the school staff and parent community will participate at all community outreach events and information sessions to ensure that native Spanish speakers can fully understand our program and application process.

For students that may speak other languages, our EL teachers will reach out to translators to support with communication.

We will attend and distribute materials at organizations throughout Memphis that provide adult EL classes and our support to families from other countries. Those organizations include: Memphis Refugee Empowerment Program, World Relief Memphis and local libraries and colleges.

CEG has ten years of experience serving ELL students in Memphis, as well as working with community partners that serve and support the EL families outside of school. CEG will utilize their experience and relationships to continue this success with ELL students and families.

9. How does the school's record of achievement support the approval of this amendment? For purposes of this question, the authorizer will review various metrics of success, including but not limited to the school's scores on TVAAS, TN Ready and the authorizer's school performance framework, as well as the school's financial information and duration of operations.

N/A.

CEG's existing schools have been among the best in the current district, the ASD, for the past nine years. Some highlights include:

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Totals	75	150	225	300	375	675

<u>Anticipated Demographics</u>		
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