



Charter School Closure Protocol

Applicable only to charter schools authorized by the Commission

Overview

The Tennessee Public Charter School Commission ("Commission") is deeply committed to ensuring that all charter schools under its authorization offer a high-quality public education to Tennessee students. Recognizing that charter school closures can be difficult for everyone involved, the Commission is strongly dedicated to implementing and overseeing a comprehensive closure process. This process is designed to provide the necessary support and guidance to students, families, and staff during this challenging transition.

To ensure an orderly and supportive closure, the Commission will oversee the formation of a transition team composed of representatives from the charter school and the Commission. This team will manage all aspects of the closure process, including student transfers, handling student and personnel records, financial matters, and communication with families and the community. The Commission's close involvement underscores its commitment to protecting the best interests of all stakeholders.

Open and effective communication is a cornerstone of the Commission's approach to charter school closures. The Commission will hold the charter school accountable for ensuring that parents, school staff, and the community receive clear, timely, and adequate information throughout the entire closure process. This commitment to transparency helps to maintain trust and provides families and staff with the support they need to navigate the transition successfully.

The charter agreement establishes the performance expectations and the criteria and conditions for charter school intervention, revocation, and renewal/non-renewal. Should the closure of a charter school become necessary, this closure protocol will be implemented in conjunction with relevant Commission policies, including Commission Policy 3.400 Charter School Intervention and Commission Policy 3.500 Charter School Revocation, with the Commission as Authorizer.¹ These policies provide a framework for addressing charter school performance concerns and guide the closure process to ensure a smooth transition for all stakeholders.

Ultimately, the Commission's focus remains on minimizing disruption for students and facilitating their successful transitions to new learning environments. By providing comprehensive support and guidance, the Commission aims to ensure that students continue to receive a high-quality education despite their charter school's closure.

Closure Requirements

The closure requirements are a set of actions that a charter school must complete before closing its doors. A charter school must demonstrate that it has met all requirements and has addressed all outstanding matters before closure. Closure requirements include documentation of completion of items including, but not limited to, student transfers, personnel records, financial matters, and communication with families and the community. The Commission provides a detailed list of all closure items within the closure checklist, which is included within this closure protocol.

¹ All [Commission rules and policies](#) may be found on the [Commission's website](#).

Closure Checklist

The closure checklist is broken into several sections:

1. **Immediate Action Items.** This section covers the immediate legal and administrative aspects of charter school closure, including governance procedures, transition team formation, and records disposal.
2. **Notification and Communication.** This section focuses on communication with various stakeholders (parents, staff, regulatory bodies) regarding the closure, including school staff meetings and communication strategies for parents/guardians and staff.
3. **Records Action Items.** This section addresses the continuation of instruction for remaining students until closure and the proper handling and transfer of student records after the end of classes.
4. **Financial Matters.** This section covers all financial aspects of charter school closure, including financial obligations, tax requirements, audits, payment of funds, financial reporting, and payroll.

Pursuant to Commission Policy 3.100, all requirements for closure must be completed in accordance with the charter agreement. A charter school's failure to complete closure items or effectively communicate regarding progress could result in additional actions or intervention. It is the charter school and governing board's responsibility to fulfill the requirements for closure. The Commission reserves the right to take appropriate action to ensure the orderly closure of the school and the protection of student interests.

Timeline and Completion of Closure Checklist

A comprehensive closure checklist is provided to each school with a detailed list of closure actions, documentation, and deadlines upon the decision to close school operations. This closure checklist serves as a working document between the Commission and the charter school to track progress and ensure all items are accomplished. Schools will utilize this checklist to delegate tasks, track closure progress, and organize deadlines. This checklist is subject to change as regulations and policies may be revised.

Schools are expected to submit all requirements within the checklist through the designated shared folder in a timely manner and effectively communicate any questions or delays. All deadlines are laid out within the checklist provided. The Commission will check in frequently via email or phone to ensure all questions are answered and progress is on track. In addition to informal check-ins, the Commission will hold required monthly closure meetings (described in detail below).

Preparing for the Closure Process

- **Identify a point of contact and closure team:** Communication between the Commission and the charter school during the closure process is frequent and may occur outside of formal meetings. The charter school should designate a point of contact for closure matters and provide a list of roles and responsibilities for their closure team to ensure effective communication.
- **Closure Meetings:** The Commission will schedule regular meetings to monitor progress and offer guidance on specific requirements and topics. These meetings will provide an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the closure process and deliverables. Attendance at these meetings with the closure point of contact and any applicable staff is critical.



- **File Sharing and Documentation:** The Commission will establish a file-sharing system where all necessary closure documentation will be uploaded. Documentation due dates and file naming conventions will be provided within the closure checklist. The charter school is responsible for ensuring that all documents are uploaded correctly to the file-sharing system.

Process of Internal Review of Submissions

Commission staff will complete an internal review of submitted materials, if applicable, after each deadline. If immediate follow-up or action is needed, or if any items are missing, the charter school will receive an email from the Commission with the necessary action steps. If no immediate action is needed, the school can expect to receive confirmation that all requirements have been met during the subsequent closure meeting. Commission staff will ask for updates on all closure items at each check-in. While the checklist includes specific timelines, Commission staff may request additional documentation or updates as schools work through the closure process. The charter school is responsible for responding to these requests.

Closure Meetings

Closure meetings serve as checkpoints for progress and provide support throughout the closure process. The frequency of these meetings will be determined collaboratively by the Commission and the charter school. At a minimum, this will involve a monthly meeting schedule, with the frequency potentially increasing as the closure date approaches, depending on the situation's intensity and the volume of items to be submitted. While these meetings are essential for communication and guidance, they will not be the only interaction between the charter school and the Commission. The Commission will also communicate with the school's points of contact via email and schedule additional meetings as needed.

All meetings are held virtually via Microsoft Teams unless otherwise specified within the schedule.



Charter School Closure Plan

Immediate Action Items

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
Closure Notification Within ten days of the Commission's vote to close the charter school, the Commission will provide notice of revocation or nonrenewal to the school and the Tennessee Department of Education. This notice will include a copy of the Commission's resolution setting forth the decision and reasons for denial. ²	Commission Staff Lead	Within ten days of the Commission's vote to close the charter school T.C.A. § 49-13-122(e)
Establish a Transition Team and Assign Roles Establish a team dedicated to ensuring the smooth transition of students and staff and the closedown of the school's business. The transition team should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead person from the Commission staff • Lead finance contact from the charter school and Commission • Other Commission staff as needed • Charter school governing board chair • Lead administrator from the charter school, and • Lead person from the charter school parent organization (if applicable) 	Commission Staff Lead and Charter School Board Chair	Within two calendar weeks of the Commission's vote to close the charter school T.C.A. § 49-13-130
Assign Transition Team Action Items and Responsibilities Distribute contact information to all transition team members, set calendar for meetings, and assign dates for the completion of each charter school closure action item.	Commission Staff Lead	Within two calendar weeks of the Commission's vote to close the charter school

² Notice will also be provided to the Tennessee Department of Education in instances of a charter school's decision to voluntarily relinquish its charter agreement in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-110(d).

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
Talking Points Create talking points for students, parents, staff, community, and press. Focus on communicating plans for orderly transition of students and staff.	Transition Team	Within two calendar weeks of the Commission's vote to close the charter school
School Staff Meeting The governing board chair should communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to continuing school operations through closure process • The plan to assist students and staff, by ensuring a smooth closure • Reasons for closure • The timeline for transition details • The compensation and benefits timeline • Contact information for ongoing questions. 	Charter School Board Chair and Charter School Administrator Lead	Within two calendar weeks of the Commission's vote to close the charter school
Instruction Continue high-quality instruction in accordance with the charter agreement for the remainder of the school year for currently enrolled students. Per T.C.A. § 49-13-123, no additional students may be enrolled.	Charter School Administrator Lead	Continuous after the Commission's closure vote until end of the school year T.C.A. § 49-13-130
Parent/Guardian Communication Distribute a letter with detailed guidance regarding the transition plan. Notification should include, but not be limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of the parent closure meeting • Date of the last day of regular instruction • Cancellation of any planned summer school • Date(s) of any planned school choice fair(s) • Listing of all other public school options in the area • Information on obtaining student records before the end of classes • Contact information for parent/guardian assistance/questions 	Transition Team	Within one calendar week of the Commission's vote to close the charter school

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
Plan and Convene a Parent Closure Meeting At the parent closure meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a list of all other public school options for which students are eligible to enroll • Make copies of the “Closure FAQ” document available • Provide an overview of the Commission’s closure policy and closure decision; Provide a calendar of important dates for parents • Present the timeline for transitioning students • Present the timeline for winding down of school operations • Remind parents/guardians of the right to access student records • Provide contact information 	Transition Team	Within 30 days of the Commission’s vote to close the charter school T.C.A. § 49-13-130
Establish Financial Transition Plan Outline the school’s remaining financial obligations and incoming funding to support the orderly closure of the school.	Commission Financial Lead, Charter School Board Chair, and Charter School Financial Lead	Within two calendar weeks of the Commission’s vote to close the charter school
Secure All Records Secure all financial records and ensure they are organized, up to date, and maintained in a secure location.	Charter School Board Chair, Administrator, Financial Lead	Ongoing
Secure All Assets The school’s assets and any assets in the school that belong to others must be protected against theft, misappropriation, and deterioration. The school should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain existing insurance coverage until the disposal of such assets under the school closure action plan • Continue or obtain appropriate security services • Plan to move assets to secure storage after closure of the school facility • Maintain any officer and staff insurance and coverage (such as surety bonds) required under state law until the official dissolution of the school 	Charter School Board Chair, Administrator, Financial Lead	Ongoing

Notification Action Items

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
Geographic LEA Notification Notification of the closure, accompanied by the Commission's resolution and transition team contact information, will be sent to the geographical LEA	Commission Staff Lead	Within two calendar weeks of the Commission's vote to close the charter school
School Staff Communication Outline transition plans and timelines for staff, including but not limited to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee termination date • Commitment of school's board to transition staff • Commitment to positive transition of students into new educational settings • Any transition to new employment assistance that the board anticipates providing (such as job fairs) • Timelines for compensation and benefits, including TCRS • Timelines for outstanding professional development issues • COBRA information • Pertinent licensure information • Faculty lead contact information • Transition team member contact information. 	Charter School Board Chair	Within 30 days of the Commission's vote to close the charter school
Notification to Benefits Providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify benefit providers of the pending termination of all employees • Notify providers of termination of all benefit programs. • Terminate all programs as of the last date of service in accordance with applicable laws and regulations (i.e., COBRA), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health care/health insurance ○ Life insurance ○ Dental and vision plans ○ Retirement and pension plans, including TCRS 	Charter School Board Chair and Charter School Financial Lead	Within 45 days of the Commission's vote to close the charter school

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
<p>Notification of Vendors and Contractors</p> <p>The school must formulate a list of all contractors and vendors (including any education service providers) and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify them regarding school closure, including the final date of operations • Provide notice of non-renewal in accordance with the management contract if applicable • Request the final invoice and accounting, including an accounting of retained school funds and grant fund status if applicable • Instruct contractors to make arrangements to remove any contractor property from the school by a certain date (such as copy machines or other rented property) • Retain records of past contracts as proof of full payment • Maintain telephone, gas, electric, and water long enough to cover the time period required for all necessary closure procedures to be complete. 	Charter School Financial Lead	Within one month of the Commission's vote to close the charter school
<p>Notification to Creditors and Debtors</p> <p>Solicit from each creditor a final accounting of the school's accrued and unpaid debt. Compare the figures provided with the school's calculation of the debt and reconcile.</p> <p>Where possible, negotiate a settlement of debts consummated by a settlement agreement reflecting satisfaction and release of the existing obligations.</p> <p>Contact all debtors and demand payment. If collection efforts are unsuccessful, consider turning the debt over to a commercial debt collection agency. All records regarding such collection or disputes by debtors regarding amounts owed must be retained.</p>	Charter School Financial Lead	Within one month of the Commission's vote to close the charter school

Records Action Items

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
Disposition of Records In accordance with Tennessee state law, follow the appropriate disposition of records policy. In all cases, the school board shall maintain all records related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans, bonds, mortgages, and other financing; • Contracts; • Leases; • Assets and asset sales; • Grants (records relating to federal grants must be kept in accordance with the Uniform Grants Guidance); • Governance (minutes, by-laws, policies); • Employees (background checks, personnel files); • Accounting/audits, taxes, and tax status; • Employee benefit programs and benefits; and • Any items provided for in the closure action plan. 	Charter School Board Chair	Within two months of the end of classes and ongoing
Student Records The school must ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All student records are organized and secure • All student records and report cards are complete and up to date • Parents/guardians are provided with copies of final report cards and notice of where student records will be sent (with specific contact information) 	Charter School Board Chair and Charter School Administrative Lead	Specific deadlines will be established in consultation with the geographic LEA but no later than within one month after the end of classes

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
<p>Transfer of Student Records As required by state statute, the school must transfer all student records to the students' new school or school district.</p> <p>Student records should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades/academic information • All materials associated with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or other services evaluations • Immunization records • Parent/guardian information. 	<p>Charter School Administrative Lead and Commission</p>	<p>Within one month after the end of classes</p>
<p>Documenting Transfer of Records Written documentation of the transfer of records must accompany the transfer of all student materials.</p> <p>The written verification must include the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of general education records transferred • Number of special education records transferred • Date of transfer • Signature and printed name of the charter school representative releasing the records • Signature and printed name of the district (or other entity) recipient(s) of the records. <p>Provide copies of all materials documenting the transfer of student records to the Commission.</p>	<p>Charter School Administrative Lead and Commission</p>	<p>Within one month after the end of classes</p>

Financial Action Items

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
IRS Status If the school has 501(c)(3) status, it must take steps to maintain that status until dissolved, including (but not limited to) the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification to IRS regarding any address change of the school corporation • Filing of required tax returns or reports (e.g., IRS form 990 and Schedule A) If the school corporation proceeds to dissolution, notify the IRS of the dissolution of the education corporation and its 501(c)(3) status, and provide a copy to the Commission.	Charter School Board Chair and Charter School Financial Lead	Date to be determined depending on 501(c)(3) status
UCC Search The school should perform a Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) search to determine if there are any perfected security interests and to what assets security interests are attached.	Charter School Board Chair and Financial Lead	Within 30 days of the Commission's vote to close the charter school
Audit The school must establish a date by which to complete a final close out audit by an independent firm or state auditor as determined by statute. Provide a copy of the final audit to the Comptroller.	Charter School Board Chair and Charter School Financial Lead	Within 120 days of the end of classes
Inventory The school must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a fixed asset list segregating state and federal dollars. • Note source codes for funds and prices for each purchase. • Establish fair market value, initial and amortized for all fixed assets. Provide the Commission with a copy of all documents.	Charter School Financial Lead	Within 45 days of the Commission's vote to close the charter school

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
Disposition of Federally Funded Equipment Check with the Commission's federal programs staff and the Tennessee Department of Education (if necessary) regarding proper procedures for the disposition of property purchased with federal funds.	Commission and Charter School Financial Lead	Within 45 days of the Commission's vote to close the charter school
Disposition of Inventory Establish a disposition plan and establish a payment process (e.g., cash, checks, credit cards) for any remaining items, and provide the Commission with a copy of all documents.	Commission and Charter School Financial Leads	Within 45 days of the Commission's vote to close the charter school
Property Purchased with Charter School Program (CSP) Funds Work with the Tennessee Department of Education to determine the required disposition of property purchased with CSP funds. Generally, property purchased with CSP funds should first be offered to other charter schools within the same region in which the closing school is located. If no schools want the property, an auction may be held to dispose of the CSP assets.	Charter School Financial Lead	Within two weeks of Commission's vote to close the charter school
Disposition of Facilities Determine state requirements for real property acquired from a public school district to determine right of first offer and other applicable requirements for disposition.	Charter School Board Chair and Financial Lead	Within two calendar weeks of the end of classes

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
<p>Payment of Funds</p> <p>The school should work with the Commission to prioritize payment strategy considering state and local requirements.</p> <p>Using available revenue and any funds from auction proceeds, pay the following entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retirement systems • Teachers and staff • Employment taxes and federal taxes • Audit preparation • Private creditors • Overpayments from state/district • Other as identified by the Commission. <p>Provide the Commission with a copy of all materials associated with this action.</p>	<p>Commission and Charter School Financial Lead</p>	<p>Within 45 days of the Commission's vote to close the charter school</p>
<p>Expenditure Reporting</p> <p>Work with Commissions staff to complete all required Federal Expenditure Reports (FER).</p>	<p>Charter School Financial Lead</p>	<p>Plan complete within 45 days of the Commission's vote to close the charter school and ongoing until completed</p>
<p>Itemized Financials</p> <p>Review, prepare, and make available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal year-end financial statements • Cash analysis • A list of compiled bank statements for the year, all unused checks, and bank accounts • A list of payables • Accounting of petty cash <p>Collect and void all unused checks, and close accounts once transactions have cleared.</p>	<p>Charter School Financial Lead</p>	<p>Within 45 days of the end of classes</p>

Action Item	Responsibility for Completing Action	Completion Date
Payroll Reports The school must generate a list of all payroll reports including taxes, retirement, or adjustments on employee contracts.	Charter School Financial Lead	Within 30 days of the end of classes
List of Creditors and Debtors Formulate a list of creditors and debtors and any amounts accrued and unpaid with respect to such creditor or debtor. The list should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contractors to whom the school owes payment • lenders • mortgage holders • bond holders • equipment suppliers • secured and unsecured creditors • persons or organizations who owe the school fees or credits • lessees or sub-lessees of the school • any person or organization holding property of the school 	Charter School Board Chair and Financial Lead	Within 30 days of the end of classes