



Department of
Education

Tennessee Charter Annual Report Guidance

Revised July 2016



Introduction

Tennessee law requires each public charter school to report certain information on an annual basis. The required information is submitted to the chartering authority and the State. The information in annual reports should help school operators, chartering authorities, policymakers, and parents make decisions that will lead to improving achievement of all public school students.

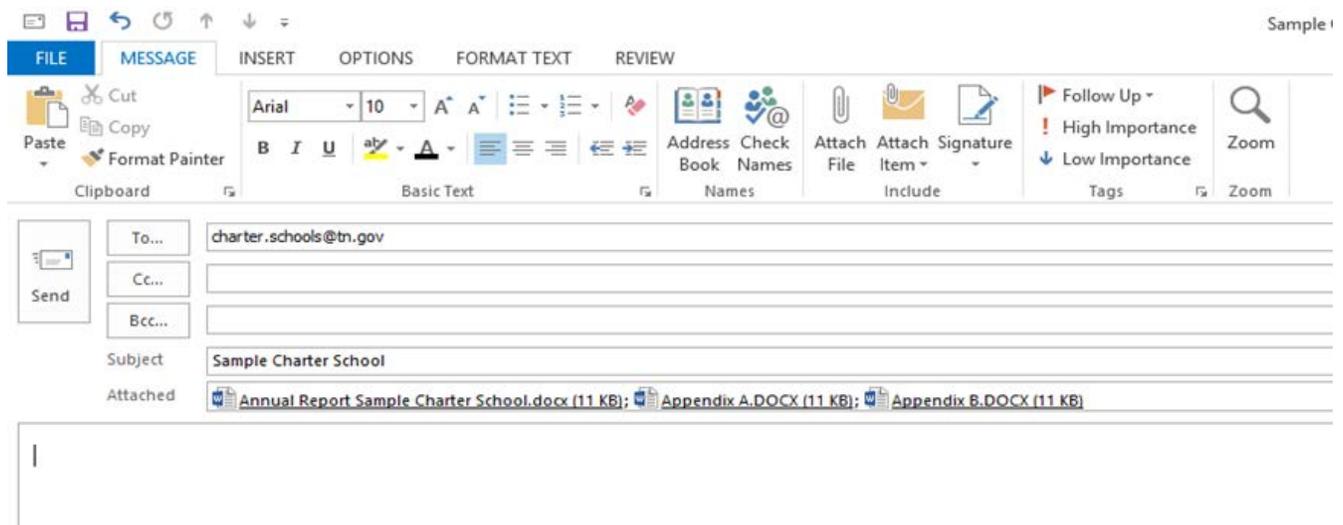
Charter school operators should use annual reports to measure progress toward the goals outlined in their charter, adjust operations based on this information, and gauge the likelihood of renewal of their charters. Chartering authorities should use annual reports to provide effective oversight of charter schools, share best practices across all schools in their jurisdiction, and to make renewal, nonrenewal or revocation decisions. Operators, authorizers, and policymakers may use annual reports to measure the return on investment in schools and programs. They may then use this information to support existing high-performing schools and programs, foster more innovative school models, and decrease the number of low-performing schools.

One purpose of reporting school performance annually (for all public schools, not just charter schools) is to reduce the length of time that failing schools remain open. Tennessee law requires chartering authorities to provide charter operators with “a performance report that directly reflects the renewal evaluation, “one year prior to renewal. T.C.A. § 49-12-121(e). However, charter school operators and authorizers should know long before the mandatory five year review or one year prior to expiration of the charter whether the school is successful.

Submission Instructions

Annual reports are due to the chartering authority and the Tennessee Department of Education no later than close of business on September 1. The chartering authority may set an earlier deadline. If the due date falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the report shall be due by the close of the next business day.

This year, the annual report must be submitted as a word or pdf document to charter.schools@tn.gov. The total length of the annual report should not exceed 15 pages (excluding attachments) and each content requirement should be easily identifiable. Each charter school must submit one email with the school name as the subject, and the annual report document must be saved with the charter school name. Any attachment should be saved as the section number it corresponds with and a brief identifying label (see example below).



Please check with the chartering authority to find out how to submit electronic copies of the annual report and any hard copies that may be required. If the original sponsor of the school is a different entity than the governing body preparing the report, then a copy must also be submitted to the sponsor.

Reporting Requirements

Most academic performance, attendance, transfer and other student achievement information will already be available to chartering authorities through the Department's school report cards and data warehouse. Chartering authorities are likely to have locally-developed performance frameworks or other instruments. It is also important to note that a charter school's audit, required by T.C.A. § 49-13-111(m) and 127, likely satisfies the financial reporting requirements in T.C.A. § 49-13-120. Thus, a separate financial report may not be necessary.

Each school is required to report the following information annually (T.C.A. § 49-13-120 and 133):

- "The progress of the school towards achieving the goals outlined in its charter,
- "The same information required in the reports prepared by local boards of education pursuant to state laws, rules and regulations,
- "Financial records of the school, including revenues and expenditures, and
- "The number of students who leave the school, including when and why."
- "A detailed accounting, including amounts and sources, of funds other than those funds received under T.C.A. § 49-12-112(e).

Chartering authorities may use annual reports to present achievement and other data to the charter school and ask the school to write the operational and academic story that data tells.

However an annual report is prepared, it should be useful to all parties: operators, chartering authorities, policymakers and parents.

Content Requirements

The annual report must include the following:

Cover Page

Provide a cover page that lists the following information:

- School name
- School address
- School contact information: name, title, telephone, fax, email address, and website
- Date of the report

Introduction to the School

Provide the following basic information about the school:

- Name of school
- Type of charter
- Year school opened
- Age of school
- School hours
- Grade level(s) served
- Current enrollment
- Maximum enrollment
- Number of instructional days per school year
- Name of Board President
- Board President email address
- Board President phone number
- Name of School Leader
- School Leader email address
- School Leader phone number
- Mission Statement

Section I – Progress toward the charter school’s goals (must include academic achievement)

Describe the progress made during the last year toward the goals outlined in the current charter agreement (use tables and data, as appropriate). This may include the performance framework agreed to by the school and the chartering authority, a written response to data provided by the chartering authority, and additional school specific goals from the charter application.

Section II – Student mobility

Identify the reasons students left the school during the last year. Include the total number of students leaving for each reason. Do not include student names. Describe any plans to improve student retention in the coming year.

Section III – Operations and finance

Describe what the school has done or will do in response to any operational or fiscal challenges faced during the past year. Address any findings from the most recently completed school audit. If the chartering authority formally notified the school of particular concerns, include a brief summary of those concerns and the school's efforts to remediate those concerns. Provide a detailed accounting, including the amounts and sources, of funds other than those funds received under per pupil state and local funds and federal allocations. Include any funds received from: 1) federal grants, 2) grants, gifts, devises, or donations from any private sources, 3) state funds appropriated for the support of the public charter school, and 4) any other funds that may be received by the local school district.

Section IV – Leadership changes

Note any changes in board membership or school leadership during the past year.

Section V – Parent and community involvement

Briefly summarize parent and community involvement efforts during the past year, including any new community partnerships. Describe how parent and community involvement affects student achievement.

Section VI – Promising practices

Describe 3-5 operational practices that have had the most impact on student achievement.

Action Steps

List some specific action steps the school plans to take in response to the information gathered and summarized for this annual report. As you consider what steps to take, keep in mind the critical questions the chartering authority will be asking at the time of renewal:

- Is the school an academic success?
- Has the school met its non-academic goals and been faithful to its mission and charter design?
- Has the school been effectively governed?
- Is the school fiscally sound?
- Are the parents and students satisfied?
- Has the school satisfactorily met its legal requirements?
- If the school's charter is renewed, are its plans for the next charter likely to be achieved?