



Office of Charter Schools

2017 Charter School Application Supplement

Additional Information for New Charter Schools and Replication
Applications (including existing operators)

For schools applying on April 1, 2017, for the
2018-19 school year.

Submission Requirements

For the 2017 charter school application process, **any sponsor interested in opening a charter school in Shelby County must complete and submit both the Tennessee Department of Education’s 2017 Charter School Application (including the budget document) and Shelby County Schools’ 2017 Charter School Application Supplement.** The Shelby County Schools (SCS or “the District”) Supplement elaborates on key aspects of the state application for opening a successful school within Shelby County.

Evaluation of the DOE Application and SCS Supplement

State law requires the Tennessee Department of Education (DOE or “the Department”) to provide “sample scoring criteria addressing the elements of the charter school application specified in the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002,” SBE Rule 0520-14-01-.01(2). **SCS will use the DOE’s Charter School Application Evaluation Ratings and Sample Scoring Criteria (“charter school scoring rubric”) to evaluate all application materials submitted by a sponsor, including the Supplement.** The District’s decision to approve or deny an application will be based on the degree to which a sponsor’s Charter School Application and Application Supplement meet the state’s evaluation criteria. The SCS Supplement requests additional information that informs the degree to which the sponsor’s proposal meets those criteria. Consistent with the requirements of DOE’s scoring rubric, applications that do not meet or exceed the standard in all sections (academic plan, operations plan, financial plan, and, if applicable, past performance), as evidenced by the summary review ratings, will be deemed not ready for approval.

SCS Supplement Format

The SCS Application Supplement contains six sections that require narrative responses and provide for attachments as identified at the appropriate places. **All applicants must respond to Sections 1-5. Applicants should respond to Section 6 only if they are proposing to engage a third-party Education Service Provider (ESP).** The main response to the Application Supplement, excluding attachments, should be contained in one PDF document. This PDF document will be submitted to SCS in both hard copy and electronic versions as part of the sponsor’s complete charter school application submission. Required attachments to the Supplement should be saved as separate files (labeled as indicated below) and submitted with attachments to the standard DOE application.

1. Addressing Areas of Need

Please review the tables below which provide data released by the DOE regarding student performance in Shelby County over the previous two academic years. The District identifies both reading language arts (across all tested grade levels) and college and career readiness as immediate areas of need; however, improvement is needed in all content areas. Based on the grade structure of your proposed charter school, describe specifically how your education plan will assist the District in targeting areas of need. If the proposed school is a high school, list and explain your strategies for raising the ACT composite score of your students to a 21.

If your organization currently operates charter schools in Tennessee, submit each school's proficiency rate and percentile rank in the most recent academic year for each content area included in the table(s) below (applicable to the school's current grade structure). If one or more of your currently operating schools is a high school, list the ACT composite and graduation rate for the last three (3)¹ years.

2014-2015 Data		
Content Area	Proficiency Rate	Percentile Rank in TN
3-5 Math	46.1%	9.9%
3-5 RLA*	32.6%	7.8%
6-8 Math	34.4%	9.3%
6-8 RLA*	32.6%	3.6%
High School English*	43.5%	5.4%
High School Math	45.3%	14.8%
ACT Composite*	17.7%	4.8%
Graduation Rate*	75.0%	N/A

*Immediate Areas of Need

2015-2016 Data*		
Content Area	Proficiency Rate	Percentile Rank in TN
High School English	19.5% (on track or mastered)	6.3%
High School Math	7.6% (on track or mastered)	7.9%
ACT Composite	16.8	
Graduation Rate	78.7%	N/A

*The District has not yet received 2015-2016 proficiency data for Grades K-8.

¹ Operators with less than three years of ACT and/or graduation rate data are still eligible and should include as much data as are available.

Section 1. Evaluation Criteria

Responses from Section 1 will inform SCS' analysis of the extent to which applicants meet the following criteria from the DOE charter school scoring rubric:

- *A clear and comprehensive explanation of the school's academic focus that is aligned with the school's mission and vision.*
- *Evidence the proposed academic plan will be appropriate and effective for growing all students while at the same time closing achievement gaps.*
- *Academic achievement goals are rigorous, measurable, and realistic and set high standards and high expectations for student learning.*

2. Percentile Rank, Success Rate, and TVAAS

Please list the expected annual percentile rank, success rate, and TVAAS scores for each of the school's first three years of operation (*if not already included in your response to Section 1.4 of the DOE application*). Please explain the anticipated student performance baseline and describe specifically how your proposed academic program will help students achieve expected results.

If your organization currently operates charter schools in Tennessee, list the percentile rank, success rate, and TVAAS score for the last three (3) years for each school. The District believes that a level 4 or 5 TVAAS score reflects performance that warrants consideration for expansion. If you currently operate schools that have not attained a level 4 or 5, please explain to what, specifically, you attribute the lower performance, and provide a rationale – including other performance indicators – that demonstrates your readiness for growth.

Section 2. Evaluation Criteria

Responses from Section 2 will inform SCS' analysis of the extent to which applicants meet the following criteria from the DOE charter school scoring rubric:

- *A clear and comprehensive explanation of the school's academic focus that is aligned with the school's mission and vision.*
- *Evidence the proposed academic plan will be appropriate and effective for growing all students while at the same time closing achievement gaps.*
- *Academic achievement goals are rigorous, measurable, and realistic and set high standards and high expectations for student learning.*
- *Applicant provides clear, compelling evidence of successful student outcomes for each school in the network and evidence that the operator's schools are high performing and successful by meeting state and national standards.*

3. Operational Scorecard

Please review the District's operational scorecard, included as **Exhibit 1** of this Supplement. In response, please:

- A. Explain your organization's overall approach to ensuring it meets the District's operational performance standards set forth in the scorecard.
- B. Detail how the proposed school will satisfy the requirements of each indicator contained in the District's operational scorecard. Some elements of the scorecard are District-specific, and thus plans for satisfying requirements will not have been addressed in the DOE application. Other elements may have been addressed, at least in part, by requirements in the DOE application. If your plan for satisfying a specific requirement has already been addressed as part of your response to the standard DOE application, you may cite the relevant response by section name and page number.
- C. ***If your organization currently operates charter schools authorized by SCS***, please submit your most recent scorecard and account for any indicators that received a score of 1, 2, or "did not meet."

Section 3. Evaluation Criteria

Responses from Section 3 will inform SCS' analysis of the extent to which applicants meet the following criteria from the DOE charter school scoring rubric:

- *Proposed structure is likely to ensure effective governance and meaningful oversight of school performance, operations, and financials.*
- *A plan to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal regulations.*
- *Provides a compelling data management plan that includes communication strategies for parents.*
- *Detailed financial procedures, policy, or other reasonable assurance that the proposed school will have sound systems and processes in place for accounting, payroll, and independent annual school-level and network-level (where applicable) financial and administrative audits.*
- *Individual and collective qualifications for implementing the financial plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as financial management, fundraising and development, and accounting.*
- *Organization is in good standing wherever they have located schools, and there have been no revocations, litigation that has resulted in negative outcomes, non-renewals, or financial, organizational, or academic deficiencies.*

4. Capacity Review

Capacity means the ability to execute the proposed plan effectively and, ultimately, to establish and operate a high-quality public charter school. Shelby County Schools will examine the capacity of the sponsor and school leadership to determine if the proposed charter school can competently and effectively deliver top results in both academics and operations. To assess a sponsor's capacity, SCS considers the group's individual and collective qualifications and experiences, members' alignment to the proposed school mission and vision, and individuals' commitment to supporting the school's start-up and ongoing operation. A strong school design is necessary but not sufficient for approval; a sponsor must inspire confidence in its ability to implement the proposed program successfully.

- A. ***If your organization is currently operating charter schools***, Question 4.1(b) of the DOE application requires existing operators to, "Provide detailed student achievement and growth results for each school in the network as **Attachment R**." Please complete the template provided as **Exhibit 2** of this Supplement and submit as required Attachment R.
- B. ***If your organization does not currently operate schools***, present any evidence of successful contributions to education and/or community engagement to improve the lives of children for which the sponsoring organization and/or leadership team members have been responsible.
- C. Identify the proposed school founder/executive director/school leader and explain why this individual is well qualified to lead the proposed school in achieving its mission. Describe the proposed leader's academic and/or organizational leadership record, as applicable.

Provide specific evidence that demonstrates the school leader's capacity to design, launch, and manage a high-performing charter school, including the following (if not already provided as part of **Attachment H** of the DOE application):

- Achievement data as determined by the state for each school year and each subject area, including the percent of students testing proficient and advanced for all years and subject areas (provide for the most recent three years of teaching or school leadership).
- Growth measurements as determined by the state for each school year and each subject area (provide for the most recent three years of teaching or school leadership).
- Any gap closure data, if provided by the state.

If the proposed leader has never run a school, describe any leadership training programs that (s)he has completed or is currently participating in.

If the proposed leader has not yet been identified, discuss the qualifications, skills, and experience that will be most important for the person in this position to have in order for the school to be successful. Describe the methods to be used for recruiting qualified candidates. Explain the recruitment and selection timeline and process.

- D. Describe the responsibilities and qualifications of the school's leadership/management team beyond the principal/head of school. If known, identify the individuals who will fill these positions and provide, as **Attachment S1** of the Supplement, the qualifications, resumes, and professional biographies for these individuals (if not already provided as part of **Attachment H** of the DOE application).

- E. The DOE application asks for documentation of any pledged community support and/or established partnerships (Section 1.12 (e)/**Attachment E**). Please identify any community partnerships or engagements that have been established informally, or that you intend to establish, and describe how those partnerships will support the school's success.
- F. Identify any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are partners in planning and establishing the school, along with a brief description of their current and planned role and any resources they have contributed, or plan to contribute, to the school's development.
- G. Explain who will be primarily responsible for development of the school from approval to opening, and what the expected time commitment for these people will be.
- H. Describe the applicant team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the operations plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as:
- Staffing;
 - Professional development;
 - Performance management;
 - General operations; and
 - Facilities management.
- I. Describe the organization's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.

Section 4. Evaluation Criteria

Responses from Section 4 will inform SCS' analysis of the extent to which applicants meet the following criteria from the DOE charter school scoring rubric:

- *Proposed structure is likely to ensure effective governance and meaningful oversight of school performance, operations, and financials.*
- *Evidence the proposed board members will contribute the wide range of knowledge, skills, and commitment needed to oversee a successful charter school, including but not limited to educational, financial, legal, and community experience and expertise.*
- *Compelling plan for leading the development of the school from post-approval to opening, including identification of a capable individual or team to lead the planning and start-up, as well as a viable plan for compensating this individual or team during the planning year.*
- *If leader is identified, chosen leaders have necessary qualifications, competencies, and capacity for their assigned roles and resumes for school leadership are included. If available, includes previous student achievement data for school leadership.*

5. Regional Data

Please review **Exhibit 3** of this Supplement, which provides summaries of *enrollment growth, building capacity, school performance, and real estate inventory* for SCS by region. In response:

- A. **Student Data:** Explain how data regarding *enrollment growth, building capacity, and school performance* in the community in which you intend to open your school inform your plans.
- B. **If you intend to seek use of a District facility,** please:
 - a. Articulate how the available facility aligns with your anticipated needs;
 - b. Explain the status of conversations with the District regarding the terms of its availability;
 - c. Discuss your assessment of the building's readiness, including any anticipated up-front improvements and renovations, and plans for covering these costs.

NOTE: *Shelby County Schools will meet its obligation to make facilities available to charter operators. Charter schools are responsible for all investments and expenses related to the building's operation, and the use of District facilities is subject to the District and the school agreeing on operating terms.*

Section 5. Evaluation Criteria

Responses from Section 5 will inform SCS' analysis of the extent to which applicants meet the following criteria from the DOE charter school scoring rubric:

- *A clear description of the community where school intends to draw students including school zones and academic performance of surrounding schools.*
- *Rationale for selecting the community where school will locate and description of how the school will serve as a needed alternative.*
- *Facility plans are reasonable and adequately meet the requirements of the educational program and anticipated student population.*
- *A sound plan and timeline for identifying, financing, renovating, and ensuring code compliance for a facility.*

6. Third-Party Education Service Providers

This section is required of any applicant intending to contract with an Education Service Provider (ESP), and is meant to supplement questions found in Section 2.9 of the DOE application. An ESP is any nonprofit third-party entity that provides comprehensive education management services to a school via contract with the school's governing board. Applicants need not provide any information already provided as part of the primary application.

A. Third-party ESP Selection

1. Explain how and why the ESP was selected, including when and how the applicant learned of the ESP, which other ESPs were considered, why the ESP was selected over other ESPs, and what due diligence was conducted.

B. Third-party ESP Track Record

1. Explain the ESP's success in serving student populations similar to the target population of the school. Describe the ESP's demonstrated academic track record as well as successful management of non-academic school functions (e.g., back-office services, school operations, extracurricular programs). Provide summary information from reference checks conducted by the applicant (regarding the third-party ESP), identifying each reference.
2. List all schools operated by the ESP. For schools that serve the same grade levels *and* student populations demographically similar to the anticipated population of the proposed school, include the name, year opened, board contact information, location, number of students, and identify the authorizer. If the ESP operates more than 10 schools fitting the criteria, list the 10 schools you consider to be most comparable to the proposed school.
3. Provide evidence of the financial health of the ESP. Include as Attachment S3 the most recent independent financial audit report of the ESP and its most recent annual report.
4. List and explain any management contract terminations, as well as any charter revocations, non-renewals, or withdrawals/non-openings, that the proposed ESP has experienced in the past five (5) years.

C. Legal Relationships and Disclosures

1. Provide evidence that the board is independent from the ESP and self-governing, including evidence of independent legal representation and arm's-length negotiating.
2. Describe any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the school's governing board, proposed school employees, proposed ESP, and any affiliated business entities.
3. List all subsidiaries or related entities that are affiliated, or owned in whole or in part, by the ESP and identify the nature of those entities' business activities.
4. Explain whether the school has or will have any relationship with, or receive any services from, any of the entities listed in the previous question.
5. Explain the supervisory responsibilities of the ESP (if any), including which school employees the ESP

will supervise, how the ESP will supervise these employees, and how the charter school board will oversee the ESP's supervisory responsibilities.

6. If the school's governing board intends to execute promissory notes or other negotiable instruments, or enter into a lease, lease-purchase agreement, or any other facility or financing relationships with the ESP or its affiliates, provide evidence that such agreements are separately documented and not part of or incorporated in the school management contract. Any facility or financing agreements must be consistent with the school governing board's authority and practical ability to terminate the management agreement and continue operation of the school.
7. Describe and provide documentation of any loans, grants, or investments made between the ESP and the school, including an explanation of how any such loans, grants, or investments may be initiated, repaid, and refused by the school.

D. Organizational Structure

1. Provide a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities of the ESP.
2. Describe the scope of services and costs of all resources to be provided by the ESP.
3. Describe the oversight and evaluation methods that the board will use to oversee the ESP.
4. Describe the compensation structure and payment schedule, including clear identification of all fees, bonuses, and any other compensation to be paid to the ESP.
5. Describe the respective financial responsibilities of the school governing board and the ESP. Who will own property purchased with public funds? Which operating and capital expenditures will each party be responsible for? What types of spending decisions can the management organization make without obtaining board approval? What reports must the ESP submit to the board on financial performance, and on what schedule? How will the school governing board provide financial oversight?

Section 6. Evaluation Criteria

Responses from Section 6 will inform SCS' analysis of the extent to which applicants meet the following criteria from the DOE charter school scoring rubric:

- *Proposed structure is likely to ensure effective governance and meaningful oversight of school performance, operations, and financials.*
- *If school plans to contract with a CMO, describes rationale and process for selecting CMO and explanation of why the CMO is a strong choice and good fit for the proposed school and community.*
- *Provides clear division of roles between the board and the service provider.*
- *If available, the CMO agreement (**Attachment K**) is free of conflicts of interest and there is a viable plan for identifying and managing potential conflicts.*