

<b>Murfreesboro City School Board</b>			
Monitoring: <b>Review: Annually, in September</b>	Descriptor Term: <b>Charter Schools</b>	Descriptor Code: <b>1.704</b>	Issued Date: <b>1/24/17</b>
		Rescinds: <b>BO 46</b>	Issued: <b>11/01/12</b>

## 1   **SCOPE**

2   This policy shall apply to Sponsors and potential Sponsors of newly created public charter  
 3   schools. It shall not apply to public charter schools converted from existing public schools  
 4   pursuant to T.C.A. §49- 13-106(b)(2).

## 5   **DEFINITION**

6   A charter school shall be a public, nonsectarian, non-religious, non-homebased school which  
 7   operates within a public school district. It shall be subject to all state and federal laws and  
 8   constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color,  
 9   gender, national origin, religion, ancestry or need for special education services.<sup>1</sup>

10   The purposes of charter schools are to:<sup>2</sup>

- 11   (1) Improve learning for all students and close the achievement gap between high and low  
 12   students;
- 13   (2) Provide options for parents to meet educational needs of students in high priority schools;
- 14   (3) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods, and provide greater decision  
 15   making authority to schools and teachers in exchange for greater responsibility for student  
 16   performance;
- 17   (4) Measure performance of pupils and faculty, and ensure that children have the opportunity to  
 18   reach proficiency on state academic assessments;
- 19   (5) Create new professional opportunities for teachers; and
- 20   (6) Afford parents substantial meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their  
 21   children.

## 22   **APPLICATION PROCESS<sup>3</sup>**

23   A prospective charter school sponsor shall send the director notice of its intent sixty (60) days  
 24   prior to April 1 of the year preceding the year in which the proposed charter school plans to  
 25   begin operation as a public charter school.

26 A sponsor seeking Board approval of an initial charter school application must complete the  
27 form provided by the Tennessee Department of Education as well as provide a list of  
28 requirements that the sponsor wants to waive. In the application, the sponsor must demonstrate  
29 that the proposed charter school meets the purpose prescribed by law for the formation of a  
30 charter school and the proposed charter school will be able to implement a viable program of  
31 quality education for its students. In the case where a traditional public school is seeking to  
32 convert to a charter school, the application must include documents showing the necessary  
33 parental or teacher support.

34 Applications must be submitted to the Board on or before 4:30 p.m. on April 1 of the year  
35 preceding the year in which the proposed charter school plans to begin operation as a public  
36 charter school. Applications will be accepted only between March 1 and April 1. If the 1st of  
37 April falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday on which the school district offices are closed,  
38 applications will be accepted on the previous business day on or before 4:30 p.m. Late  
39 applications will not be accepted, without exception. The sponsor shall pay an application fee of  
40 \$500.00.

#### 41 **REVIEW TEAM**

42 If necessary, the Board shall appoint a review team to assist in reviewing and evaluating charter  
43 school applications. The team shall be composed of: members of the administrative staff for the  
44 district; community members; and, a member of the Board. At the Board meeting in February  
45 each year, the Director of Schools shall make a recommendation to the Board of which members  
46 of the Director's administrative staff should be appointed to the team. The Board shall name the  
47 members of the team at its first meeting in March of each year. The Board shall designate a  
48 chairperson of the review team as the contact person for answering questions about the  
49 application process and receiving applications.

50 The Board shall require a procedure of receiving, reviewing and ruling on applications for the  
51 establishment of charter schools. The procedure must include a timeline for the application and  
52 review process and the means for reviewing and evaluating each application, including the  
53 criteria on which the decision to grant or deny a charter will be based. A copy of the procedure,  
54 including the review criteria, shall be available to any interested party upon request.

55 The review team shall:

- 56 1. Evaluate all charter school applications based on the review criteria adopted by the  
57 Board;
- 58 2. Recommend one of the following options to the Board for each application: approve,  
59 reject, or reject with stipulations for reconsideration;
- 60 3. Monitor charter school progress; and
- 61 4. Make recommendations for revocation, renewal or non-renewal of charter contracts.

#### 62 **APPROVAL, DENIAL OF APPLICATION<sup>4</sup>**

63 The Board shall rule by resolution on the approval or denial of a charter application within ninety  
64 (90) days of receipt of the completed application or the application shall be deemed approved by  
65 law.<sup>5</sup>

66 **Approval**

67 If the application is approved, the Sponsor may proceed to negotiate a charter agreement with the  
68 Board through its designee within the district administration. The Sponsor of a public charter  
69 school that is approved by the Board shall enter into a written agreement with the Board, which  
70 shall be binding on the charter school's governing body. This agreement, known as the charter  
71 agreement, shall be in writing and shall include all aspects of the Sponsor's approved application  
72 as well as any reporting requirements prescribed by law.

73 To warrant adoption, charter schools must promote and implement new and innovative practices  
74 and conditions in delivering public education not typically found in traditional public schools. It  
75 is expected that the candidate school status for accreditation will be received during the first year  
76 of the charter school operation.

77 Charter schools approved by the Board of Education are expected to implement the application  
78 as submitted and approved. Substantial deviations from the approved application may result in  
79 revocation of the Charter by the Board.

80 Charter schools approved by the Board are expected to operate with knowledge of and  
81 compliance with all rules, regulations, statutes and policies relevant to that charter school's  
82 operations; including but not limited to instruction, human resources, communication,  
83 administration, business services, facilities and operations, transportation, food services, safety  
84 and student discipline. The Board should not be expected to provide services to charter schools  
85 that are not requested during the application process except for those services that are required  
86 under state or federal laws. Services agreed to be provided to the charter schools by the Board  
87 shall be provided at Board actual cost.

88 The Governing Body of an approved public charter school shall make a written report to the  
89 Board annually between August 1 and September 1. This reporting requirement shall begin in the  
90 year after the public charter school begins operation. This annual report shall include: a report on  
91 the progress of the school in achieving its goals, objectives, pupil performance standards, content  
92 standards, and all other terms of the charter agreement; and a financial statement disclosing the  
93 financial health of the school including the costs of the administration, instruction and other  
94 spending categories of the school.

95 New public charter schools, conversion schools, and all renewals of charter agreements are  
96 approved for ten year periods. However, following the fifth year of a charter school's initial  
97 period of operation or the fifth year of any renewal of a charter school agreement, MCS must  
98 conduct an interim review of the charter school according to the guidelines developed by the  
99 Department of Education.

100 No later than October 1 of the year prior to the year in which the charter agreement expires, the  
101 governing body of a public charter school shall submit a renewal application to the Board. The  
102 Board shall make its renewal decision based on the progress of the school towards its stated  
103 goals and on the financial status of the school.<sup>6</sup>

104 The Board may revoke or deny renewal of a public charter school agreement for any of the  
105 reasons enumerated in T.C.A. §49-13-122.

106 **Denial**

107 Upon receipt of the grounds for denial, the sponsor shall have fifteen (15) days within which to

108 submit an amended application to correct the deficiencies. The Board shall have thirty (30) days  
109 either to deny or to approve the amended application or the application shall be deemed  
110 approved by law.<sup>5</sup>

111 A denial of an application by the Board may be appealed by the sponsor within ten (10) days of  
112 the final denial decision to the State Board of Education.

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Legal References:

1. T.C.A. §49-13-105; TCA §49-13-111
2. T.C.A. §49-13-106(1)(2)
3. T.C.A. §49-13-107
4. T.C.A. §49-13-108; TRR/MS 0520-14-1-.01 & .02
5. T.C.A. §49-13-108(a)
6. T.C.A. §49-13-121(b)