

Alabama Public Charter School Commission

Charter Replication and Expansion Policy

1. Definitions

Replication - An existing charter school/LEA establishes another school that does not lie within the school's existing campus footprint or approved school area and that replicates one or more of the following: the mission, vision, grade level configuration, academic program, and instructional modal of the existing charter school.

Expansion A: An existing charter school/LEA establishes another school that does not lie within the school's existing campus footprint or approved school area and does not replicate one or more of the following: vision, mission, grade-level configuration, academic program and instructional model.

Expansion B: An existing charter school that expands its program beyond the grade-level configuration designated in its charter contract. The expansion takes place within the school's existing campus or within the approved school area.

- Example 1: A grade K-5 elementary schools expands to a K-8 school on the same campus.
- Example 2: A 6-8 middle school expands to a grade 6-12 secondary program with the high school located in a separate building in the same school approved area.

2. Evaluations and Decisions

The staff of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission (the "Commission") implements a transparent and rigorous process that uses comprehensive data to make merit-based replication and expansion evaluations for the Commission.

The Commission's replication and expansion decisions are supported by analyses and weighing data regarding a charter school's performance over time in relation to the goals and terms of the school's charter application and performance framework. Consistent with the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act, Ala. Code § 16-6F-1, et. seq. (the "Act"), replication and expansion decisions are informed by a comprehensive set of multiple sources, standardized test results, and internal building measures.

3. Replication and Expansion Criteria

Consistent with the Act, the Commission grants replication or expansion only to charter schools with a quality educational program in their existing school(s) that has achieved the goals and standards set in the charter and performance framework, is organizationally and financially viable, and has been faithful to the terms of the charter, authorizer, and applicable law.

For Commission staff to present a positive evaluation of a charter school for replication or expansion, the charter school/LEA must demonstrate in its application that it:

- Meets academic performance standards as set forth in the charter school contract/framework for increasing student achievement.
- Meets generally accepted standards of fiscal and organizational performance
- Provides evidence when requested to confirm compliance with all provisions of the Act and other state and federal laws.
- Is faithful in terms of its charter application.
- Has local community support.
- Provides clear evidence in the application of its capacity to execute replication or expansion successfully. This includes, without limitation:
 - A strong replication or expansion plan.
 - Evidence of sufficient human capital to effectively execute the plan.
 - Submission of sufficient financial resources to effectively execute the plan.
 - Submission of a sound business plan.
 - Facilities with sufficient space to accommodate enrollment increases.
- Satisfies any other criteria set forth in the Act.

4. Replication and Expansion Process and Procedures

The following process and procedures apply to a charter schools/LEA's request to replicate or expand:

- Charter schools seeking to replicate or expand must submit a thorough written application to the appropriate authorizing authority.
- A Replication Charter School or an Expansion A request will be treated as a new start-up charter school as defined in, and consistent with, the Act. In either scenario, an application should be filed with the approved local authorizer, or if there is no registered local authorizer in the new location, the Commission. The Commission's staff will evaluate any Replication or Expansion A application submitted to it either directly or via an appeal from the denial of a local authorizer pursuant to the criteria set forth herein and in the Act.

- An Expansion B request is not treated as an application for a new start-up charter school. An Expansion B request will be addressed in the form of an amendment to the original charter contract. The Commission's staff will evaluate any Expansion A request for a charter school for which it is the authorizer pursuant to the criteria set forth herein.
- The Commission will vote in a duly-noticed public meeting to approve or deny a replication or expansion application within 60 days of the application's submission.
- The Commission will memorialize its decision on replication or expansion in a duly-adopted resolution.
- Any request for a new cost center associated with an Expansion B request must be included in the application. If the Commission approves the charter school's Expansion B request and authorizes the school to seek approval from the Alabama State Department of Education ("ALSDE") for a new cost center, the school must then obtain approval from the ALSDE for the new cost center pursuant to the ALSDE's applicable guidelines. If and when approved by the ALSDE for a new cost center, the Commission will evaluate each cost center both individually and collectively pursuant to the charter school/LEA's measurement of academic achievement expectations and goals outlined in the school's performance framework.