



Department of
Education

ASD School Transition Framework

Tennessee Department of Education | Dec. 28, 2020





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December 4, 2020

To Our Tennessee Stakeholders and Education Community,

As educators, it is our fundamental responsibility to provide every child with access to a quality education and ensure each is on a path to success. This is even more true for those students who have been educated in our lowest-performing schools. **In service to these students – and their families – the state maintains a strong commitment to the Achievement School District (ASD) as the state’s most intensive intervention model.** This is both necessary and important as a signal to Tennessee’s contemporary history of accelerated growth, as well as a step towards continued improvement in some of education’s most challenging work.

The purpose of the ASD School Transition Framework that follows is to outline the process through which a school exits the ASD and, when applicable, the process for transitioning a school in the ASD to its permanent authorizer.¹ This framework will guide that transition process, including the development of individual school exit plans for current and future ASD schools.

To be clear: this framework is limited to the options currently available in statute. This requires ASD charter schools to first apply to their home district for approval, with the option of appealing to the Tennessee Charter Commission should the home district deny the charter application. Throughout the development of this framework, a number of stakeholders requested the option for high-growth or high-performing ASD charters to be allowed to apply directly to the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, if they so choose, as a way to minimize costly and challenging processes and expedite stability for students and families. While the Department supports fruitful conversations regarding pathways that provide savings to taxpayers and confidence in public education systems for families, this is not currently an option that is legally available and would require legislative action.

This framework is also not intended to discuss or cover future iterations, adjustments, or changes to the ASD. Those ongoing conversations will continue in earnest as we develop a strategy that capitalizes on the lessons learned and provides strong opportunities and choices for students and families.

This document is an ASD School Transition Framework. To inform the development of this framework, the Department convened an advisory group and engaged other stakeholders, charter operators, and communities for feedback. I want to thank each member of the advisory group, as well as the hundreds of parents across the state who provided feedback about the ASD over the last year. Each of your comments, your stories, and your reflections contributed to our shared goal of providing the best possible education for all children.

We know this work is important. We know the stakes are high. Our resolve is clear, and I am encouraged by the partnership, collaboration, and participation that has been displayed by so many stakeholders. As Tennesseans committed to children, we must come together to find bold solutions to complex challenges. **Few are as complex as school turnaround, which is why we must maintain our focus on doing what is right, even – and especially – when it is hard.**

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Penny Schwinn', written in a cursive style.

Penny Schwinn, PhD, MAT
Commissioner of Education

ⁱ As required in PC 777

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Section I: Introduction

Background

Over the past decade, education has remained a top priority for Tennessee; this commitment established the foundation for education reform in our state and ultimately the creation of the Achievement School District (ASD).

In 2007, Tennessee ranked 41st nationally in fourth-grade reading, 46th in fourth-grade math, 39th in eighth-grade reading, and 42nd in eighth-grade math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—despite proficiency rates close to 90 percent or better on state assessments. Consequently, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce gave Tennessee an “F” in [*Truth in Advertising about Student Proficiency*](#) in its 2007 state report card on educational effectiveness. To address this disparity, the Tennessee Department of Education (department) embarked on ambitious education reform, including raising academic standards, overhauling assessments, and improving teacher evaluations. As a result, from 2011 to 2015, Tennessee became the fastest-improving state on NAEP, with students showing more growth over that time than students in any other state in the nation. One of the initiatives that was part of Tennessee’s reform was the establishment of the ASD, a statewide district charged with turning around the state’s lowest-performing schools.

In 2012, the ASD took over its first cohort of five failing schools. Currently, the ASD is comprised of 27 schools serving over 9,200 students, with four schools being operated directly by the ASD (known as the Achievement Schools) and the remaining schools being operated by local and national charter partners. The ASD began with a very ambitious goal: move schools from the bottom five percent to the top 25 percent of schools in the state within five years.

Since its inception, the ASD has experienced several challenges in meeting this ambitious goal. There has been significant turnover in the superintendent role, with four different superintendents in nine years. Moreover, there have been staffing challenges across all schools—even with supports from partners including Teach for America (TFA), Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR), and others. There has also been difficulty in attracting high-quality charter partners, especially due to funding issues and decreased enrollment.

As a result, the ASD has not seen consistent growth in achievement across all schools. While there have been schools that have exited Priority status, the ASD has fallen short of meeting its ambitious goal of moving schools into the top 25 percent of schools in the state. Additionally, while the ASD has a school performance framework (SPF) intended to hold schools accountable, this framework has not been implemented with fidelity since 2016. The changes in ASD leadership resulted in the ASD being in a continuous state of change, with limited training and buy-in from new leadership and staff.

Acknowledging that a renewed examination of the ASD's structure and purpose was needed, the department began examining lessons learned over the past decade. First, in the fall of 2019, the department hosted listening sessions in communities across the state to discuss and collect feedback on a proposed school turnaround framework for the state's Priority schools, including schools operated by the ASD. These sessions were followed up with additional convenings in early 2020 to continue engaging with schools and communities. Next, edits to the ASD school performance framework were underway to address the challenges with implementing the current SPF. The department had also begun to address how schools would exit the ASD, as several ASD charter schools were approaching end of the ten-year charter term—acknowledging that the ASD has not been a successful intervention for all schools. Finally, the department and ASD leadership had begun early discussions with Shelby County Schools (SCS) in the spring of 2020 and had also begun scheduling additional meetings with ASD charter operators to discuss school performance and how schools would transition out of the ASD. However, the COVID-19 pandemic halted all discussions in March 2020 as focus rightfully shifted to keeping students and teachers safe, providing meals to students, and preparing for virtual learning.

On July 15, 2020, the Tennessee General Assembly passed public chapter 777 (PC 777), now codified in [T.C.A. § 49-1-614\(k\)\(4\)](#), requiring the commissioner of education to develop a transition plan for schools to exit the ASD no earlier than the 2024-25 school year. PC 777 requires the plan to be submitted to the education committees of the house and senate no later than January 1, 2021.

Purpose

The department drafted this ASD School Transition Framework in response to PC 777. The purpose of the framework is to inform the development of School Exit Plans (SEPs) for current and future ASD schools, outlining the guidelines and processes through which a school exits the ASD.

Because each ASD school is unique, each will have an SEP that is school-specific and structured to detail the key areas and decision points needed to facilitate a smooth exit out of the ASD and transition to its receiving authorizing agency or district. The transition process included in the SEP will be developed over a series of collaborative discussions amongst the following stakeholders: school personnel, charter operator (where applicable), authorizing agency or district, ASD leadership, and family and community members. This process will be pursuant to a timeline approved by the department and will be captured in a final SEP approved by the commissioner of education. All SEPs must be developed using this process and will be captured in [Section IV](#) of this document.

The development of an ASD School Exit Plan is a critical component of Tennessee's [Best for All](#) strategic plan, ensuring that students in ASD schools have access to an excellent education as their schools exit the ASD. As the transition team works through the development and implementation of an individual SEP for each school exiting the ASD, it is important that this process remains focused solely on making decisions and creating conditions for transitions that are in the best interests of students. This plan requires the inclusion of key milestones and safeguards to track and measure progress of transition activities in each SEP, as well as a timetable for activities related to the school's full exit from the ASD and transition to its receiving authorizing agency or district.

The state remains committed to the ASD as the state's most intensive intervention within a larger framework of turnaround support for the state's Priority schools. As such, it is essential that the transition team develop a collaborative framework for making "students first" decisions. Parties will be charged with developing and maintaining productive relationships with one another, as well as with other agencies, to support the achievement and development of students. To this end, all parties commit to operating with professionalism and valuing the other's contributions.

This framework is divided into four main sections that are intended to provide guidance on the development and implementation of each school's SEP:

- [Section I](#) is an introductory section, which includes background information and purpose;
- [Section II](#) includes the legal authority for the creation and operation of the ASD and the transition of an ASD school to its receiving authorizing agency or district, including the new language regarding the transition plan added by PC 777;
- [Section III](#) provides information on the process, options, and conditions for the exit of a school from the ASD and transition of legal governance or authorization of a school within the ASD to its receiving authorizing agency or district;
- [Section IV](#) is the School Exit Plan (SEP) template, which includes
 - 1) a list of members on the transition team,
 - 2) a school data profile of key historical information and data elements,
 - 3) financial, operational, and programmatic considerations,
 - 4) an implementation plan,
 - 5) assurances, and
 - 6) an appendix for any relevant attachments.

ASD School Transition Advisory Group

To provide input and to inform the development of this framework, the department convened the ASD School Transition Advisory Group comprised of representatives from multiple stakeholder groups. Commencing in August 2020, the group met monthly to have robust discussions, review data, and provide feedback and questions to consider for the development of this framework. From these convenings, two key themes emerged:

- Transparency and meaningful engagement with families and communities are essential.
- The framework must require an SEP for each school that is school-specific and structured to take into account an individual school's history, performance, needs, etc.

Below is a list of the participants in the ASD School Transition Framework Advisory Group. Each will be invited to continue to serve in this advisory capacity to support SEP implementation, as well as provide feedback to the department on SEP reports and other communications to stakeholders.

ASD School Transition Framework Advisory Group

Member Name	Organization	Type
Michelle Armstrong	Pyramid Peak	Education advocate
Jay Brown	LEAD Public Schools	Charter operator
Vinessa Brown	Libertas Montessori	Board member
Maya Bugg	TN Charter School Center	Charter partner
Sarah Carpenter	Memphis LIFT	Community partner
Victor Evans	TNCan	Education advocate
Sharon Griffin	Metro Nashville Public Schools	District representative
Speaker Ferrell Haile	Tennessee General Assembly, Senate District 18	Elected official
Bryan Johnson	Hamilton County Department of Education	Superintendent
Stephanie Love	Shelby County School Board Member	Elected official
David Mansouri	State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE)	Education policy group
Terence Patterson	Memphis Education Fund	Education advocate
Lisa Settle	ASD Interim Superintendent	ASD representative
Sonia Stewart	Hamilton County Department of Education	District representative
Gini Pupo-Walker	MNPS School Board Member and Education Trust	Elected official and education advocate
Michael Whaley	Shelby County Commission	Elected official
Chairman Mark White	Tennessee General Assembly, House District 83	Elected official
Angela Whitelaw	Shelby County Schools	District representative
Marian Williams	Kirby Middle School Principal	Principal

Section II: Regulatory Context

Legal Authority—Achievement School District

[T.C.A. § 49-1-614](#) is the legal authority for the creation and operation of the ASD, with other statutes relevant to charter school and ASD operation included in the [Supplementary Law Excerpts](#) section of this Plan. T.C.A § 49-1-614(k), provided below, addresses the exit of ASD schools and includes the new language on the transition plan added by PC 777 in (4):

- (1) A school that has been removed from the LEA and placed in the ASD shall remain in the ASD until the school is no longer identified as a priority school pursuant to §49-1-602 for two (2) consecutive cycles beginning with the 2017 priority school list; provided, however, that no school shall remain in the ASD for more than a ten-year period. After the school improves student performance such that the school is no longer identified as a priority school for two (2) consecutive cycles, the commissioner, in consultation with the LEA, shall develop and approve a transition plan for the purpose of planning the school's return to the LEA. If the LEA is identified as an LEA earning the lowest accountability determination pursuant to §49-1-602(a) and the parents of at least sixty percent (60%) of the children enrolled at the school demonstrate support for remaining in the ASD by signing a petition, then the school shall remain in the ASD and shall return to the LEA after the LEA is no longer identified as an LEA earning the lowest accountability determination.
- (2) Notwithstanding subdivision (k)(1) or any other provision to the contrary, if a school enters the ASD and is operated as a charter school through authorization by the ASD pursuant to §49-13-106, the ASD shall remain the chartering authority through the duration of the charter agreement and the school shall remain under the authority of the ASD. Upon expiration of the charter agreement, the school shall return to the LEA and the terms of the charter agreement may be renewed upon submission of a renewal application by the governing body of the charter school to the LEA under the provisions outlined in §49-13-121.
- (3) Notwithstanding subdivision (k)(1) or any other provision to the contrary, the commissioner shall have the authority to remove any school from the jurisdiction of the ASD at any time.
- (4) Notwithstanding subdivisions (k)(1)-(3), a school that has been placed in the ASD shall remain in the ASD until the school is authorized to return to the school's LEA according to the transition plan developed by the commissioner pursuant to this subdivision (k)(4). The

commissioner shall develop a transition plan for the purpose of planning the return, no earlier than the 2024-2025 school year, of schools in the ASD to the LEAs from which the schools were removed. The commissioner shall submit the plan developed pursuant to this subdivision (k)(4) to the education committees of the senate and house of representatives by January 1, 2021.

Other Provisions and Information Relevant to ASD Operations

Every Student Succeeds Act

Schools in the ASD are also subject to the provisions in Tennessee's [accountability model](#) as detailed in the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. Currently, the state's accountability model for districts and schools is comprised of the following indicators and includes a minimum performance goal and multiple indicators for determining performance:

- (1) Proficiency on annual assessments
- (2) Growth measure on annual assessments
- (3) Graduation rates
- (4) Additional indicator of school quality and student success (chronic absenteeism and ready graduate indicators)
- (5) Progress in achieving English language proficiency (ELPA)

It is also within this school accountability model that schools become eligible for the ASD intervention. Finally, the state's accountability model for districts is designed to be implemented in concert with all provisions of Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 6 and could impact ASD school transition options included in SEPs. Specifically, in instances where the home district earns the lowest accountability determination of "in need of improvement," transition options for a school's SEP may be impacted.

ASD School Performance Framework

The ASD's School Performance Framework (SPF) is an instrument used to measure the effectiveness of schools in the ASD's portfolio and is an integral part of the agreement between the ASD and CMO. The SPF was based on the accountability requirements of the state's TCAP testing, standard financial operating procedures, and a focus on strong school culture and family rights that lead to an

environment where students thrive and succeed. There are three components (and associated sub-components) in the ASD's current School Performance Framework:

Finance <i>Measured at the operator level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current Ratio: <i>1:1 Threshold</i>• Cash on Hand: <i>At least 30 days</i>• Audit: <i>Clean Financial Audit</i>
Student & Family Rights <i>Measured at the school level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access: <i>Right to special services, as required by law</i>• Enrollment: <i>Right to school choice and equitable enrollment</i>• Health/Safety: <i>Right to healthy and safe environment</i>• Leadership: <i>Right to qualified staff</i>• Voice: <i>Right to be informed and included</i>
Academic Composite <i>Measured at the school level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mission: <i>Is the school increasing its relative TN performance?</i>• School Progress: <i>Is the school making adequate proficiency gains?</i>• Student Progress: <i>Are students growing academically?</i>• Equity: <i>Are all students receiving an equitable education?</i>• College & Career: <i>Are students being prepared for college and career?</i>• Culture: <i>Are students learning in a safe and positive culture?</i>

A school's performance in each category results in an overall rating of "Does Not Meet," "Approaching," "Meeting," or "Exceeding Expectations," and each school will receive an individual, overall rating on the SPF, which is based on the lowest rating of any of the individual sections. These overall ratings lead to operator action decisions of "Grow/Replicate," "Expand," or "Revocation." A copy of the current of the framework can be found [here](#).

In summer 2021, the ASD's SPF is will be updated to align with the state's ESSA plan and Tennessee's School Accountability Framework. Once updated, this plan and the SEP template will be updated to reflect the revised SPF.

ASD and Charter Agreements

In compliance with the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002, the ASD enters into a charter agreement with a charter school governing body or Charter Management Organization (hereinafter referred to as charter operator) for the standard term of ten years required by law. The agreement grants a charter to the charter operator for the operation of a school within the ASD and defines the

roles and responsibilities of the charter operator and ASD, and includes general operational requirements including:

- governance
- funding
- grants
- financial management
- academic program and assessment
- student population and enrollment
- serving students with disabilities

The charter agreement also provides academic performance requirements that ASD schools must meet and sets forth school closure notification requirements and provisions for terminating the agreement. Charter agreements may be amended when necessary for implementing the SEP.

Supplementary Law Excerpts

T.C.A. [Title 49 Chapter 13](#) (“Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002”)

The Tennessee Public Charter Schools act includes provisions regarding the authorizing and closure of charters including those in the ASD. See specific statutes below.

T.C.A. § [49-13-104](#). Chapter Definitions

T.C.A. § [49-13-105](#). Public Charter School Commission

T.C.A. § [49-13-106](#). Creation or Conversion of Charter Schools

T.C.A. § [49-13-107](#). Application Process

T.C.A. § [49-13-121](#). Renewal of Charter and Voluntary Closure

T.C.A. § [49-13-122](#). Revocation of Charter

T.C.A. § [49-13-126](#). Promulgation of Rules and Regulations

T.C.A. § [49-13-130](#). Closure of Charter School

Section III: Transition Options for School Exit Plans

Purpose

This section provides information on the process, options, and conditions for schools to exit the ASD, the transition of legal governance or authorization of schools as authorized by current law, and how the transition of a school must be memorialized in an SEP.

Conditions Affecting Charter School Transition Options

The school transition option included in each ASD charter school's SEP must be identified from the list of options provided below and is contingent on several factors or conditions, including but not limited to:

- the years remaining in the term of the current charter agreement,
- the academic achievement of the school,
- the charter operator and school's compliance with the current charter agreement,
- district commitment, readiness, and capacity; and
- the availability of higher-performing schools within the home district.

When a school is identified for transition by the department, a [transition team](#) will be immediately appointed for the purpose of developing a school's SEP. The transition team will meet regularly to review school information and data, identify a transition option, and develop and enact an implementation plan. The transition team will be charged with creating a school-specific School Exit Plan (the template for which can be found in [Section IV](#) of this document).

School Transition Options

The department's intent is that this framework be flexible so that transition options for schools exiting the ASD may be added should the Tennessee General Assembly revise the law allowing new options to be added to this framework.

School Exit Plans for the Achievement Schools (ASD direct-run schools) shall include provisions for transitioning the school out of the ASD and, depending on the academic achievement of the school, may include provisions facilitating the transition of students to higher-performing schools.

Current transition options available for ASD charter schools will be contingent upon the conditions noted above. For options requiring ASD charter operators to apply to the home district for authorization, the charter operator must complete the revised charter school application (described below) that, if approved by the home district, will result in a new charter agreement between the home district and the charter operator. If the home district denies the application, the charter operator may appeal the denial to the Charter Commission.

Ensuring student access to higher performing seats should be an integral component of all available options.

- **Option 1: This option is applicable if the charter school has earned Priority exit status based on the state’s accountability model prior to the expiration of the school’s ASD charter agreement.** Earning this designation would initiate the development of an SEP that could include the assignment of the existing ASD charter agreement by the ASD to the home district as described in Option 2 or the school remaining in the ASD longer based on the home district’s accountability determination.
 - If the home district is identified as a district earning the lowest accountability determination pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-602(a) and the parents of at least sixty percent (60%) of the children enrolled at the school demonstrate support for remaining in the ASD by signing a petition, then the school shall remain in the ASD for the remainder of the term of the ASD charter agreement or until the home district is no longer identified as a district earning the lowest accountability determination ([T.C.A § 49-1-614\(k\)\(1\)](#)).

- **Option 2: This option is applicable if a charter school has not earned Priority exit status and when the ASD, charter operator, and home district mutually agree to the assignment of the existing ASD charter agreement.** The ASD and the home district must execute an Assignment of Charter Agreement indicating that the ASD assigns all obligations and benefits in the existing ASD charter agreement to the home district, and the home district assumes all

obligations and rights under the existing ASD charter agreement for the remainder of its term, with charter operator consent. The Assignment of Charter Agreement does not amend the terms or conditions of the existing ASD charter agreement. Upon expiration of the existing ASD charter agreement, the charter operator would apply to the home district for renewal of the charter agreement using the revised application for a new charter agreement that includes a more streamlined process for schools transitioning from the ASD to a new charter authorizer (detailed below). If the application is denied by the home district, the charter operator may appeal the denial to the Charter Commission.

- **Option 3: This option is applicable if the school is approaching the end of its ten-year ASD charter agreement term; the school has not met the Priority exit criteria; and the charter school application (new revised application for schools exiting the ASD) filed by the charter operator is denied by the home district and the Charter Commission (on appeal).**

In this scenario, the school would be closed, and the SEP for this option would focus on transitioning students into other higher-performing schools in the home district at the expiration of the existing ASD charter agreement. The availability of higher-performing schools must be part of the transition discussions and decisions on what provisions are included in the SEP. The SEP must indicate where students are specifically assigned upon enrollment in the home district and ensure students have access to a higher-performing school.

- **Option 4: This option is applicable if the ASD revokes the charter agreement prior to the expiration of the ten-year term and will result in the ASD electing to either directly operate the school; enter into a new ASD charter agreement with a new charter operator; contract with one or more individuals, governmental entities, or non-project entities to manage the day-to-date operations; or transition the school to the jurisdiction of the home district.** Pursuant to [T.C.A. § 49-13-122\(b\)](#), a charter authorizer may revoke a charter at any time if the authorizer determines that the school:

- Committed a material violation of any conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter agreement;
- Failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward the performance expectations set forth in the charter agreement; or

- Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.
- **Option 5: This option is applicable if the charter operator agrees to terminate the current charter school agreement.** In this instance, the SEP would include provisions facilitating the transition of students to higher-performing schools in the ASD, the home district, or Charter Commission.

If the Commissioner chooses to exercise the general authority under T.C.A. §49-1-614 (k)(3) to remove a charter school from the jurisdiction of the ASD prior to the expiration of the ASD charter agreement, such action would initiate the development of an SEP that includes transition Option 2, 3, or 5. The option selected in the SEP is contingent upon the [conditions listed above](#).

Application Process for Exiting ASD Charter Schools

The department, in collaboration with the State Board of Education, has modified the public charter school [application](#) (“Application”) to accommodate a charter school in the ASD that is transitioning out of the ASD. The Application is structured to reflect that, as a school exits the ASD, it is neither a new-start nor a renewal.

Pursuant to [T.C.A. § 49-13-107\(a\)](#), a charter school exiting the ASD must submit, to the home district and the department, a letter of intent to apply for a charter in its home district by December 3 of the year preceding the submission of its application. Pursuant to T.C.A. [§ 49-13-107\(b\)](#), the charter school exiting the ASD must submit to the home district and the Department its transition application by February 1 of the year preceding the year in which the school will transition to its home district.

The home district’s board of education then has 90 days in which to approve or deny the application. If the board of education approves the application, the charter operator of the school will enter into a charter agreement with the home district. If the board of education denies the application, the process is as follows:

- The charter operator of the school has 30 days from receipt of the denial to submit an amended

application to the home district.

- If the district denies the amended application, the charter operator may appeal to the Charter Commission.
- If the Charter Commission approves the charter operator's application, the charter operator would enter into a charter agreement with the Charter Commission, unless the home district and the Charter Commission mutually agree that the home district will be the authorizer.
- If the charter operator's application is denied by Charter Commission, the school would no longer be operated as a charter school in the home district. The school would either be run as a traditional school by the home district or closed, with students transported to higher-performing schools.

Section IV: School Exit Plan Template

Section IV is the template the transition team (described below) will use to develop an SEP. Through collaboration and shared decision making, the transition team will collect information and make decisions essential to a transition that focuses on what is best for students. These decisions will then guide the next steps and subsequent agreements.

Guiding Principles

The implementation of each SEP requires a commitment from all parties to ensure a smooth transition for ASD students. Therefore, the following guiding principles were identified for the development and implementation of each SEP:

- Collaboration among stakeholders to make student-first decisions
- Transparency and engagement with families and communities
- Accountability before, during, and immediately following the transition
- Choice for families to ensure equity and empower communities

State Oversight of Transition

The commissioner of education or designee shall oversee the exit of schools from the ASD, including development, approval, implementation, and oversight of every SEP. The department will engage with impacted schools and communities during the development and implementation of an SEP, working with the turnaround team to monitor fidelity of implementation. This will occur through monthly calls with the transition team to assess progress on the established milestones. In addition, the transition team will develop a plan to self-assess or monitor implementation.

To honor the commitment to transparency as schools exit the ASD, timely, ongoing communication with stakeholders will be critical. The department will implement the following communication protocol to provide an update on the progress of SEP development and implementation for each school identified to exit the ASD:

- quarterly updates to the Office of the Governor, and the House and Senate Education Committees;
- quarterly updates on the ASD and state websites with dates of upcoming meetings, reports, etc.; and
- bi-annual updates to State Board, Charter Commission, and the ASD Transition Advisory Group.
- NOTE: Communication to families and communities will be a required component of each SEP.

Transition Team

A transition team must be appointed for the purpose of developing a school’s SEP as soon as a school has been identified for exit. Establishing the primary points of contact and members of the transition team are critical first steps. Upon identification for exit, the department will notify the charter operator; in collaboration with the ASD and charter operator, the department will identify members of the transition team for participation.

In the space provided below, the identified transition team will provide contact information on the primary points of contact for the district, ASD, school, community, and department, considering: 1) the primary owners of the school exit plan; 2) that representatives from key areas are included on the transition team, i.e., academics, operations, fiscal, community, human resources, etc.; and 3) that transition teams should be no larger than ten people.

Additionally, while initially the department point of contact will facilitate the establishment of the meeting cadence and method for the transition team, the transition team will determine how often the team will meet and whether that will take place virtually or in-person. Finally, the transition team will develop working norms for working effectively and productively together.

Transition Team		
Primary Points of Contact		
Stakeholder Group	Name/Position	Email/Phone

Transition Team		
Primary Point of Contact: ASD		
Primary Point of Contact: District		
Primary Point of Contact: School		
Primary Point of Contact: Community		
Primary Point of Contact: TDOE		
Other Team Members		
Name/Organization	Area of Expertise/Role	Email/Phone
Meeting Method & Cadence		
Transition Team Working Norms		

School Profile

Next, the SEP will capture some illustrative information on the school and its community. This context will serve as a foundation for the decisions to transition the school and ultimately for the transition of students. In the space provided below, provide information on the current school, including enrollment and demographic information, as well as historical and other context relevant to making sound transition decisions for this school. Note: Additional information can be included as

attachments in the [Appendix](#).

Data Cover Sheet	
School Name	
Student Enrollment <i>Include enrollment for current and two previous school years</i>	
Student Demographics by Grade	
Historical/Other Context of the School	
Current Academic Performance <i>Growth and achievement by grade and content area and graduation rate, if applicable</i>	
Academic Performance and Trends <i>At least three years</i>	
Comparison to Neighborhood Schools <i>Include at least five proximal schools serving similar grade levels and demographics</i>	
Availability of Higher-Performing Schools Serving the Same Grade Band <i>Insert description here</i>	
Current Non-Academic Data <i>Attendance, chronic absenteeism, discipline, and teacher retention</i>	
Community Supports & Resources <i>After-school programs, social services, health services, community partners, etc.</i>	

School Transition Option

Guidance: Based on the [Conditions Affecting Charter School Transition Options](#) as well as the Data Cover Sheet, identify the initial [Option](#) the transition team will pursue and provide a rationale for the option selected. NOTE: the rationale/narrative should specify which conditions or data elements informed the transition option selected.

Directions: Select an option below and provide a written narrative explaining the rationale.

<p>Options (Select one)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Option 1: The school has earned Priority exit status; either current charter agreement assigned to home district, or school remains in ASD based on home district's accountability determination and complying with the provision in T.C.A § 49-1-614(k)(1).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option 2: The school has not earned Priority exit status; all parties agree to execute an Assignment of Charter Agreement where the charter agreement is assigned to the home district for the remainder of the charter term.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option 3: The school is closed as a result of the following: the school has not met Priority exit criteria, the school is nearing the end of its ten-year agreement, and the charter application has been denied by the home district and the Charter Commission on appeal.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option 4: ASD revokes the charter agreement prior to its expiration; new authorizer/operator is identified.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option 5: The charter operator agrees to terminate the charter school agreement.</p>
<p>Rationale</p>	

Financial Considerations

The purpose of this section is to outline the fiscal considerations to ensure responsible oversight when a school exits the ASD. The specific details of how these considerations will be implemented will be detailed in the [Implementation Plan](#), specifically the [Milestones](#).

Audit

Guidance: To ensure the ASD managed all grant funds in accordance with mandated requirements and that all funds are expended within the required time period, the ASD will provide the authorizing agency or district a copy of the most recent audit report for a school transitioning back to the home district. Further, any audit finding or corrective action (A-133 or other) while under the auspices of the ASD shall remain the responsibility of the ASD and is not transferrable to the new authorizing agency.

Directions: The audit report should be included as an attachment in the [Appendix](#). Include any additional information or considerations below.

Budget Development

Guidance: The ASD shall provide the receiving authorizing agency or district with a budget status report to include the following for each grant: the original budget, transfers, expenditures, encumbrances, and available balance. These balances will be transferred to the authorizing agency at a date determined by the transition team included in the SEP (dependent upon transition completion).

Directions: A budget status report, created and provided by the ASD, should be included as an attachment in the [Appendix](#). The transition team should engage in budget discussions regarding remaining balances across federal and state funding, as well as approved budgeted expenditures during the transition. Based on these discussions, provide specific information on grants and timelines in the space below.

Other Financial Considerations

Directions: Other school-specific discussions among the transition team would include decisions and

information regarding other financial obligations (e.g., contracts, open purchase orders, scheduled trainings, etc.) and should be captured in the space below.

Operational Considerations

The purpose of this section is to outline the operational considerations to ensure responsible oversight when schools exit the ASD. The specific details of how these considerations will be implemented will be detailed in the [Implementation Plan](#), specifically in the established [Milestones](#).

Facilities

Guidance: The cost of capital projects and facilities maintenance projects shall be properly recorded in a management system that provides accurate financial information. A capital projects report will be provided by the ASD as an attachment in the [Appendix](#).

Directions: In the space below, the transition team shall address potential options for current facilities contingent upon transition option and SEP. Consider: Will the home district continue to provide instruction in the same building, or will the home district reassign, merge, or make other arrangements for the current students? Will the charter school have the opportunity to remain in the building (if authorized either by the district or Charter Commission)?

Procurement

Guidance: Once a school has fully transitioned out of ASD, items purchased by the school with state, local, or private funds and federal dollars while in the ASD may be either retained by the charter school or transferred to its receiving authorizing agency or district, contingent on the following:

- Should a charter school return to and be authorized by the home district, the charter school

would retain items purchased by the school.

- Should a charter school be authorized by the Charter Commission (appeal), the charter schools would retain items purchased by the school.
- In instances where the charter is not re-authorized, either by the home district or the Charter Commission, the ASD will provide the home district with an itemized inventory that details the equipment, instructional supplies, and minor sensitive equipment purchased with federal funds to be transferred.

Directions: The team shall discuss and make decisions to be included in the SEP regarding what equipment (capital and other) will transition back the receiving authorizing agency or district and what will remain property of the charter school or ASD. Provide information on these decisions in the space below.

Transportation

Guidance: The SEP must detail how the receiving authorizing agency or district will transport students once the exit plan has been fully executed and schools have successfully exited ASD in accordance with state law and policies.

Directions: Respond to the guidance above in the space below.

Nutrition Services

Guidance: Unless otherwise articulated in the school exit plan, the receiving authorizing agency or district will be responsible for nutrition services for students once the exit plan has been executed and schools have fully exited the ASD.

Directions: There are conditions, however, where additional discussion and decisions among the

transition team may be required (i.e., Charter Commission). In these instances, these decisions should be included below.

Enrollment - Equity

Guidance: The receiving authorizing agency or district must remain committed to policies and procedures regarding student enrollment that will prioritize equity, access, and accountability for all students transitioning out of the ASD. The department strongly encourages the home district to utilize open enrollment and other public choice options, where appropriate, in the development of the school exit plan. This may include utilizing federal, state, or local funds to provide transportation to ensure students have access a higher-performing school.

Directions: In the space provided below, describe the strategies that will be utilized to ensure equity for students including, but not limited to, reserving seats in magnet or optional schools and offering open enrollment (with transportation).

Other Operational Considerations

Guidance: When a higher performing charter school is exiting the ASD, the department strongly encourages the transition team to maintain certain operating conditions set forth in the current ASD agreement. These conditions may include maintaining facility, enrollment, and funding practices to allow a higher-performing charter school to continue under the same operating conditions but under a newly executed charter agreement. The transition team should also agree on a process to modify school names and numbers in state systems/the school directory.

Directions: Provide information on the operational considerations, as well as the process for modifying school names and numbers in the School Directory in the space below.

Programmatic Considerations

This section of the SEP is especially important as it addresses the continuity of learning for students. In practice, this will require dedicated discussions on the academic program (curriculum), professional learning for teachers, data collection, supports for student groups (i.e., English Learners, students with disabilities, and others), evaluation of teachers, and other learning-related issues (such as RTI²). It also will require a deep dive into the data—both academic and non-academic—to address district readiness and ensure the home district has a strong sense of how to plan and prepare for students to return. The specific details of how these considerations will be implemented will be detailed in the [Implementation Plan](#), specifically the [Milestones](#).

The ASD shall maintain accountability for school performance during the transition period. Following the transition, determinations on whether the school shall retain any existing federal school improvement designation will be made on a case-by-case basis, in alignment with the state's accountability business rules.

Academics & Assessments

Guidance:

- What instructional materials are being implemented for each grade band? Are any supplemental programs being utilized?
- Regarding curriculum, is there a monitoring process inclusive of observations, classroom visitations, and learning walks to assess the quality of implementation in all grade levels; a system of continual feedback; and professional development to address specific needs of each staff member (professional learning communities, vertical/horizontal articulation meetings), and data meetings?
- Regarding assessment, what benchmark assessment is being utilized? Include frequency, date of last assessment, and other formative data.

Directions: Address the academic/assessment questions noted above in the space below.

Educators & Other School Personnel

Guidance: The transition team should discuss and consider how the authorizing agency or home district will manage the transition process for personnel including whether current ASD school employees are offered employment with the home district if the school is directly operated by the home district after the transition is complete. It is strongly recommended that the home district make efforts to retain teachers and other school-based personnel as home district employees for at least 12 months, when possible, to facilitate a smooth transition for students. Additionally, the home district is strongly encouraged to make hiring decisions for the school that prioritize employee performance based on teacher evaluations and other relevant data.

Directions: Respond to the personnel guidance above in the space below.

Programs & Services for Vulnerable Populations

Guidance: The transition team should examine the historically underserved student groups (e.g., English learners, students with disabilities, students who are economically disadvantaged, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care) as they evaluate school demographic and academic data. In instances where there are large numbers or percentages of students in a vulnerable student group, the transition team should detail how they will plan for services to ensure student needs are being met.

Directions: Respond to the guidance on vulnerable populations (above) in the space below.

Data Transmission

Guidance: The ASD will provide student performance and non-academic data to inform the home district's transition preparations, while ensuring all state and federal laws regarding the privacy of student data are followed. A data sharing agreement must be completed, signed by both parties, and attached in the Appendix. Below are recommended academic and non-academic data elements; however, the authorizing agency or home district may request additional, relevant data from the ASD.

- Academic
 - In addition to summative data, which is accessible via the state report card, the ASD shall provide full accountability files for all students and relevant student subgroups to the receiving authorizing agency or district.
- Non-Academic
 - Teacher Attendance
 - Teacher and leader evaluation data
 - Student Attendance—overall attendance rates
 - Chronic absenteeism—trend data
 - Student Discipline—current discipline data, including in-school and out-of-school suspensions.
 - Enrollment/demographic data
 - After-school/enrichment opportunities

Special Populations Data

As referenced above, current data on students with disabilities and English learners (including screener data and WIDA) should be provided to ensure that the home district is adequately addressing the needs of students, such as those with IEPs, Section 504 Plans, English learners, Gifted and Talented, Overaged and Under Credited students in accordance with recognized best instructional practices and with relevant federal and state laws.

Directions: A data sharing agreement must be completed, signed by both parties, and attached in the [Appendix](#). Include other relevant data transmission information below.

Implementation Plan

Establishing Goals

Guidance: The transition team should establish the overarching SMART goal(s) for this transition.

Directions: The goal(s) should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound), specific to the option for exit ([Section III](#)), and supported by the [Milestones](#), below.

Length of Transition Period

Guidance: The purpose of a period of transition is to ensure the orderly exit of schools from the ASD, to allow for schools and communities to receive ongoing support during and through the time of transition, and to establish systems to sustain operational integrity and academic improvement. As previously noted, all SEPs will address the same components or issues but will be unique to the needs of individual schools and school communities. The transition period shall be determined by and mutually agreed upon by impacted schools, the authorizing agency or home district, and the ASD based on the needs of the school exiting the ASD. The transition period, included in the SEP, shall be no less than six months but no more than two years in length. If the department determines that a school's SEP is not being successfully implemented based on demonstrated progress towards meeting the established milestones and state oversight of the transition, the SEP may be amended to extend the transition period and revise other provisions and milestones.

Considerations when determining the appropriate length of the transition period included in the SEP are noted below.

- Current school year calendar
- Modality of learning (in-person, virtual, hybrid)
- Number of students impacted
- Number of teachers impacted
- Number of years remaining in the current charter agreement
- Availability of pertinent data: benchmark, summative, non-academic data, etc.

Directions: In the space below, state the length of the transition and the rationale.

Milestones

In addition to engagement with stakeholders, the successful implementation of an SEP requires the inclusion of detailed timelines and milestones that will provide a measurement of progress toward achieving the stated goal(s), to ensure that meaningful conversations are taking place, and that the transition processes and periods in the SEP remain on schedule

Additionally, the milestones in each SEP will be based on the duration of the transition period. will form the basis of the commissioner of education's progress reports to various entities throughout the implementation of an SEP and will serve as a means for state oversight. Progress reporting on SEP milestones will occur once per quarter and will be communicated to communities, families, and other stakeholders via the department and ASD websites, as well as through school communications.

The department is responsible for ensuring milestones within each SEP are met and is committed to aligning its supports to this end. In instances where 20% of milestones are not met in an SEP, the commissioner of education or designee may establish interventions and modifications to the SEP, which specifically address any area(s) of identified concern or deficiency. These interventions may include:

- required amendments to a school’s SEP, which may include revisions to the transition milestones;
- providing additional levels of State oversight and support; and/or
- extending the duration of an SEP.

Below are milestone categories and measures to be developed and included in the SEP. The transition team should consider the following items for each identified milestone category.

- *Communications and Engagement:* What information needs to be shared with students, families, employees of the transitioning school, and the broader school community? Include where, when, and how you will share information will take place. For students and families specifically: where will they attend school; will their child’s teacher(s) remain; what supports are available; what other options are available for a higher-performing school? For engagement, how will you proactively plan for ways to listen to stakeholders and solicit feedback and input?
- *Academics:* What are the current instructional materials, modalities of instruction, and formative and benchmark assessments being utilized? Milestones should include performance (proficiency and growth) on summative assessments and whether the students will be able to transition to a higher-performing school option.
- *Educators & Other School Personnel:* How will current teachers, administrators, custodial, and other staff members be managed? For example, what are the discussions or processes to determine whether the home district will require teachers to reapply for jobs during the transition period? These discussions and milestones should include information about last date of employment, benefits transition, and a notification timeline.
- *Data:* What academic and nonacademic data will be provided to the receiving authorizing agency or district and by what date?
- *Financial:* What budgets, grants, and additional supports are needed to facilitate a smooth transition?
- *Operations:* What are the appropriate steps on occupancy, transfer of equipment, nutrition, transportation, school numbers, etc.?

Directions: In the table below, the transition team should detail the milestones for the transition process in each of the categories detailed below. More than one task per milestone category should be needed. Transition teams are permitted to use another document or method to document and track milestones and tasks, if needed. However, tasks owners, tasks, deadlines, progress, and risks must be identified and tracked.

School Exit Plan Milestones								
Milestone Category	Task Owner(s)	Task	Start Date	Due By	Status	% Complete	Notes/ Comments	Risks
Communications								
Engagement								
Academics								
Educators & Other School Personnel								
Data								
Financial								
Operations								

Communications & Engagement Plan

One of the key components of a school exit plan is how the ASD and receiving authorizing agency or home district will collectively plan for the dissemination of information in a timely manner to all relevant stakeholders and continue to pursue meaningful community engagement to inform and support district strategies.

In this section, the transition team will create a communications and engagement plan to be utilized during the development and implementation of the SEP. There will be messaging and audiences that will be owned exclusively by one party and others where the communication and messaging would be shared; the communications plan should detail every touchpoint with various stakeholder groups, including person(s) responsible.

The plan should include, at a minimum, the following:

- Identification of stakeholder groups, which must include, at minimum, students, families, employees of the transitioning school, and the broader school community
- Cadence of dissemination of information
- Cadence of engagement opportunities with specific stakeholders
- Multiple modes of communication and engagement
- Annual achievement and growth updates/reports
- Progress on transition milestones in the SEP

Directions: In the table below, create a communications and engagement plan. Transition teams are permitted to use another document or method to document

Communications & Engagement Plan				
Audience	Owner	Key Message	Method	Deadline

Dispute Resolution Process

Guidance: To maintain effective management of the school exit plan, it is essential that the parties work together professionally and respectfully. To that end, the transition team should collaboratively develop and follow the working norms. Additionally, it is recommended that parties engage constructively in issue resolution at collaborative meetings. To ensure this, a dispute resolution process shall be developed as soon as the transition team is appointed and should be followed in the event a dispute arises among entities during the development and implementation of the SEP.

Directions: Provide an explanation of the process should a dispute arise among entities, and be sure to answer the following questions:

- *What types of disputes is the dispute resolution process designed to resolve and what types of disputes must be resolved in another manner?*
- *Who may file a complaint, regarding a dispute, pursuant to the dispute resolution process?*
- *When may a complaint, regarding a dispute, be filed pursuant to the dispute resolution process? Is there a timeline for filing a complaint regarding a dispute?*
- *How may a complaint, regarding a dispute, be filed pursuant to the dispute resolution process? Is the complaint required to be in a specific form and what specific information must all complaints include?*
- *Who will be involved in reviewing the complaint, investigating the complaint, and determining the final resolution of the dispute included in a complaint? Does it depend on the subject of matter of the dispute included in the complaint?*
- *How will the final decision on the resolution of the dispute included in a complaint be communicated to all parties and documented in the SEP when appropriate?*
- *How may a party appeal the final decision on the resolution of a dispute included in a complaint to the commissioner of education or her designee?*

Monitoring Protocol

Guidance: The purpose of this section is to ensure the established school exit plan is implemented with fidelity. This monitoring protocol should articulate how the transition team will hold itself and others accountable for the development and implementation of the SEP

Directions: For the monitoring protocol, include the cadence, communication, data (milestones), and other processes to be used by the transition team (and leads) to ensure the established school exit plan is implemented with fidelity. This plan will be one of the components used throughout implementation in regular calls with the department, and information will be utilized in the preparation of the reports shared with stakeholders. In the development of the monitoring protocol, the transition team should consider the following:

- *How frequently will the team need to perform checks on the progression of the milestones and other components of the SEP?*
- *How will the team leads communicate updates to the full transition team?*
- *What data will be collected/reviewed to ensure the SEP development and implementation remains on track?*

Assurances

1. All parties to this agreement shall act in good faith and meet all applicable federal, state and local requirements, including health and safety requirements.
2. All parties to this agreement shall meet all applicable state and federal requirements, including ESEA, IDEA, and regulatory guidance in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).
3. All parties to this agreement shall comply with all federal and state civil rights laws regarding nondiscrimination. These laws apply both to services provided to students (including students with disabilities) and employment practices. State and federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status, pregnancy, genetic information, or age.
4. All parties to this agreement shall comply with federal laws prohibiting discrimination on these grounds include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (prohibits discrimination under federally funded programs), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (prohibits discrimination in employment, where organization has 15 or more employees), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (prohibits discrimination based on sex under federally funded programs) and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (prohibits discrimination based on age).
5. All parties to this agreement shall comply with federal laws governing students and other persons with disabilities include Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by recipients of federal funds), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by state and local governments and agencies, regardless of federal funding), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (which provides federal funding to support the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities).

Charter Management Organization:

[Insert Name & Title]

Date

Charter Management Organization Board Chair:

[Insert Name & Title]

Date

District Superintendent:

[Insert Name & Title]

Date

District Board Chair:

[Insert Name & Title]

Date

TDOE State Turnaround Superintendent:

[Insert Name & Title]

Date

Tennessee Commissioner of Education:

Penny Schwinn, Commissioner

Date

School Exit Plan Appendix

Attach the completed and signed data sharing agreement, budget status report, and capital projects report, as well as any other relevant documents.