**Frequently Asked Questions About Charter Schools**

**What is a charter school?**
Charter schools are public, tuition-free schools that are sponsored by non-profit organizations who serve as the governing body of the schools. Enrollment is open for all students to attend.

**How do you apply for enrollment at a charter school?**Unlike traditional schools where there is a centralized enrollment process, each charter school handles its own enrollment. Therefore, parents must contact their desired charter school directly to apply.
 **Are charter schools considered Shelby County Schools?**

Shelby County Schools has authorized the majority of charter schools in the Memphis area. The schools that were approved by SCS are subject to monitoring, and the district will make renewal/closure decisions about those schools. However, the sponsoring organizations are responsible for being the "hands on" governing body for the schools in the same manner that the SCS Board of Commissioners rules on the business of traditional SCS schools.

**What are ASD charter schools?**

The ASD (Achievement School District) is a state-run district that has the power to authorize its own charter schools for the turnaround of specific of schools that have been identified as having the lowest academic performance in the state. Although many of these schools were previously part of SCS, the schools are now under the jurisdiction of the ASD.

 **Who should parents call if they have a problem with a charter school?**

If a parent has a problem with an SCS-authorized charter school, the proper protocol is to contact the school leader first to try and resolve any concerns. However, if the issue has escalated without resolution, the parent may contact the governing board chair of the charter school. All charter schools are required to have the contact information for their board members posted on their individual websites.

If a parent has a problem with an ASD-authorized charter school, he/she should contact the ASD office at (901) 260-9649 for further direction on how to resolve or address concerns.

**What is the role of the SCS Office of Charter Schools when parents have a complaint?**

The SCS Office of Charter Schools staff will listen to complaints and assist parents in reaching the appropriate contact(s) at the respective charter schools. Staff will also direct parents to contact the governing board members of a charter school in order to ensure that the appropriate protocols are followed. As charter school personnel are not employees of Shelby County Schools, it is not possible for the SCS Office of Charter Schools staff to report them to Human Resources for reprimands. For this reason, it is important for parents to be in contact with the governing boards of charter schools because the sponsor of the charter school employs their schools’ staff.