At-A-Glance: Public Charter School Commission

Created in 2019, the Public Charter School Commission is the state-level, independent 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. Effective January 1, 2021, the appellate authorizer duties switched from the SBE to the commission. Appellate authorizer duties for the three charter schools already authorized by the SBE will transfer to the commission on July 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 commission. The commission will conduct a de novo (new) review of the sponsor's application. The commission will review the applications on appeal in accordance with SBE's quality public charter school authorizing standards.

If the commission upholds the local board of education's denial of the charter school sponsor's application, the public charter school will not open. If the commission overturns the local board of education's denial of the application, the commission becomes the authorizer of the charter school. If the local board of education in which the charter school is geographically located wants to become the authorizer for the charter school instead of the commission, the local board of education and the charter school may agree in writing to the transfer of authority.

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.