

History Of Tennessee Public Charter Sector



STATE POLICY & FUNDING TIMELINE

2002

Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act introduces charter schools to provide an alternative for students in failing schools. The number of new charters cannot exceed the total number of schools failing to make adequate progress as defined by the state's accountability system.

2003

First public charter schools open in Tennessee: one in Nashville and three in Memphis.

2011

Cap on the number of charter schools that can open in Tennessee is removed to encourage the replication of high-quality schools, and enrollment eligibility is extended to all students (open enrollment). If the number of students who apply to enroll exceeds the school's capacity for enrollment, a blind lottery is designated to determine enrollment. This lottery provision remains in effect today.

2014

Legislation is passed to allow the State Board of Education (SBE) to act as an authorizer upon appeal. While charter schools could always appeal a decision by the local district to deny their application to the State Board, this law allows the State Board to serve as the authorizer for those schools approved on appeal. This appellate authorizer authority only applies to charter schools applying to a district with a priority school in the district.

2016

For the first time, Tennessee receives a federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant for \$20 million to support the growth of charter schools.

2017

The Tennessee High-Quality Charter Schools Act passes. This act modernizes the 2002 Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act, provides more clarity around application processes, and enables districts to charge an authorizer fee to cover the costs of charter oversight.

As of 2017, a charter school consistently failing to meet academic expectations is closed automatically.

The Charter Facilities Fund is established to provide grants for public charter schools with facilities needs; a \$6 million non-recurring investment is made.

2019

Tennessee's Public Charter School Commission is created and becomes the state's appellate authorizer; the commission can hear appeals for any denial rather than just districts with a priority school.

The State Board becomes the formal charter authorizer accountability body.



The Charter Facilities Fund is increased to a \$12 million nonrecurring investment. Each of Tennessee's public charter schools receives per-pupil allocations, while the remaining funds are reserved for competitive grants. The two types of competitive grants include need-based facility grants for charter schools with demonstrable unmet facility needs and high-quality charter expansion grants for schools with a demonstrated record of student achievement that are opening or expanding.

2021

The Charter Facilities Fund is increased to \$24 million, \$6 million of which are recurring and \$18 million nonrecurring.



2022

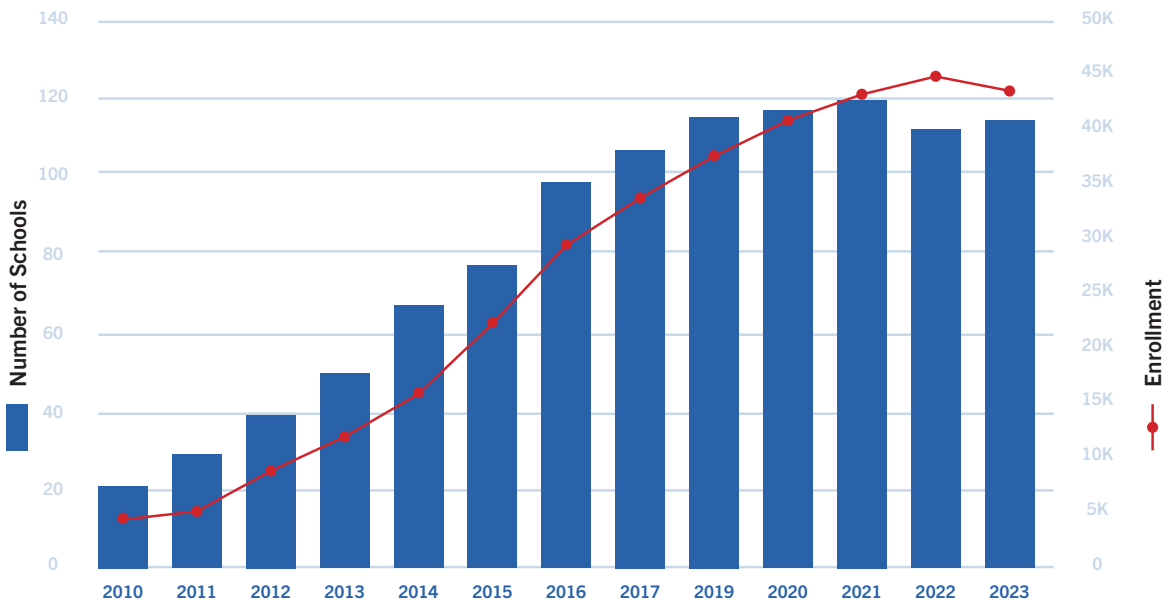
The state's new K-12 education funding formula, the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act (TISA), includes an unprecedented direct allocation for charter school students and a new requirement for charter schools to receive state and local funding based on the characteristics of students enrolled.



The Charter Facilities Fund is increased to \$38 million, \$22 million of which are recurring.

Tennessee receives a federal CSP grant of \$24 million.

Tennessee's Public Charter School Sector Has Steadily Grown Over Time



Source: Tennessee Department of Education, 2023

