



# TENNESSEE

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION

**SY2023-24**  
**UPDATES**

**JANUARY 25, 2024**

# OVERVIEW

- Pre-opening updates
- Site visits updates
- Interim review
- Bluff City probation
- Renewal updates
- Quarter 1 monitoring
- Authorizer evaluation
- School program and supports



# PRE-OPENING UPDATES

- The following schools are in the pre-opening process:
  - American Classical Academy Madison
  - Cornerstone Prep Lester Campus
  - Empower Memphis
  - Invictus Nashville
  - KIPP Antioch Global Elementary School
  - KIPP Antioch Global Middle School
  - Rutherford Collegiate Prep
- The pre-opening process includes:
  - Submitting required items on pre-opening checklists
  - Providing regular updates on facilities, staffing, enrollment, etc.
  - Participating in pre-opening meetings and best practice trainings with Commission staff



# PRE-OPENING UPDATES

- Invictus Nashville
  - School is finalizing facility plan for short- and long-term facilities.
  - Currently in final interview stages for staff to join school leadership team.
- Empower Memphis
  - School is currently weighing two separate potential facility options.
  - Currently in several interview processes for additional grant and funding opportunities.



# PRE-OPENING UPDATES

- Cornerstone Prep Lester Campus
  - K-5 campus transitioning from the ASD to the Commission in SY24-25.
  - School shares building with Lester Prep.
- KIPP Antioch Global Middle School
  - Opening with 5th and 6th grades in SY24-25.
  - New campus will be shared with KIPP Antioch Global High School.
  - Founding principal is an internal hire, trained through KIPP's Principal in Residence program.
- Rutherford Collegiate Prep
  - The school has received 826 applications as of 1/12/24. The school's target is 671 students for SY24-25.
  - Already identified assistant principal and in process of finalizing principal hire by mid-February.



# PRE-OPENING UPDATES

Two schools have exercised their abilities to delay opening for one academic year in accordance with statute. These two schools are:

- American Classical Academy Jackson Madison
- KIPP Antioch Global Elementary School

Commission staff is holding quarterly check-ins to monitor their progress, with a plan for full pre-opening beginning in Fall 2024 ahead of their SY25-26 openings.



# SITE VISIT UPDATE

- Commission staff completed site visits for 5 out of 13 schools in the fall semester:
  - KIPP Antioch College Prep Elementary \*
  - KIPP Antioch Global High School \*
  - Lester Prep \*\*
  - Libertas School of Memphis \*
  - Promise Academy Spring Hill \*\*

\*Site visits were half-day visits, as determined by Commission's site visit protocol.

\*\*Also served as the school's renewal site visit.



# SITE VISIT TRENDS

- Commission schools are committed to data-driven practices. Processes are in place for data collection, analysis, and supporting teachers in responding to academic data.
- Across schools visited, school cultures are strong. Parents and families interviewed spoke positively about the ways schools engage families.
- A facility walkthrough and security review is a part of all site visits. School buildings are clean, well-maintained, and secure.





# REMAINING SITE VISITS

- The remaining site visits are scheduled for the spring:
  - Nashville Collegiate Prep - 1/31
  - Rocketship Dream - 2/6
  - Tennessee Nature Academy - 2/13
  - LEAD Neely's Bend - 2/20
  - Bluff City - 3/5
  - Cornerstone Prep School/Cornerstone Prep Denver \* - 3/6

\*Site visits are half-day visits, as determined by Commission's site visit protocol.



# INTERIM REVIEW

- In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-121(k) and the State's quality authorizing standards, an authorizer shall conduct an interim review of a charter school in the fifth year of its charter term.
- The interim review includes:
  - Submission of an interim review report.
  - A school site visit by Commission staff, including interviews with stakeholders.
  - Commission staff's review of previous annual reports and the school's performance record in accordance with the School Performance Framework (SPF).
  - An interim report, detailing the evaluation of the school and any subsequent feedback or recommended corrective action, as necessary.
- KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle submitted an interim review report to the Commission on December 1, 2023.
- Commission staff will complete an interim site visit on February 21, 2024.



# BLUFF CITY HIGH SCHOOL PLAN OF CORRECTION

- In October 2023, in accordance with Commission Policy 3.400, the Commission extended the probationary status of Bluff City for SY23-24 due to lack of adequate marginal improvement across the improvement objectives.
  - The Bluff City leadership team developed and submitted a corrective action plan that is aligned with the improvement plan objectives.
- Commission staff meets with Bluff City bi-monthly to review updates on progress toward improvement objectives.



# BLUFF CITY HIGH SCHOOL PLAN OF CORRECTION

Improvement Objective	Improvement Objectives Update
<p>Increase academic achievement in ELA and Math to meet AMO targets annually in each tested subject.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><i>On winter final exams, four out of six subject areas hit 3% increase compared to Q1 assessments.</i></b> (The 3% increase is a benchmark toward the AMO goal.)</li> <li>▪ Final exams are created in alignment to EOCs.</li> </ul>
<p>Increase annual student growth as measured by TVAAS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ From fall to winter iReady assessments, 25% of students met their projected growth measure in Reading and 29% of students met projected growth in Math.</li> <li>▪ <b><i>This data indicates school is on track to meet its mission-specific goal.</i></b></li> </ul>
<p>Increase percentage of students prepared for post-secondary success to meet AMO goal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shared individual student data tracker to monitor progress on College and Career Readiness pathways.</li> </ul>



# BLUFF CITY HIGH SCHOOL PLAN OF CORRECTION

Improvement Objective	Improvement Objectives Update
Decrease chronic absenteeism to meet the AMO target annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>As of 1/11/24, chronic absenteeism rate was 44.6%.</b></li> <li>▪ At this time last school year, it was 57.1%.</li> </ul>
<p>Maintain an ADM of 476 students for SY23-24.</p> <p>Have an enrollment of 500 students for SY24-25 or meet the SY24-25 budgeted enrollment goal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As of 1/11/24, there were 464 enrolled students, with 11 more in the process of enrolling. Once enrolled, school will be at 475 students.</li> </ul>
Reduce the number of suspensions to 35 unique suspensions per year, not including zero tolerance offenses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The school has had 20 unique suspensions this school year, not including zero tolerance offenses.</li> </ul>



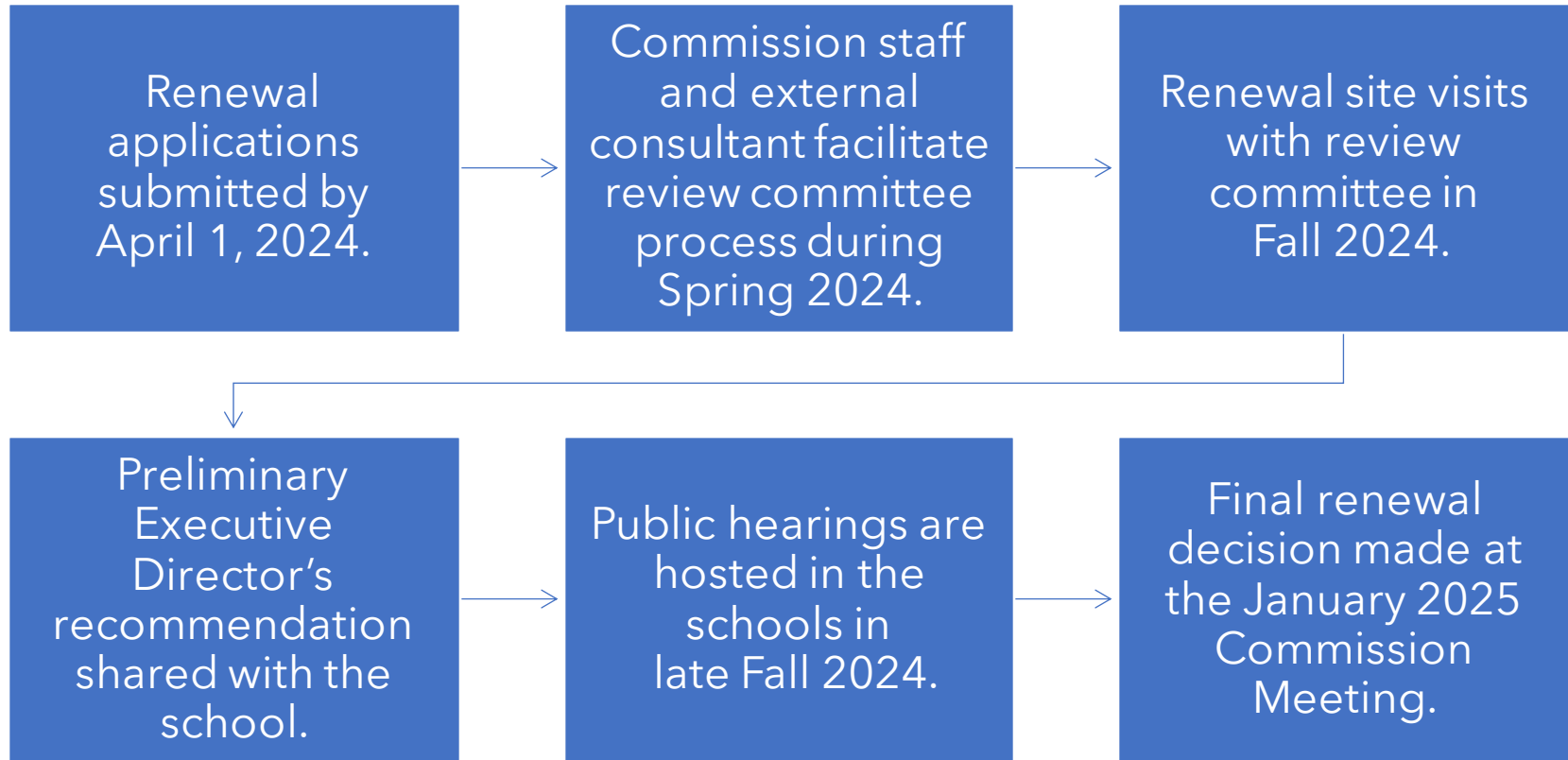
# RENEWAL UPDATES

School in 2024 Cohort	First Year Authorized by Commission	Pathway to Commission
Cornerstone Prep Denver Campus	SY21-22	Transitioned from ASD
Libertas School of Memphis	SY21-22	Transitioned from ASD
LEAD Neely's Bend	SY22-23	Transitioned from ASD

- All schools were provided cumulative performance reports in alignment with the renewal criteria that was approved during the October 2023 meeting.
- Operators will discuss any off-track status designations in alignment with the criteria within their renewal application due April 1, 2024.



# RENEWAL UPDATES



# QUARTERLY MONITORING

- In alignment with Commission Policy 3.300, Commission staff conducts school oversight to evaluate performance and monitor charter school compliance.
  - All schools receive a monitoring letter in the month following the end of the quarter.
  - Letters include timely organizational and fiscal indicator status reports.
- Quarter 1 covers July-September with letters sent the week of October 30, 2023.
- Quarter 2 covers October-December, and letters will be sent the week of January 29, 2024.





# QUARTERLY MONITORING

## Quarter 1 Summary Highlights

- Special Populations: Staff noted improvements from prior years when it came to documentation related to students with disabilities and English Learners. Schools and staff continue to navigate TN Pulse challenges.
- Credentialing: In Quarter 1, 6 out of 13 schools had one or more teachers that were not fully licensed or endorsed. This indicator tends to improve as the school year progresses.
- Enrollment: 7 out of 13 schools had a budgeted enrollment variance within the 95% threshold. Four schools were below the threshold. Two schools had to submit additional documentation.



# QUARTERLY MONITORING – NEXT STEPS

- Staff is encouraged by an overall improvement in special populations documentation. Staff continues to support schools in the transition to TN Pulse.
- Staff continues to monitor progress on teacher licensure and enrollment in our monthly calls with school operations leads.
- The Commission's School Performance Framework allows one board-approved revised budget in a fiscal year and schools were provided the opportunity to adjust their budget to reflect a more accurate enrollment projection.



# AUTHORIZER EVALUATIONS

- T.C.A. § 49-13-145, requires the State Board of Education to conduct authorizer evaluations, and they have adopted Quality Authorizing Standards to guide this process.
- Quality Authorizing Standards set forth the overarching values and the practices that should govern the day-to-day operation of a charter authorizer.
- Official evaluations occur bi-annually, with the Commission completing its first formal evaluation in Fall 2022.
- During the 2022 formal evaluation the Commission scored **Exemplary.**
- In Fall 2023, the Commission completed a self-assessment.



# AUTHORIZER EVALUATIONS

- The authorizer evaluation rubric consists of 21 standards and includes the following categories:
  1. Agency Commitment and Capacity
  2. Application Process and Decision Making
  3. Performance Contracting
  4. Ongoing Oversight and Evaluation
  5. Revocation and Renewal Decision Making
- An overall rating is calculated based on the average rating across **all** standards.

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



# IDENTIFIED STRENGTHS

From the Fall 2023 Self-Assessment:

- The Commission continues to conduct a rigorous, transparent, and thorough new start appeals process with added resources and supports to support appellants and LEAs.
- Beginning SY23-24, staff implemented prior evaluation's feedback and focused on increasing school autonomy by streamlining elements of the reporting calendar, implementing risk-based monitoring, and introducing half-day site visits for some schools.
- Maintains ongoing communication with its schools and regularly engages in feedback conversations to ensure its schools are supported and heard.
- Continually prioritizes authorizing decisions that will result in positive student outcomes, in accordance with state law.



# AREAS OF FOCUS

From the Fall 2023 Self-Assessment:

- Future review committee trainings will formally incorporate charter school autonomy and accountability into the training and discussion.
- Appeal decision letters will be updated to incorporate evidence-based factors for denial consistent with the state's scoring rubric and due diligence.
- Review of external service provider agreements will be incorporated into the pre-opening process for new schools to ensure contracts include all required elements.



# NEXT STEPS

- Staff will meet in February to discuss the areas of focus and formalize a plan to address these items moving forward.
- Staff remains focused on cross-team collaboration particularly around ongoing oversight and evaluation.
- Staff will gather documents for formal SBE evaluation in Fall 2024.
- Continue to ensure quality authorizing standards are adhered to as the Commission scales and adds schools to the portfolio.



# **SCHOOL PROGRAMS & SUPPORTS**





# RESULTS-BASED MONITORING

- The Commission met with the TDOE Results-Based Monitoring in January to discuss the upcoming monitoring site visit.
- The district and both school site visits (Lester Prep and KACPM) are scheduled for Wednesday, February 14.
- The monitoring prework is due January 30, and we are on track to have all submissions completed.
- Following the site visit, the Commission will meet with TDOE to discuss the results on March 1.
- The Commission will correct any findings prior to the end of the fiscal year.



# OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- School Planning - The LEA Plan for SY2024-25 opened this month and is due March 1.
- English Learners - The WIDA testing window is open from February 5 - March 29; schools will conduct ongoing testing of EL students at this time.
- TN Pulse - The Commission has completed two quarterly monitoring cycles of IEPs and ILPs in TN Pulse and is working to ensure all schools are in compliance on the new portal.
- School Safety - The Commission completed its first of three Threat Assessment Reports in December, a new reporting requirement through the Department of Homeland Security. The next report is due February 28.





# TENNESSEE

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION