



Application Assistance to Establish Charter Schools

If a Letter of Intent has been received in the Knox County Board of Education Office sixty (60) days before applying, to be considered, the potential charter school applicant is required to appropriately complete the Tennessee Charter School Application that is due in the Knox County Board of Education Office no later than close of business, 4:30 pm EST on February 1, 2024. All submitted applications must include a check for \$2,500.00 made out to the Knox County Schools (KCS). This is to defer the cost of reviewing the application.

When submitting an application, please provide KCS one (1) electronic copy and five (5) hard copies of the renewal. E-mailed proposals should be submitted to KCS at charteringauthority@knoxschools.org. Hard copies should be submitted to this address:

Atten: Office of Academic Supports
Knox County Schools
P.O. Box 2188
Knoxville, TN 37902

The Charter Governing Body must also submit one electronic copy to the Tennessee Department of Education. All charter school application information and details for submission [can be found on their website](#).

The Knox County Schools can provide guidance with a publicly promoted technical assistance workshop for application completion, and when specific requests are made will meet with potential applicants *by appointment* to clarify what the applicant should seek to answer. This guidance, if requested, should be considered carefully in crafting the final application and may include references to the law or other resources that may be necessary for developing the application, meeting deadlines, and/or indicate specific documents that must be submitted as a part of the application.

The Knox County Schools will be impartial to all potential applicants seeking assistance. KCS will not compose application sections for applicants or complete research and development for which the applicant is responsible. Applicants must take full accountability for what is written and submitted to KCS. KCS has developed a website to provide charter school information, FAQ's, and appropriate contact information for developing and submitting your charter school application. In addition, the State of Tennessee charter school website also offers guidance, as well as necessary forms, and applicants are encouraged to consult the [website for additional information](#).

Important Information:

State Due Date: On or before February 1 of the year preceding the year in which the proposed public charter school plans to begin operation, the sponsor shall file applications as follows by the close of the business day:

- Knox County Schools Charter Authorizer requires 5 hard copies and one electronic copy of the complete application to the director of schools for the local board of education considering the charter school application.

- One electronic copy of the complete application to the Tennessee Department of Education, Office of Charter Schools.

The same number of copies of any updates or revisions submitted during the review process should also be submitted to the above entities.

Criteria for Recommending Proposals for Approval

- The State application comes with a scoring rubric, which the committee will use to guide the review committee’s final recommendations. However, there are certain *minimum* general criteria the committee will consider when reviewing the proposals. These criteria are:
 - Letter of Intent is submitted by **December 4, 2023**.
 - Application is submitted by the **February 1, 2024**.

The focus of the application is aligned with all relevant KCS priorities outlined at the beginning of the Request for Proposal (RFP). Proposals that meet the minimum criteria outlined above will then be evaluated by the review committee on the application evidence. The focus of the application is outlined in the RFP.

Additional criteria considered are:

- Font is either Arial or Times New Roman.
- The font size is no smaller than 11. (Arial *Narrow* font will not be accepted.)
- Pages have been numbered consecutively with a one-inch margin on all sides.
- The application does not exceed 250 pages; appendices and budget pages are in addition to the 250 page limit.
- Section titles have been highlighted within the narrative, labeled and tabbed, following the state application template.
- The submitted electronic application has been formatted as a pdf.
- Budget documents may be created in Microsoft Excel then formatted in pdf for submission and are not considered part of the 250 page limit. Budget documents should include evidence of sufficient funding and/or source for start- up funding of the charter school.
- Five (5) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy have been submitted. In the event of any discrepancies between the hard and electronic copies, KCS will consider the electronic copy as the official copy.
- Each application, whether submitted on a flash drive or hard copies, contains appropriate signatures on all copies.
- At the time of submission, all applications will include a check for \$2,500.00 made payable to the Knox County Schools.

The review committee reserves the right to discontinue its review if it is determined that a proposal does not meet these minimum requirements. A proposal that does not meet these requirements cannot be recommended for approval

We caution applicants to not use a “cut and paste” from vendor internet curriculum/software programs without providing rationale and evidence of research and exploration of best practices for the pupil demographics to be served. **Only proposals that meet the above criteria will be recommended for approval.**

The Knox County Schools is interested not only in the potential of proposed schools to successfully navigate the challenges of the application process and the challenges of the start-up period, but also will consider whether the school is likely to meet the criteria for renewal at the end of the initial ten-year charter period. The Request for Proposal and additional resources [can be found on our KCS Charter website](#).

Preference Scoring Criteria for Charter Schools

Although the scoring rubric is from the State of Tennessee, the KCS review committee looks at strong proposals that have the following general criteria throughout the proposal:

- A viable plan to meet the needs of special populations: pupils with disabilities, English Language Learners, and economically disadvantaged pupils. How will your school close the achievement gap for these pupils?
- Increasing high school graduation rates for pupils at risk of not graduating.
- A focus on middle school pupils' academic achievement and the transition to high school
- Using high-quality assessments designed to measure the learning of the critical concepts and are aligned with Tennessee State Standards.
- Management and leadership capability to overcome initial start-up problems and establish a fiscally viable school.
- Increasing the acquisition, adoption, and use of professional development systems that provide teachers and school leaders with the information and resources they need to inform and improve instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness.
- Demonstrated use of data to make instructional decisions with an established system of communication between administration, school director, and teachers.
- Partnering with schools located within the area in which the school will be located to share best practices and innovation.
- Adherence to the stated charter school priorities for KCS.
 - Excellence in foundational skills, particularly early literacy and middle-school math;
 - Providing great educators in every school;
 - Career empowerment and preparation; and
 - Success for every student.