

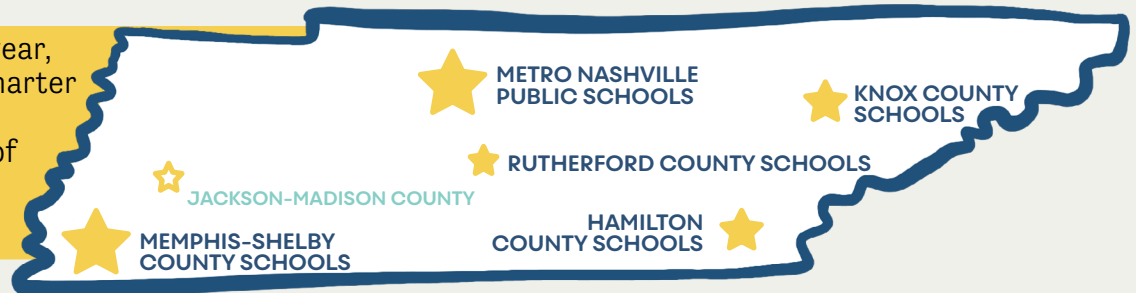
Tennessee Charter School Quick Facts

Tennessee Public Charter Schools:

- Are public and free to attend
- Are operated by a nonprofit organization
- Must enroll any student who applies, regardless of behavior, special need, or academic performance
- Are required to use a lottery if demand exceeds available seats
- Employ licensed educators
- Must meet the same academic standards and administer the same assessments as traditional public schools
- Are required by law to undergo an independent financial audit every year
- Can be closed if the school fails to meet academic or financial expectations

Public charter schools are concentrated in Tennessee's largest districts and are authorized by a variety of entities.

During the 2024-25 school year, a total of **115** Tennessee charter schools were located within the geographic boundaries of five school districts across the state:



Seven entities acting as local education agencies (LEAs) authorized charter schools in operation during the 2024-25 school year: Hamilton County Schools, Knox County Schools, Metro Nashville Public Schools, Memphis-Shelby County Schools, and Rutherford County Schools, along with the state's appellate authorizer (the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission, or TPCSC) and the state's school turnaround district (the Achievement School District, or ASD).

A charter school approved in the Jackson-Madison County school district will open in the Fall of 2026.



Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

Since 2021 the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission has considered 40 appeals for charter schools seeking initial authorization to open.

The commission approved 16 of these charter applications and will serve as the authorizer for 15 of those new schools.

The commission affirmed 18 LEA decisions to deny, and six applications were withdrawn before a decision. The commission also received six applications for schools to transition from the ASD. The commission approved five of these ASD transitions.

Charter School Enrollment by Authorizer, 2024-25

	Number of Charters	Charter Only Enrollment	% Charter Enrollment of LEA
Achievement School District (ASD)	3	1,412	100%
Hamilton County Schools (HCS)	9	2,910	6.6%
Knox County Schools (KCS)	2	542	0.9%
Memphis-Shelby County Schools (MSCS)	56	19,944	19%
Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)	26	12,734	16%
Rutherford Country Schools (RCS)	2	373	0.7%
Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (TPCSC)	17	6,774	100%
State of Tennessee	115	44,689	5%

Source: Tennessee Department of Education, 2025



Compared to their district counterparts, on average, public charter schools serve a higher percentage of students of color and students who are economically disadvantaged.

During the 2024-25 school year, Tennessee charter schools served over 44,000 students — roughly 5% of the student population statewide and about 9% of the state’s Black, Hispanic, and Native American student population.

Almost half (49%) of the students served by Tennessee charter schools (non-ASD) are economically disadvantaged, and 87% identify as Black, Hispanic, or Native American. Compared with district-run schools in districts with charter options (non-ASD), on average, the enrollment of economically disadvantaged students at charter schools is 15 percentage points higher and the enrollment of Black, Hispanic, and Native American students at charter schools is 24 percentage points higher.

Approximately 76% (87 schools) of Tennessee charter schools are elementary and middle schools, while only 24% (28 schools) are high schools and middle/high schools.

49%

Economically Disadvantaged

87%

Students of Color

Demographics of Charter Schools by Authorizer, 2024-25

	HCS		KCS		MNPS		MSCS		RCS		ASD TPCSC	
Black, Hispanic, Native American	72%	50%	86%	32%	81%	71%	94%	92%	45%	47%	>95%	82%
Economically Disadvantaged	37%	31%	40%	19%	35%	32%	63%	57%	9%	15%	56%	40%
Students With Disabilities	15%	15%	20%	17%	14%	14%	10%	13%	10%	10%	10%	14%
English Learners	18%	13%	7%	10%	28%	32%	15%	14%	20%	18%	20%	23%

■ Charter ■ Noncharter

Source: Tennessee Department of Education, 2025

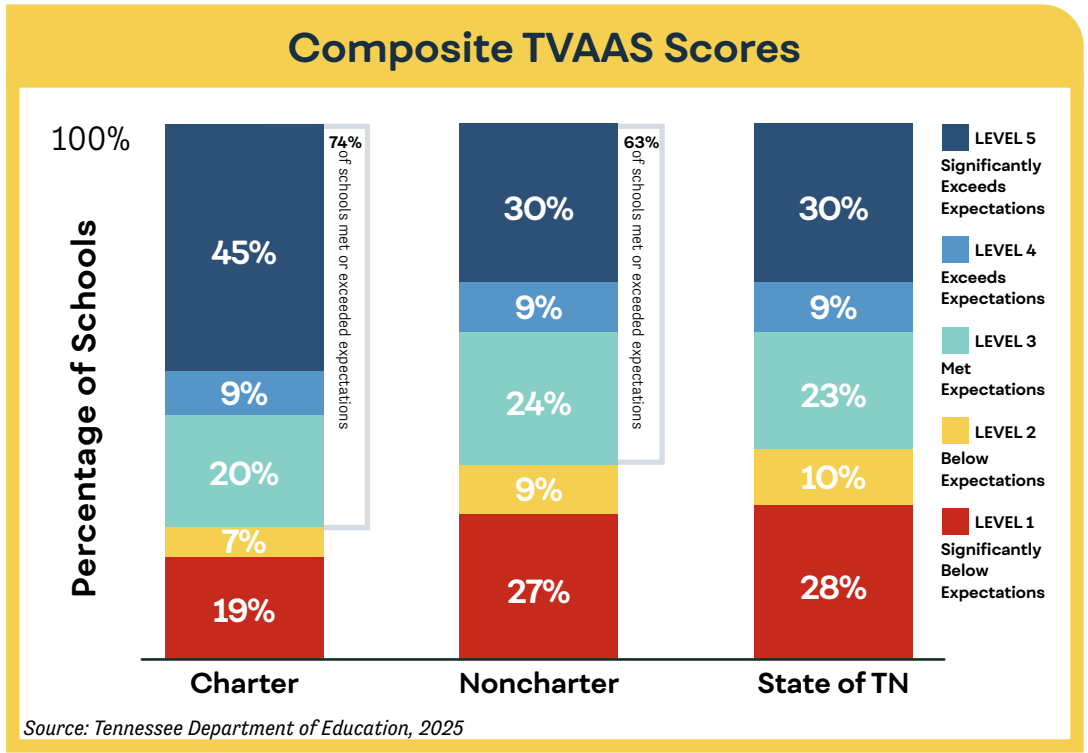
In 2025, public charter schools outpaced their district counterparts in academic growth and graduation rates.

45%
CHARTER

30%
NONCHARTER

Forty-five percent of charter schools (non-ASD) earned a Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) Level 5 “Significantly Exceeding Expectations” score as compared to 30% of district-run schools in districts with charter options (non-ASD).

Seventy-six percent of charter schools met or exceeded student growth expectations (TVAAS levels 3-5) compared to 60% of noncharter schools in districts with public charter options.



The average charter high school (non-ASD) graduation rate (89.1%) was 7.6 percentage points higher than the average high school graduation rate (81.5%) at district-run schools in districts with charter options (non-ASD).

Percentage of Grade 3–8 Students Proficient on TCAP by Authorizer, 2024–25

	HCS		KCS		MNPS		MSCS		RCS		TPCSC
Reading	19%	39%	27%	43%	32%	31%	22%	25%	26%	43%	31%
Math	24%	41%	29%	44%	35%	30%	26%	24%	24%	50%	32%

Legend: Charter (teal), Noncharter (blue)

Source: Tennessee Department of Education, 2025