



What are **charter schools**?

Charter schools are **public schools** operated by independent, nonprofit governing bodies. Charter schools are authorized by one of three entities in Tennessee: **local boards of education**, the **Achievement School District (ASD)**, or the **Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (TPCSC)**. The majority of Tennessee charter schools are authorized by local boards of education. Charter schools must meet the **same academic performance standards** as traditional public schools but have **greater autonomy** in areas such as personnel and salary policies, curriculum and instruction methods, and financial decisions in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance.



As of 2023-24, **more than 100** charter schools operate in Tennessee under **six** authorizers.

- Achievement School District - 13 charter schools
- Hamilton County Schools - 8 charter schools
- Knox County Schools - 1 charter school
- Memphis-Shelby County Schools - 53 charter schools
- Metro Nashville Public Schools - 27 charter schools
- Tennessee Public Charter School Commission - 13 charter schools
- *Rutherford County Schools will open one charter school in the 2024-25 school year*



In exchange for **more autonomy**, charter schools face **stricter accountability** measures than traditional schools.

A public charter school must be closed if the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) has designated it as a **priority school**, with academic achievement in the bottom 5 percent in the state, for two consecutive designation cycles. A charter school may be closed if it is designated as a priority school; fails to meet minimum performance standards, make sufficient progress toward performance expectations, or otherwise violates its charter agreement; or fails to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management. Since 2018, 18 charter schools have closed at the direction of their authorizer.



Charter schools are **funded** in the same way as traditional public schools.

State law requires that local boards of education allocate to charter schools an **amount equal to state and local student-generated funds** for member students in the charter schools, including fast-growth provisions in the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA), Tennessee's new K-12 funding formula. A charter school authorized by the ASD or the TPCSC receives funds from TDOE or from the local school district in which the charter school is located.