

AT A GLANCE

Public Charter School Commission

2023



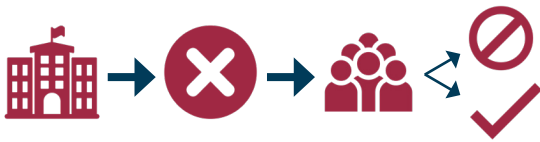
Created in 2019, the Public Charter School Commission (PCSC) is the state-level appellate authorizer of charter schools in Tennessee. The Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE) was the state’s appellate authorizer of charter schools until the end of 2020. Appellate authorizer duties switched from the SBE to the PCSC on January 1, 2021. The commission is composed of nine members – three members from each grand division – appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the General Assembly.



If a local board of education denies a charter school sponsor’s application, the sponsor may appeal the decision to the PCSC. The commission will conduct a de novo (new) review of the sponsor’s application. The commission reviews the applications on appeal in accordance with the SBE’s quality public charter school authorizing standards and must approve or deny the application no later than 75 days from its receipt of the notice of appeal. The commission’s decision is final and not subject to appeal.



If the PCSC upholds the local board of education’s denial of the charter school sponsor’s application, the school will not open. If the commission overturns the local board of education’s denial of the application, the PCSC becomes the authorizer of the charter school unless the local board of education and the charter school agree in writing that the local board of education will be the authorizer.



The commission must either approve or deny the application no later than 75 days from its receipt of the notice of appeal. The commission’s decision is final and not subject to appeal.

In its first two years (2021 and 2022) of authority over the appeals process, the PCSC heard 16 new start (i.e., proposed schools not already in operation) charter appeals. Of those, the commission approved five applications and upheld seven district decisions to deny. The remaining four applications were withdrawn by the applicant.



Certain Achievement School District (ASD) charter schools may apply directly to the PCSC for authorization under a new charter agreement, either upon a determination by the Commissioner of Education that the charter school may exit the ASD prior to the end of its original charter agreement or upon meeting the state priority school exit criteria.

As of March 2023, nine schools in two counties (Davidson and Shelby) operate under the authority of the PCSC. Three schools whose new start applications were approved by the PCSC, including one in Rutherford County, will open in the 2023-24 school year, and two others will transition from the ASD to the authority of the commission. Two approved new start schools plan to open in the 2024-25 school year.



Davidson County	Shelby County	Rutherford County
KIPP Antioch Collegiate Prep HS*	Bluff City High School	Rutherford Collegiate Prep*
KIPP Antioch Prep Elementary	Cornerstone Prep School	
KIPP Antioch Prep Middle	Cornerstone Prep Denver	
KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Elementary‡	Lester Prep	
KIPP Southeast Nashville College Prep Middle‡	Libertas School of Memphis	
LEAD Neely’s Bend^	Promise Academy Spring Hill^	
Nashville Collegiate Prep		
Tennessee Nature Academy*		
Rocketship Dream Community Prep		

* Opening for the 2023-24 school year

^ Transitioning from the ASD to PCSC for the 2023-24 school year

‡ Opening for the 2024-25 school year

Source: Tennessee Public Charter School Commission.