

POLICY MANUAL

EMPOWERING EVERY CHILD

ELEVATING EVERY FUTURE

HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS FOR ALL

ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION
JULY 2026

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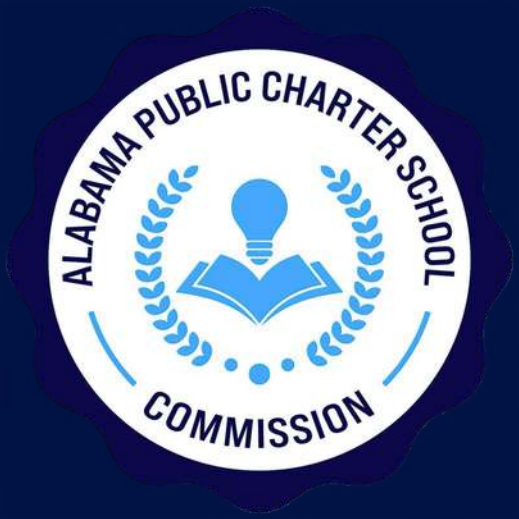
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AMENDMENT APPLICATION POLICY



Alabama Public Charter School Commission Amendment Application Policy

The instructions below are for completing and submitting an application to amend a Charter Contract. Amendment applications will be considered for action of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("Commission") in May and September. Applications must be submitted sixty days in advance. Any approved amendments are conditional upon meeting any requirements set forth in the amendment agreement. Charter contract amendment applications should be submitted at a minimum of one year in advance of the anticipated need. Early consideration for the following year will occur in May with a submission deadline in March and last consideration for the following year will occur in September with a submission deadline in July.

Below are the steps a charter school should follow to complete an application to amend a charter school contract.

1. All applicants must complete Part I, General Information that includes the following:
   a. Selecting the amendment category.
   b. Providing the requested school background information.
   c. Providing the background statements and related attachments for each amendment that is requested; and
   d. Signing of the completed application by both the contact person and board chair.
2. In Part II, specific amendment requests, applicants should **only** complete the subpart that applies to the category of amendment the school is seeking. The subparts contain more specific questions relevant to the identified category. If a school is seeking multiple amendments, the school shall complete the applicable subpart for each requested amendment category. A school should include any attachments requested by the applicable subpart.
3. The completed application and all attachments should be submitted through Anvilar. The link will be provided as soon as possible.
4. Failure to submit a complete application to the Commission, including attachments, by the deadlines listed below will result in the amendment application not being reviewed. Early Submission for May Consideration: March 15st Submission for September Consideration: July 15st

Emergency Amendment Applications:

A charter school may submit an emergency amendment application at any time if good cause exists for an amendment due to unanticipated extraordinary circumstances. In addition to the category of amendment, the school should check "EMERGENCY Petition" at the bottom of the first page of Part I and briefly describe the circumstances constituting the emergency. The
Background Statements shall include detailed written findings explaining the unanticipated extraordinary circumstances giving rise to the emergency amendment application.

Timeline for Review:

The Commission will strive to rule on an amendment application within 60 days of its submission due date, or within 60 days of the date of submission of an emergency application.
Evaluators will use the following criteria to rate each amendment for which an application is received:

Rating Criteria:
Meets or Exceeds the Standard: The response thoroughly addresses key issues. The proposed amendment clearly aligns with the mission and goals of the school. The response includes specific, evidence-based information that shows thorough preparation and viability of the plan.

Does Not Meet Standard: The response is substantially incomplete; demonstrates lack of preparation; is unsuited to the mission and goals of the school; or otherwise raises significant concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant's ability to implement it.

Recommendations for approval or denial of each amendment requested in an amendment application will be based on the materials submitted as well as the Commission's independent due diligence.

Characteristics of a strong response:
Clear, evidenced-based rationale for the proposed amendment that is aligned with the school's mission and goals, and supports the best interest of students. Academic results provide compelling support for the proposed amendment. (For Subparts B, C, F, G, and H only)
Realistic and detailed budget that explains the financial impact of the proposed amendment and clear evidence that the financial outlook of the school supports the costs associated with the proposed amendment. Thoughtful and realistic facility plans that accommodate the proposed amendment. (For Subparts B, C, and E only)

Detailed implementation plan with a realistic timeline that addresses the operational impact of the proposed amendment.
Clear evidence of support for the proposed amendment from parents, staff, and community partnersFOR EMERGENCY PETITIONS ONLY:
Compelling evidence of unanticipated extraordinary circumstances supporting the filing of an emergency amendment application.
Application Review:
 Meets or Exceeds Standard
 Does Not Meet Standard Strengths

Charter Contract Amendment Application Checklist:
The following components makeup a complete amendment application and shall be submitted in Anvilar.
 Part I of the application (fill in the blanks, check the applicable box(es) and provide the Background Statements)
 Most recent audit
 Balance sheet for the fiscal quarter ending thirty (30) or more days prior to submission of the application
 Budgets for the current fiscal year and two (2) succeeding fiscal years, assuming approval of the amendment
 Written communications with stakeholders regarding the proposed amendment
 Minutes of Board meeting approving the amendment and vote results
 Executed Signature Page
 Responses to questions in the applicable Subpart(s) of Part II

Example of Application:

(To be located in Anvilar; updated Charter.Tools)

Part I: General Information

All Applicants Must Complete This Section:
Name of Charter School:_____

Check the box for the category under which this Amendment Petition falls:

- Change in governance structure (including, but not limited to, a change in the nonprofit entity governing the school), or addition of or changes to the charter management organization
- The addition or removal of a grade level or levels
- Changes in student enrollment which fall outside of the minimum or maximum enrollment thresholds set forth in the charter school's charter contract
- The addition or removal of a plan to provide transportation to students attending the charter school
- Changes to the charter school's location or acquiring an additional facility
- Changes to the charter school's cost center status

Changes to the charter school's academic focus or goals set forth in the charter contract
☐ Provide qualitative and quantitative data to support the requested modification.
in the charter contract as material modifications or amendments.

Please specify:

Other material changes not covered by any of the above categories.
Please specify:
 EMERGENCY Petition. Please briefly describe the emergency: School Background:
Provide the following information about your school:

a) Campus address:
b) First school year in operation:
c) Grade levels and enrollment currently serving:
d) Grade levels and maximum enrollment to be served at maturation of charter contract, if different:
e) End of current charter term:

Background Statements:
This is an application to amend a school's charter contract by changing the item selected above. Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below:

1. Provide details on the selected amendment above and describe the requested change, including the school's rationale for the proposed change. Describe any planning that is requested change, including the school's rationale for the proposed change. Describe any planning that is already underway to prepare for the proposed amendment.
2. How will the proposed amendment support or enhance the school's mission and goals?
3. Describe how the proposed amendment will impact the school's finances. Explain any anticipated revenues or expenses arising from the proposed change. If expenses are anticipated, explain how the school will finance them. Please attach the school's (i) most recent audit, (ii) balance sheet for the fiscal quarter ending thirty (30) or more days prior to submission of the application, and (iii) budgets for the current fiscal year and two (2) succeeding fiscal years assuming the proposed amendment is approved.
4. How has the school informed its external stakeholders (e.g. local school board representatives, neighbors, community partners) and internal stakeholders (e.g. staff, parents) of the proposed amendment? Please attach any written communication (e.g., meeting minutes). Describe any not able support for or opposition to the proposed amendment. If concerns have been brought to the school or governing board's attention, what is the plan to address them?
5. When did the school's governing board approve the proposed amendment? Please attach minutes from the meeting and vote result
6. EMERGENCY PETITIONS ONLY: Explain the unanticipated extraordinary circumstances giving rise to the emergency amendment application. Identify when these circumstances were first discovered and brought to the attention of the governing board. Why did the governing board determine that the circumstances warranted an emergency that warranted the filing of an emergency petition?

Application to Amend a Charter Agreement Signature Page:
By our signatures below, we hereby certify that the governing body of the charter school identified herein has approved the submission of this application to amend a charter contract.
Contact Signature, Printed Name, Email, Date Completed Board Chair
Signature, Printed Name, Email, Date Completed

Part II: Specific Amendment Requests
Only Complete the Applicable Subpart for the Amendment the School is Seeking
Subparts:

A. Change in governance structure (including, but not limited to, a change in the nonprofit entity governing the school), or addition of or changes to the charter management organization
B. The addition or removal of a grade level or levels
C. Changes in student enrollment which fall outside of the minimum or maximum enrollment thresholds set forth in the charter school's charter contract
D. The addition or removal of a plan to provide transportation to students attending the charter school
E. Changes to the charter school's location
F. Change to the school's cost center status
G. Acquiring a Facility
H. Changes to the charter school's academic focus or goals set forth in the charter contract

I. Changes identified in the charter contract as material modifications or amendments
J. Other material changes not covered by any of the above categories.

Subpart A – Governance Structure *ONLY complete this section if applying to amend governance structure*

Amendments Covered by this Subpart: A charter school should use this Subpart A to apply for an amendment to the governance structures established in its Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and rules and policies for governance and operation of the school. These changes range broadly and may include, but are not limited to, a change in the non-profit entity governing the school or engaging or severing a relationship with a charter management organization (CMO or EMO).

Note: A charter school does not need to amend its charter when hiring a new school leader or board chair, unless specifically required by its charter contract.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below:

1. What is the school's current governance structure?
2. What is the proposed governance structure?
3. How will the proposed governance structure improve oversight of the school and benefit students?
4. If the governing body is proposing to change CMOs/EMOs or hire a CMO/EMO to oversee the day-to-day operations of the school, describe the following:
    a. An explanation of how and why the CMO/EMO was selected;
    b. A term sheet setting forth the proposed duration of the contract; roles and responsibilities of the school governing board, the school staff, and the CMO/EMO; scope of services and resources to be provided by the CMO/EMO; performance evaluation measures and mechanisms; detailed explanation of compensation to be paid to the CMO/EMO; financial controls and oversight; methods of contract oversight and enforcement; investment disclosure; and conditions for renewal and termination of the contract;
    c. A draft of the proposed management contract;
    d. Disclosure and explanation of any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the school governing board and proposed CMO/EMO or any affiliated business entities; and
    e. Describe the school's plan for implementing and transitioning to the proposed governance structure, including timelines.
5. Attach the most recent non-profit certification for the proposed governing body.
6. Subpart B – Grade Levels *ONLY complete this section if applying to add or remove grade level(s)*

Amendments Covered by this Subpart: A charter school should use this Subpart B to apply for the addition or removal of one or more grade levels to or from the grade levels set forth in its charter contract.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below. If a question is inapplicable, mark it N/A.

1. What is the school's current grade structure?
2. What is the proposed grade structure?
3. Describe and attach documentary evidence of the community need for the proposed change in grade structure.
4. How will the addition or removal of the grade level(s) improve the school's existing program and benefit students?
5. How will the school adapt its physical space to accommodate the addition or removal of grade level(s)?
6. How will the school adapt its staffing (e.g., teachers, educational aides, special population staff, other support staff, etc.) to accommodate the addition or removal of grade level(s)?
7. How does the school's record of achievement support the approval of this amendment? For purposes of this question, the Commission will review various metrics of success, including but not limited to the school's report card, and the school's performance framework, as well as the

school's financial information and duration of operations. 8. Complete the proposed enrollment summary for each grade level and each year remaining in the charter agreement in the tables

-Table: Number of Students, Grade Level, and Year along with anticipated demographics

Subpart C – Student Enrollment *ONLY complete this section if applying to amend enrollment*

Amendments Covered by this Subpart: A charter school should use this Subpart C to apply for a change in student enrollment outside of the minimum or maximum enrollment thresholds set forth in its charter contract.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below. If a question is inapplicable, mark it N/A.

1. What is the school's current enrollment by grade level and by year of the charter contract?
2. How will a change in enrollment improve the school's existing program and benefits students?
3. Describe and attach documentary evidence of the demand for this enrollment change. How does the scope ,pace, and need for this enrollment change align with current demographic and growth projections in the city?
4. Describe the school's post-lottery enrollment/waiting list process.
5. Discuss the school's enrollment trends over the past three (3) years, including any waitlist information.
6. How will the school adapt its physical space to accommodate a change in enrollment?
7. How will the school adapt its staffing (e.g., teachers, educational aides, special population staff, other support staff, etc.) to accommodate the change in enrollment?
8. Describe ways that the school ensures recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students with disabilities and English language learners, along with the school's target population.
9. How does the school's record of achievement support the approval of this amendment? For purposes of this question, the Commission will review various metrics of success, including but not limited to the school's report card, and the school's performance framework, as well as the school's financial information and duration of operations.
10. Complete the proposed enrollment summary foreach grade level and each year remaining in the charter contract.

Subpart D – Transportation *ONLY complete this section if applying to amend or adopt a transportation plan*

Amendments Covered by this Subpart: A charter school should use this Subpart D to apply for the addition or removal of a plan to provide transportation to students attending the charter school.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below. If a question is inapplicable, mark it N/A.

1. What is the school's current transportation plan?
2. What is the proposed transportation plan?
3. How will the proposed change to transportation improve school operations and benefit students?
4. If you are petitioning to add a transportation plan:
    i) Describe the plan for oversight of transportation operations (e.g., whether the school will provide its own transportation, contract out for transportation, request that a district provide transportation, or a combination thereof) and what school staff position will provide this daily oversight;
    ii) Describe how the school will transport students with special transportation needs and how that will impact the school's budget;
    iii) Describe how the school will ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations related to transportation services; and
    iv) Explain how the school will ensure compliance. If the school is petitioning to remove a transportation plan, explain how the school will ensure students can get to school, including students that require transportation services under IDEA.

Subpart E – Location *ONLY complete this section if applying to amend the school's location, acquiring a facility or changing the cost center status*

Amendments Covered by this Subpart: A charter school should use this Subpart E to apply for a change in its location, acquiring a facility, or changing its cost center status.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below.

1. What is the current address of the school?
2. What is the proposed new address of the school or of the proposed additional facility? 3P.lease elaborate on the need of the community in the new location (It must be within the geographic area that was originally approved.) or the need for the additional facility and/or cost center, which may include:
    a. Academic – the other public schools in the approved geographic area are underperforming and would benefit from your proposed charter school option.
    b. Over -Enrollment/Waiting Lists – the other public schools in the area are over-enrolled, overcrowded or have lengthy waiting lists and would benefit from your proposed charter school option.
    c. Programmatic – the other public schools in the area do not offer the program(s) your charter school would offer (e.g., language immersion; Montessori; agribusiness,etc.).
4. Describe the school's plan for transitioning to the new location.
5. What is the maximum occupancy at the new location or facility?
6. Identify the square footage of the new space and any reconfiguration of classes necessitated by the new space.
7. Is the proposed new facility a property that the school plans to purchase or lease? Quantify the difference between mortgage or lease payments for the current location and mortgage or lease payments for the new location, as well as the school's financial capacity to handle this change. If an additional cost center is needed, please explain why and whether the enrollment threshold has been met.
8. Describe how the school has engaged its community in the decision to relocate. Describe communications with staff and families and any potential concerns raised by them.

How will the proposed location modification impact the current student population and the anticipated student demographics as described in the school's current charter contract? How will the school ensure that students re-enroll?10. What contingencies does the school have in place in case the new location enrolls fewer students than anticipated?

11. How will the school support families that need transportation to the new location?
12. Describe the community outreach that has been done in the local community of the new school location.

Subpart F – Academic Focus *ONLY complete this section if applying to amend the school's academic focus or goals*

Amendments Covered by this Subpart: A charter school should use this Subpart F to apply for an amendment to the academic focus or goals set forth in its charter contract. "Academic focus" means a distinctive, thematic program such as math, science, arts, general academics, or an instructional program such as Montessori or Paideia. Include adding or removing a specific curriculum outlined in the charter agreement that would alter the school's academic focus (e.g., CORE Knowledge, STEM) or specific outcomes (e.g., International Baccalaureate Diploma). An amendment is not required for curriculum changes that do not alter the school's academic focus.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below. If a question is inapplicable, mark it N/A.

1. What are the school's current academic focus and goals?
2. What is the proposed change to the academic focus or goals?
3. How will the change in academic focus or goals improve the school's existing program and benefit students?
4. Describe how the school arrived at the decision to change its academic focusor goals, as well as the involvement of parents, staff, and other stakeholders.
5. Describe specific measurable academic goals for the modified academic focus, or describe how the modified goals will support the school's academic focus.
6. Describe the curriculum for all subject areas that will be used in conjunction with the modified academic focus or goals.

Subpart G – Material Modifications *ONLY complete this section if applying for a material modification identified in your charter contract*

Amendments Covered by this Subpart:

A charter school should use this Subpart G to apply for a change to a provision of its charter agreement that is

identified in the charter agreement as a material modification or amendment.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below.

1. What at provision of the current charter agreement is the school seeking to modify? Specify the applicable section and text.
2. What material modification or amendment to this provision is the school proposing? 3S.pecify the section of the charter contract that identifies the proposed change as "material," if different from the section identified in Question 1.
3. Describe how the school arrived at the decision to make this modification.
4. How will this change improve the school's existing program and benefit students?
5. Provide qualitative and quantitative data to support the requested modification.

Subpart H – Other Material Change *ONLY complete this section if applying for a material change not covered by any other Subpart*

Amendments Covered by this Subpart: A charter school should use this Subpart H to apply for a material change to its charter agreement that is not covered by any other Subpart.

Application: Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the questions below.

1. What provision of the charter agreement is the school seeking to modify? Specify the applicable section and text.
2. What is the proposed change to this provision?
3. Explain the material nature of the proposed change.
4. Describe how the school arrived at the decision to make this modification.
5. How will this change improve the school's existing program and benefit students?
6. Provide qualitative and quantitative data to support the requested modification.

FACILITY APPROVAL POLICY

Alabama Public Charter School Commission Facility Approval Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this "Facility Approval Policy" is to ensure that a charter school's physical facility, including any changes to a facility, whether permanent or short-term, are undertaken in compliance with applicable laws, the relevant charter contract, and with appropriate written approvals obtained in advance. Any facility utilized by a charter school shall comply with all aspects of federal, state, and local law, including all health/safety codes.

Scope

This Facility Approval Policy applies to any change in location where students are housed during the course of a school day, including both permanent and short-term facility changes. Permanent facility changes include, without limitation, a change of the principal location of the school or the expansion of an existing school site. Short-term facility changes include, without limitation, emergency and/or temporary relocations, short-term leasing arrangements, and the installation of modulars or other forms of temporary classroom units.

Rationale

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("APCSC") must ensure student safety and that it is involved in decisions regarding the use of facilities to verify each facility comports with applicable law. As an authorizer, the APCSC is responsible for "monitoring, in accordance with charter contract terms, the performance and legal compliance of public charter schools." *Ala. Code* § 16-6F-6(p)(5).

Process and Procedure

Permanent Facility Change: Permanent facility changes, such as a move to a new principal school location or the expansion of an existing facility, must be approved by the APCSC at a duly-noticed meeting. A request for a permanent facility change should be made in accordance with the APCSC's charter contract amendment policy.

Short-term Facility Change: Any request for a short-term (non-permanent) facility change, such as emergency and/or temporary relocations, short-term leasing arrangements, the installation of modulars or other forms of temporary classroom units, shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will investigate the request and shall, within a reasonable time after investigation, have the discretion to either (1) grant the request, (2) deny the request, or (3) submit the request to the APCSC for a decision at a duly-noticed meeting. The written request submitted to the Executive Director for a short-term facility change shall include the following:

- The rationale and explanation for the change
- A description of the proposed facility change
- The impact on enrollment, programming, etc.
- A proposed timeline for implementation

Any denial of a short-term facility change by the Executive Director is subject to appeal if requested in writing within fourteen (14) days of the denial. The APCSC will vote in a duly-noticed public meetings to either affirm the decision of the Executive Director or approve the request for short-term facility change (or an amended or modified version thereof). The appeal will be heard at the next APCSC meeting following the appeal.

Non-Compliance

Failure to obtain required approval prior to implementation of a permanent or short-term facility change may constitute a violation of the charter contract and result in corrective action at the discretion of the APCSC up to and including revocation.

FINANCIAL INDICATOR GUIDEBOOK

Financial Indicator Guidebook

Introduction

While charter schools in Alabama have the autonomy to manage their finances as they desire within the constraints dictated by state and federal law, as an authorizer the Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("Commission") plays a role in assuring that portfolio schools are financially able to meet the promises made to their students, parents, staff and community. Hence it is incumbent upon an authorizer to monitor a school's finances and be aware of any shortcomings or vulnerabilities arising out of a lack of funding, a failure to use funding proficiently, or lack of suitable policies and procedures in financial matters.

When monitoring a school's finances, the best practice is to use data from audited financial statements. In Alabama, financial audits are often not available until 9 to 12 months past the end of the fiscal year under the best circumstances, with delays possible if there are complications. With a rapidly developing charter sector and growing charter school enrollment, the Commission has adopted the use of unaudited information supplied by the schools monthly to the Alabama State Department of Education ("ALSDE") through the LEA Accounting function. This information is available 45 days after the end of each month and allows the Commission to have timely access to financial information in a uniform format with no further burden on schools. Commission staff use this information to calculate and monitor financial measures for portfolio schools at least once each year, with the intent of monitoring every six months or more often.

Commission staff review the financial audits of schools as they become available to reconcile the unaudited financial data with the audited data. It is worth noting that the legal framework under which a charter operates can vary, with nonprofits, benefactors, or other entities holding property, assets, or debt on behalf of the school under favorable (to the school) terms. Depending on the nature of these agreements, there may be obligations tied to the school that do not appear in the unaudited financial statements. A review of the financial audit can reveal this more complicated and individualistic nature of the financial situation of a school and point to areas of financial risk. While the most common type of agreement involves the school facility, obligations tied to retirement plans and other post-employment benefits ("OPEB") may also not appear in the unaudited financial statements. Reviewing the financial audit is a critical step in understanding the full financial picture for a school. The APCSC staff also calculate metrics from financial audits for inclusion in a supplementary section of the school report to provide a more complete picture of the school's financial position.

The Commission uses four indicators, with several measures for each indicator, to assess the financial health of a school. These indicators, and the measures within each indicator, are modified versions of the best practice indicators as established by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers ("NACSA"). The purpose of this document is to describe the financial indicators used by the Commission, the measures that are attached to each indicator, the calculation of these measures from the uniform, unaudited, financial statements, and the benchmarks established by the Commission for each measure. This document reflects the understanding of Commission staff at the time of writing and may be modified in the future. Much of the information in the document is taken liberally from the NACSA's *Guide to Performance Frameworks*, the revised version published in 2023.

Indicator 1: Near-term Measures

The Near-Term Measures indicator reflects the school's short-term financial position and whether the school can meet its obligations for this school year. Schools meeting this requirement have sufficient resources available to

meet obligations, while schools not meeting this requirement are at risk of financial hardship. Schools not meeting this requirement may need immediate corrective action by the Commission.

There are six measures for this indicator, with four being quantitative and one as qualitative. The one qualitative measure, Debt Default, is obligatory and failure to meet this requirement triggers an immediate "Does Not Meet" expectations rating for the indicator with further Commission investigation and perhaps intervention. Assuming a satisfactory rating for Debt Default, the remaining four quantitative measures are used in combination to determine a final rating for the indicator with the most weight placed on the Days Cash measure, followed by the Current Ratio measure. The Revenue Projection Ratio and Expense Projection Ratio point to signs of the budget being aligned with actual income and expenses and can help explain deficits in these other measures. For example, a Revenue Projection Ratio below 1.0 suggests that revenues have not kept pace for the time of the fiscal year, while an Expense Projection Ratio above 1.0 indicates that spending is above expected for the time of the fiscal year. The Revenue Projection and Expense Projection Ratios may vary early in a fiscal year but should converge towards one as the fiscal year progresses assuming accurate budgeting. The Average Daily Cost per Student is informational and the efficient use of public resources.

The table below gives scenarios for earning the different overall ratings for the Near-Term Measures indicator. This table is read downwards, with the overall rating for the indicator determined as the highest rating for which the school qualifies.

Near Term Measure Indicator Ratings Chart	
Meets	Debt Default = "No", Days Cash > 60; Debt Default = "No", Days Cash > 30, Current Ratio > 10.
Approaches	Debt Default = "No", Days Cash > 30, Current Ratio > 0.9;
Does Not Meet	*School does not qualify for a higher rating.*

Details on the calculations for each measure are given in the tables below.

Measure 1.a	**Current Ratio**	
Description	The Current Ratio depicts the relationship between a school's current assets and current liabilities and measures a school's ability to pay its obligations in the short term. A ratio above 1.0 indicates current assets exceed current liabilities, while a ratio below 1.0 suggests a school does not have current assets to cover all current liabilities. The Current Ratio can vary throughout the school year and is vulnerable to high values when current liabilities are small.	
Formulas	Current Ratio = Current Assets / Current Liabilities. Current Assets = Cash + Investments + Receivables + Interfund Receivables + Inventories + Other Assets in Gen, Special, Debt and Capital Columns on Exhibit F-I-A. Current Liabilities = Claims Payable + Interfund Payables + Other Liabilities in Gen, Special, Debt and Capital Columns on Exhibit F-I-A.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-I-A	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	1.1 ≤ Current Ratio 0.9 ≤ Current Ratio < 1.1 Current Ratio < 0.9

Measure 1.b	**Days Cash**	
Description	Days Cash estimates how long a school can pay ongoing operating expenses without an additional inflow of cash. This measure can vary throughout the school year and is influenced by large cash holdings or having average daily expenses calculated over a short time period.	
Formulas	Days Cash = Cash on Hand / Average Daily Expense. Cash on Hand = Cash in Gen, Special, Debt and Capital Columns on Exhibit F-I-A. Average Daily Expense = (Total expenditures in Gen, Special, Debt and Capital Columns on Exhibit F-II-A) / [365 *(Fiscal Period) / 12]. Fiscal Period = Month of the fiscal year.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-I-A Exhibit F-II-A	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	60 ≤ Days Cash 30 ≤ Days Cash < 60 Days Cash < 30

Measure 1.c	**Debt Default**	
Description	Debt Default indicates that a school has not met debt service payment obligations; or has failed to comply with financing covenants *and* the lender or financing source has notified a school that it is in default. Schools that are not meeting debt-related obligations, either through missed payments or underpayments of debt service, or violations of significant debt covenants, such as Days Cash and/or Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR), are at financial risk. Being in default triggers an immediate Commission evaluation.	
Formulas	No = The school has not defaulted on loan covenants and is not delinquent with debt service payments. Yes = The school has defaulted on a loan covenant or is delinquent on a debt service payment.	
Data Sources	Self-reported by the school.	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	No Not Applicable Yes

Measure 1.d	**Revenue Projection Ratio**	
Description	The Revenue Projection Ratio is the ratio between expected revenue and actual revenue for the given period in the fiscal year for general school operations. It measures a school's ability to budget effectively and predict revenue streams expected for the school year. The Revenue Projection Ratio assumes a linear revenue stream.	
Formulas	Revenue Projection Ratio = [Revenue Actual / Revenue Budgeted] / [Fiscal Period / 12]. Revenue Actual = Total revenue actual in General and Special columns of Exhibit F-III-A. Revenue Budgeted = Total revenue budgeted in General and Special columns of Exhibit F-III-A. These numbers should match the budget submission with any adjustments from budget amendments. Fiscal Period = Month of the fiscal year.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-III-A	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	*Informational*

Measure 1.e	Expense Projection Ratio	
Description	The Expense Projection Ratio is the ratio between expected expenses and actual expenses for general school operations. It measures a school's ability to budget effectively and predict expenses expected for the school year. The expenses projection ratio assumes a linear model for expenses.	
Formulas	Expense Projection Ratio = [Expense Actual / Expense Budgeted] / [Fiscal Period / 12] Expense Actual = Total expense actual in General and Special columns of Exhibit F-III-A. Expense Budgeted = Total expense budgeted in General and Special columns of Exhibit F-III-A. Fiscal Period = Month of the fiscal year.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-III-A	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	*Informational*

Measure 1.f	Average Daily Cost per Pupil	
Description	The Average Daily Cost per Pupil estimates the cost to educate a student for one day. It measures a school's efficiency and frugal use of public resources.	
Formulas	Average Daily Cost per Pupil = [Average Daily Expense] / [Total Enrollment] Average Daily Expense = (Total expenditures in Gen, Special, Debt and Capital Columns on Exhibit F-II-A) / [365 *(Fiscal Period) / 12].	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-II-A, Enrollment	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	*Informational*

Indicator 2: Sustainability Measures

The Sustainability Measures indicator depicts a school's financial position and viability over time. Schools that meet these measures demonstrate a low risk of financial distress in the future, while schools that fail to meet these measures are at higher risk of financial distress. Schools who fail to meet the Sustainability Measures indicator may need to change the school model, funding streams, or other mechanisms to systematically alter the financial conditions under which the school operates.

There are seven quantitative measures for the Sustainability Measures indicator, with the Current Net being both an informational measure and the most influential input to other measures. The Current Net measure is the "profit" or "loss" for the fiscal year and is calculated as the difference between the total revenues and total expenses. Net Per Student standardizes Current Net by dividing by the school enrollment which allows comparisons across differing school sizes and benchmarking for the portfolio. Total Margin and Aggregated 3-year Margin both give "rates of return" by dividing the Current Net by the total revenue across the past year or past three years respectively. Total Margin and Aggregated 3-year Margin give another way of standardizing the Current Net measure for comparison and benchmarking purposes. The Carry-Over measure gives the accumulated funding available at the start of the upcoming fiscal year and can compensate for an inadequate Current Net by providing temporary funding for operations during times of change. The corresponding Carry-Over per Student divides the Carry-Over measure by enrollment to standardize the measure. The Debt to Asset Ratio measures the ability for the school to secure financing by leveraging existing assets. It is a measure of capital assets available as collateral and

thus indicates the ability for the school to borrow money. Please note that the Debt to Asset Ratio measure is susceptible to the overall organizational structure of the school with partnering organizations – as the unaudited financial statements may not capture debt or assets held by a partnering organization on behalf of the school.

The table below gives scenarios for earning the different overall ratings for the Sustainability Measures indicator. This table is read downwards, with the overall rating for the indicator determined as the highest rating for which the school qualifies.

Sustainability Measures Indicator Ratings Chart	
Meets	Total Margin > 0.02; Aggregated 3-yr Margin > 0.02; Total Margin > 0, Aggregated 3-yr margin > 0, Debt-to-Asset Ratio < 0.9; Total Margin > 0, Aggregated 3-year Margin > 0, Carry-over per Student > $5000.
Approaches	Total Margin > 0, Debt-to-Asset Ratio < 0.9; Aggregated 3-year Margin > 0, Debt-to-Asset Ratio < 0.9;
Does Not Meet	*School does not qualify for a higher rating.*

Details on the calculations for each measure are given in the tables below.

Measure 2.a	**Current Net**	
Description	The Current Net is the difference in the revenue and expenditure over the previous fiscal year. A positive Current Net implies a school is adding to their carry-over funds, while a negative Current Net implies a school drew down carry-over funds over the fiscal period.	
Formulas	Current Net = Revenue – Expense. Revenue = Total Revenues + Other Fund Sources in Gen, Special, Debt and Capital columns on Exhibit F-II-A. Expense = Total Expenditures + Other Fund Uses in Gen, Special, Debt and Capital Columns on Exhibit F-II-A.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-II-A Period 12	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	*Informational*

Measure 2.b	**Carry-Over**	
Description	The Carry-Over is the total of all funds remaining from previous fiscal years plus the Current Net. Carry-Over represents the funds accumulated since founding and gives the base amount in "savings" entering the new fiscal year.	
Formulas	Carry-Over = Total ending fund balance in Gen, Spec, Debt and Capital columns on Exhibit F-II-A.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-II-A Period 12	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	*Informational*

Measure 2.c	**Total Margin**	
Description	The Total Margin is the "rate of return on the investment." It measures the proportion of revenues that are unused during the fiscal year. Total Margin is a dimensionless measure that allows comparison to other schools and benchmarking.	
Formulas	Total Margin = Current Net / Revenue Current Net = Revenue – Expense Revenue = Total Revenues + Other Fund Sources in Gen, Special, Debt and Capital columns on Exhibit F-II-A. Expense = Total Expenditures + Other Fund Uses in Gen, Special, Debt and Capital Columns on Exhibit F-II-A.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-II-A Period 12	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	0.02 < Total Margin -0.02 < Total Margin ≤ 0.02 Total Margin ≤ -.02

Measure 2.d	**Aggregated 3-year Margin**	
Description	The Aggregated 3-year Margin is the "rate of return on the investment" over the past three fiscal years. It measures the proportion of the last three years' revenues that were unused for expenses in the past three years. The Aggregated 3-year Margin is a dimensionless measure that allows comparison to other schools and benchmarking.	
Formulas	Aggregated 3-year Margin = Aggregated Net / Aggregated Revenue Aggregated Net = Sum of the Current Nets for past three fiscal years. Aggregated Revenue = Sum of the Revenues for the past three fiscal years. (see definitions in measure 2.c)	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-II-A Period 12 (past three fiscal years)	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	0.02 < Aggregated 3-year Margin -0.02 < Aggregated 3-year Margin ≤ 0.02 Aggregated 3-year Margin ≤ -0.02

Measure 2.e	**Debt to Asset Ratio**	
Description	The Debt to Asset Ratio is the proportion of a school's liabilities to its total assets that are reported on the unaudited financial statements. This measure depicts the extent to which a school relies upon borrowed funds for school operations.	
Formulas	Debt to Asset Ratio = Total Liabilities / Total Assets Total Liabilities = Total Liabilities from all columns on Exhibit F-I-A. Total Assets = Total Fund Equity from all columns on Exhibit F-I-A.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-I-A Period 12	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	Debt to Asset Ratio ≤ 0.9 0.9 < Debt to Asset Ratio ≤ 1.0 1.0 < Debt to Asset Ratio

Measure 2.f	**Net per Student**
Description	Net per Student gives the "profit" made per student for the fiscal year. It is the Current Net divided by the academic year's enrollment count. This measure standardizes for school size and allows comparisons and benchmarking.
Formulas	Net per Student = Current Net / Enrollment Count.

	Enrollment Count = Total enrollment for the school.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-I-A Period 12, PowerSchool report or Anvilar self-report.	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	*Informational*

Measure 2.g	**Carry-Over per Student**	
Description	Carry-Over per Student is the Carry-Over divided by enrollment size. This measure calculates the amount of money saved from previous fiscal years available on a per student basis for the upcoming school year. This measure standardizes for school size and allows comparisons and benchmarking.	
Formulas	Carry-Over per Student = Carry-Over / Enrollment Count. Enrollment Count = Total enrollment for the school.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-I-A Period 12, PowerSchool report or Anvilar self-report	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	*Informational*

Indicator 3: Flexibility Measures

The Flexibility Measures indicator captures a school's ability to financially adjust to unanticipated opportunities or expenditures. Schools that meet this requirement have unrestricted funding sources and can quickly shift these funds to handle unanticipated expenditures or have the capacity to promptly fundraise for identified needs. Schools that fail to meet this requirement have limited unrestricted funding and thus may have difficulty transitioning funds to identified needs.

This indicator also serves as a measure of financial risk when a school is reliant upon funding beyond State and Federal sources which may be difficult to sustain long-term. Schools who meet the requirement are less reliant on outside sources and thus can more readily adjust if those resources fail to materialize. Schools that fail to meet the expectation are more likely to need school-model level reductions if resources fail to materialize.

The Flexibility Measures indicator has one quantitative measure, Percent of State & Federal Funding, which gives the percentage of the total revenue that is provided by state and federal sources. State and federal funds are typically allocated for specific types of expenses, while local funding and donations have fewer restrictions. Donations may be earmarked for a specific need, but for Commission purposes are considered flexible as the need was identified at the local level and the donation was sought to meet the specific need.

The table below gives scenarios for earning the different overall ratings for the Flexibility Measures indicator. This table is read downwards, with the overall rating for the indicator determined as the highest rating for which the school qualifies.

Flexibility Measures Indicator Ratings Chart	
Meets:	80% ≤ Percent of State & Federal Funding ≤ 90%
Approaches:	*School does not qualify for a Meets expectations rating.*

Does Not Meet:	*Not Applicable*

Details on the calculations of the measure are given in the table below.

Measure 3.a	**Percent of State & Federal Funding**	
Description	The Percent of State & Federal Funding measure is the sum of state and federal funding amounts for the fiscal year divided by the total revenue - converted into a percent. It is the percentage of all funding from state and federal sources.	
Formulas	Percent of State & Federal Funding = (Gov Rev) / (Total Rev)*100. Gov Rev = State Revenue + Federal Revenue in all columns on F-II-A . Total Rev = State Revenue + Federal Revenue + Local Revenue + Other Revenue in all columns on F-II-A.	
Data Sources	Exhibit F-II-A Period 12	
Commission Targets	Meets: Approaches: Does Not Meet:	80% ≤ Percent of State & Federal Funding ≤ 90% *School does not qualify for a higher rating* *Not Applicable*

Indicator 4: Financial Management and Oversight Measures

The Financial Management and Oversight Measures indicator captures the quality of a school's financial practices to operate as a public entity and assesses the processes followed to mitigate financial risk. A school that performs well uses GAAP, has multiple people in place to monitor the financial position of the school, and is fiscally transparent. Schools that perform poorly have loose or ill-defined financial practices, fail to follow the practices in place, or have poor financial reporting processes to stakeholders.

The Financial Management and Oversight Measures indicator has four qualitative measures, each of which are instrumental for sound financial oversight. The Governance measure is concerned with the governing board's oversight, both with respect to the quality of the financial information being provided to board members, and with the board's discussions of the financial information and decisions made considering the school's finances. The Financial Policies measure captures the quality of the school's written financial policies and adherence to these policies. The Financial Reporting measure assesses the school's financial reporting to stakeholders - including the public, the Commission, other state agencies, and federal actors. The Audit Findings measure assesses whether a school's reported financial statements represent fairly, with all material respects, the respective financial position of the school.

The table below gives scenarios for earning the different overall ratings for the Financial Management and Oversight Measures indicator. This table is read downwards, with the overall rating for the indicator determined as the highest rating for which the school qualifies.

Financial Management and Oversight Measures Indicator Ratings Chart	
Meets	All four measures "Meet" expectations. Three of the four measures "Meet" expectations with the remaining measure not being "Does not Meet"

Approaches	Three of the four measures "Meets" expectations, and the remaining measure "Does Not Meet" expectations; Two of the four measures "Meets" expectations, with neither of the other two being "Does Not Meet" expectations.
Does Not Meet	*School does not qualify for a higher rating.*

Details for each measure are given in the tables below.

Measure 4.a	**Governance**	
Description	The Governance measure captures the governing board's oversight on financial matters. The measure reflects both the quality of the information provided to the school board by leadership, and the board's use of that information to guide the school along a sustainable financial path.	
Data Sources	School Board meeting agendas and minutes, School Board meeting observations by APCSC staff, Documentation submitted to the Commission, Compliance Monitoring reports, Audit Findings related to board oversight of finances.	
Commission Targets	Meets: (all must be met)	The board is provided with a monthly financial report for 75% or more of the months in the fiscal year as recorded in the board meeting minutes. The report includes at a minimum the Combined Balance Sheet (Exhibit F-I-A) and the Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances (Exhibit F-II-A). The board discusses the financial position of the school at 50% or more meetings with that discussion reflected in the minutes. The board approves the fiscal year budget and all budget amendments with a vote recorded in the board meeting minutes. The board discusses and approves all major purchases or commitments ($50K+ or limit otherwise defined in the school's financial policies). The board discusses all new positions being added to the staffing chart. The board discusses a salary schedule for school employees or salary adjustments for school employees at least once during the fiscal year with a vote for any proposal recorded in the board meeting minutes.
	Approaches: (all must be met)	The board is provided with a monthly financial report that covers the majority of the months in the fiscal year. The report includes at a minimum the Combined Balance Sheet (Exhibit F-I-A) and the Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances (Exhibit F-II-A). The board approves the fiscal year budget and all budget amendments with a vote recorded in the meeting minutes. The board discusses all new positions being added to the staffing chart.

		The board discusses and approves all major purchases or commitments ($50K+ or limit otherwise defined in the schools' financial policies).
	Does Not Meet:	*The school does not qualify for a higher rating*

Measure 4.b	**Financial Policies**	
Description	The Financial Policies measure assesses the schools written financial policies and the school's adherence to those policies. Financial policies, or changes to those policies, should be school board approved.	
Data Sources	Publicly available school board bylaws and financial policies documents, Documentation submitted to the Commission, Vender agreements, Compliance Monitoring reports, Audit Findings related to financial policies.	
Commission Targets	Meets: (all must be met)	The school has written financial policies available for Commission review that follow GAAP. These policies include details on procurement, including use of an RFP process when appropriate. There are no Findings concerning financial policies and adherence to those policies from the most recent compliance monitoring reports. There are no Findings concerning financial policies and adherence to those policies from the most recent financial audit. The school has identified personnel for CSFO and/or bookkeeper. If the school uses a vender for the CSFO functions, a school employee is identified who monitors finances and can interact with the vender. This employee must be different than the CEO/Superintendent who should also have access to financial information.
	Approaches (all must be met)	The school has written financial policies available for Commission review that follow GAAP. Any Findings concerning financial policies and adherence to those policies from the most recent compliance monitoring reports have a corrective action plan with evidence of correction. Any Findings concerning financial policies and adherence to those policies from the most recent financial audit have a corrective action plan with evidence of correction. The school has identified personnel for CSFO and/or bookkeeper. If the school uses a vender for the CSFO functions, a school employee is identified who monitors finances and can interact with the vender. This employee must be different from the CEO/Superintendent who should also have access to financial information.
	Does Not Meet:	*The school does not qualify for a higher rating*

Measure 4.c	**Financial Reporting**
Description	The Financial Reporting measure assesses the school's adherence to providing financial information to stakeholders - including the public, the Commission, other state agencies, and federal entities.

Data Sources	Postings of financial information on the school's website, Documentation submitted to the Commission, Virtual Compliance Monitoring reports, Information reported to the ALSDE, Compliance Monitoring reports, Audit Findings related to financial reporting.	
Commission Targets	Meets: (all must be met)	The school's website has the current fiscal year budget posted. The two dates for public input into the budget are listed on the website. Monthly financial reports for the fiscal year and the previous fiscal year are posted on the website, with the most recent report being within the last 90 days. These reports include: Combined Balance Sheet (Exhibit F-I-A); Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances (Exhibit F-II-A); Budget vs Actual (F-III-A, B, C). A link to the publicly available financial reports supported by the ALSDE satisfies this requirement. Monthly check registers for the fiscal year and the previous fiscal year are posted on the website, with the most recent check register being within the last 90 days. The most recent financial audit is posted on the school's website. The school is in good standing with financial reporting to the Commission. There have been no adverse reports to the Commission concerning financial reporting by state or federal agencies over the past twelve months. There are no Findings concerning financial reporting within CM reports or the most recent financial audit.
	Approaches: (all must be met)	The school's website has the current fiscal year budget posted. Monthly financial reports for the fiscal year and the previous fiscal year are posted, with the most recent report being within the past six months. These reports include: Combined Balance Sheet (Exhibit F-I-A); Combined Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances (Exhibit F-II-A); Budget vs Actual (F-III-A, B, C). A link to the publicly available financial reports supported by the ALSDE satisfies this requirement. Monthly check registers for the fiscal year and the previous fiscal year are posted, with the most recent check register being within the past six months. The school is in good standing with financial reporting to the Commission. There have been no adverse reports to the Commission concerning financial reporting by state or federal agencies over the past six months. All Findings concerning financial reporting within CM reports or the most recent financial audit have a corrective action plan in place.
	Does Not Meet:	*The school does not qualify for a higher rating*

Measure 4.d	**Audit Findings**	
Description	The Audit Findings measure assesses whether a school's reported financial statements represent fairly, with all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities and each major fund of the school. The measure also reports any audit Findings that have not been reflected in the other measures for this indicator.	
Data Source	Financial audit.	
Commission Targets	Meets: (all must be met)	The audit report states the financial documents provided represent, in all material respects, the financial position of the governmental activities and each major fund of the school (an unqualified or unmodified opinion). Any and all audit Findings are already used as evidence for other measures for this indicator. There were no repeated Findings from previous audits.
	Approaches: (all must be met)	The audit report states the financial documents provided represent, in all material respects, the financial position of the governmental activities and each major fund of the school (an unqualified or unmodified opinion).
	Does Not Meet:	*The school does not qualify for a higher rating*

MERGER POLICY



Alabama Public Charter School Commission Merger Policy

The Alabama Public Charter Commission has adopted a policy for a possible merger. A merger occurs when two or more existing nonprofit corporations authorized by the Commission combine, with the corporate existence of one of the nonprofit corporations continuing as the surviving corporation while the corporate existence of the other nonprofit corporation(s) terminates; or when two or more charter schools operating as Local Education Agencies ("LEAs") under the same nonprofit corporation seek consolidation. The Commission will consider consolidations that are solely contractual in nature when appropriate and consistent with the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act, Ala. Code § 16-6F-1, *et seq*. (the "Act").

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A CHARTER SCHOOL MERGER APPLICATION

The instructions below are for completing and submitting an application to merge two or more charter schools authorized by the Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("Commission"). Merger applications will be considered for action at a public meeting of the Commission. Applications must be submitted no later than sixty (60) days in advance of the Commission meeting at which the merger will be considered. Any approved merger is conditional upon meeting all requirements set forth in the merger agreement and applicable Alabama law. Merger applications should be submitted well in advance of the anticipated effective date to allow adequate time for review and implementation.

The Commission strongly recommends that each merging entity seek independent legal advice regarding the merger process, including compliance with applicable Alabama nonprofit corporation laws, before submitting an application.

Below are the steps a charter school should follow to complete a merger application:

- All applicants must complete Part I, General Information, which includes:
  - Providing the names of all nonprofit organizations and charter schools affected by the merger.
  - Identifying board presidents or chairpersons for each affected school.
  - Providing the current charter contract terms for each school.
  - Documenting the date(s) of governing board meeting(s) approving the merger.
  - Signing the completed application.
- In Part II, applicants must complete all applicable sections addressing school configuration, governance, community engagement, finance, academic programming, and staff impact.
- The completed application and all required attachments must be submitted through the Commission's designated submission portal (Anvilar). The submission link will be provided upon request.
- Failure to submit a complete application, including all required attachments, by the applicable deadline will result in the application not being reviewed at the scheduled Commission meeting.

Merger Timeline:

To accommodate deadlines established by the Alabama State Department of Education ("ALSDE"), approved mergers will generally take effect on July 1st of the planned merger year. Applications should be submitted at least twelve (12) months in advance of the intended effective date to allow time for Commission review, ALSDE coordination, and all required legal filings. The Commission will strive to act on a complete merger application within sixty (60) days of its submission. The Commission can, in its discretion and in exceptional circumstances, consider merger applications on an expedited or emergency basis; however, charter schools should strive to adhere to the timelines set forth herein.

The following timeline summarizes the key milestones in the merger process:

Milestone	Action Required
Prior to the application deadline of the year before the planned merger	School governing board(s) take action to merge; compliance with applicable Alabama nonprofit merger laws
Application Deadline (60 days before Commission meeting)	Completed Merger Application due to the Commission
Commission Meeting	Merger approved or denied at a public meeting
July 1 of the planned merger year	Approved merger effective; new charter contract executed; applicable filings made with the Alabama Secretary of State and ALSDE

If the nonprofit governing boards are merging as part of this process, applicants must comply with all applicable provisions of Alabama law governing nonprofit mergers. The Commission strongly recommends that each merging entity seek legal counsel.

Rating Criteria

Evaluators will use the following criteria when reviewing each merger application:

Meets or Exceeds Standard: The response thoroughly addresses all key issues. The proposed merger clearly aligns with the mission and goals of the schools and serves the best interests of students. The response includes specific, evidence-based information demonstrating thorough preparation and the viability of the merger plan.

Does Not Meet Standard: The response is substantially incomplete; demonstrates a lack of preparation; is ill-suited to the mission and goals of the schools; or otherwise raises significant concerns about the viability of the merger plan or the applicants' capacity to implement it.

Recommendations for approval or denial of a merger application will be based on the materials submitted as well as the Commission's independent due diligence.

Characteristics of a Strong Application

- A clear, evidence-based rationale for the proposed merger that is aligned with the schools' respective missions and goals and supports the best interests of students.
- Academic results from both schools that provide compelling support for the proposed merger.
- A realistic and detailed budget demonstrating the financial impact of the merger and clear evidence that the financial condition of the surviving entity supports the costs associated with the merger.
- A detailed implementation plan with a realistic timeline that addresses the operational impact of the merger on students, staff, and community.
- Clear evidence of support for the proposed merger from parents, staff, and community partners of both schools.
- Demonstrated capacity of the surviving governing board to oversee the merged school(s).

Merger Application Checklist:

The following components constitute a complete merger application and must be submitted through Anvilar:

☐ Part I of the application (general information, fill-in fields, and background information)
☐ Minutes from each governing board's meeting approving the merger
☐ Plan of merger detailing transfer of all assets and liabilities of each affected entity
☐ Most recent financial audit for each school
☐ Balance sheet for the fiscal quarter ending thirty (30) or more days prior to submission for each school
☐ Five-year budget projection for the merged school
☐ First-year cash flow projection for the merged school
☐ Proposed bylaws of the surviving governing board
☐ Proposed meeting calendar for the surviving governing board
☐ Evidence of community outreach and stakeholder engagement
☐ Written communications with stakeholders regarding the proposed merger
☐ Corrective action plan for any audit findings from the past two (2) years (if applicable)
☐ Most recent management letter from each school's independent auditor
☐ Teacher certification documentation for all teachers
☐ Executed Signature Page
☐ Inventory of equipment and assets purchased with CSP funds (if applicable)

Part I: General Information

All Applicants Must Complete This Section

Name(s) of Nonprofit Organization(s):

_____

Name(s) of Charter School(s) Affected:

_____

Board President(s)/Chairperson(s):

_____

Current Charter Contract Term(s) (by school):

_____

Date(s) of Board Meeting(s) Approving the Merger:

_____

School Background

Provide the following information for each school affected by the proposed merger:

School 1:

- Campus address:
- First school year in operation:
- Grade levels and current enrollment:
- End of current charter term:

School 2:

- Campus address:
- First school year in operation:
- Grade levels and current enrollment:
- End of current charter term:

(Add additional schools as needed.)

Background Statements

This is an application to merge the charter schools identified above. Please submit a narrative and related attachments addressing each of the following questions:

1. Provide a brief summary of the proposed merger and the rationale for merging. Address how the merger will benefit students, affect the mission and vision of the schools, improve the governing boards' capacity, and improve school operations and finances.
2. Identify any anticipated challenges resulting from the merger and describe how those challenges will be addressed.
3. Describe the financial impact of the proposed merger. Explain any anticipated revenues or expenses, and explain how the surviving entity will finance any additional costs. Attach the most recent financial audit and balance sheet for each school.
4. How has the school informed internal stakeholders (e.g., staff, parents) and external stakeholders (e.g., community partners, local school board representatives) of the proposed merger? Describe any notable support for or opposition to the merger. Attach any relevant written communications and meeting minutes.
5. When did each school's governing board approve the proposed merger? Attach the minutes and vote results from each board meeting.

Application to Merge Signature Page
By our signatures below, we hereby certify that the governing body of each charter school identified herein has approved the submission of this merger application. We understand that a merger is not effective until the Commission approves the merger and all required filings have been made with the Alabama Secretary of State (if applicable) and the ALSDE. We further understand that upon approval by the Commission, a new charter contract or charter contract amendment must be executed for the merger to be effective.
Additional signature lines may be added as needed.

Signature of Board President/Chairperson (School 1):
_____
Printed Name: _____
Email: _____
Date: _____

Signature of Board President/Chairperson (School 2):
_____
Printed Name: _____
Email: _____
Date: _____

<u>Part II: Merger Application Detailed Sections</u>
Applicants must complete all applicable sections below. Because each school merger presents unique circumstances, the Commission may request additional information or documentation in order to complete its review.

Section A: Executive Summary (narrative not to exceed 3 pages)
1. Provide a brief summary of the proposed merger.
2. Address the rationale for merging by responding to each of the following:
    - How will merging benefit students?
    - How will merging affect the mission and vision of the school(s)?
    - How will merging improve the governing boards' capacity to govern the schools?
    - How will merging improve the schools' operations and finances?

- What additional benefits are anticipated as a result of the merger?

3. Indicate any anticipated challenges resulting from the merger and describe how those challenges will be addressed.

Section B: Nonprofit Entity Configuration

1. Provide a copy of the minutes of each nonprofit governing board showing approval of the merger.
2. Provide a plan that details the transfer of all assets and liabilities (both physical and monetary) of each nonprofit corporation or LEA being merged. This plan must specify that no liabilities are being avoided and no assets are removed through the merger.
   - If merging nonprofit corporations, this plan must comply with applicable Alabama nonprofit corporation law. The Commission strongly recommends each merging entity consult legal counsel.
   - If not merging nonprofit corporations, provide a plan that details the transfer of all assets and liabilities to the surviving LEA.

Section C: School Configuration

1. Use the table below to describe the current configuration and proposed changes for each school affected by the merger. Add rows as needed.

School Name	Current Grades Offered	Maximum Approved Grades	Current Enrollment	Maximum Approved Enrollment	Proposed Changes Post-Merger
School 1					
School 2					
School 3					

2. Describe any changes to recruitment and enrollment policies that will result from the merger.

Section D: Governance

Use the table below to describe the board configuration of the surviving entity post-merger. Add rows as needed. If any proposed board members are not current board members of one of the merging schools, provide background information on those individuals.

School Name	Name of Current Board Members	Name of Board Member Post-Merger (with contact info)	Position Post-Merger (e.g., Chair, Treasurer, Member)	Terms of Board Members Post-Merger
School 1				
School 2				
School 3				

1. Provide the following governing board materials for the surviving nonprofit entity:
    - Proposed bylaws; and
    - Proposed meeting calendar.
2. Describe any additional anticipated impact on school governance post-merger.
3. Provide evidence of the surviving board's capacity to oversee the merged school(s).
4. Describe any proposed changes to education service provider contracts including but not limited to:
    - Changes to fees;
    - Changes to services provided;
    - Contract consolidation; and/or
    - Changes to the relationship between the school and the nonprofit entity.

Section E: School Community

1. Describe the outreach and engagement conducted to date to solicit community feedback on the proposed merger.
2. Provide evidence of community feedback (including results) received thus far regarding the proposed merger.

Section F: Finance

1. Provide a five-year budget projection for the merged school.
2. Provide a first-year cash flow projection for the merged school.
3. Describe any impact of the proposed merger on:
    - Accounting software;
    - Administrative functions (front office and back office);
    - Policy and procedure manuals;
    - Food, transportation, and health services;
    - Purchasing and contracting;
    - Insurance;
    - Dissolution procedures; and
    - Financial audits, including single audits.
4. If applicable, provide a corrective action plan addressing any annual financial audit findings from the past two (2) years from all entities.
5. Provide a copy of the most recent management letter received by each school from its independent auditor, along with documentation of steps taken to resolve each deficiency raised in the letter.
6. If applicable, provide a narrative addressing steps taken to resolve any issues raised on the last performance framework for each school.

Section G: Academic Policies and Programming

Describe how the merger will affect students with respect to:

1. Discipline policies, including those applicable to students with disabilities;
2. Transfer of students between schools;
3. Academic programming and alignment with Alabama state standards and the current school model;
4. Instructional design, type of learning environment, class size and structure, curriculum, and teaching methods;
5. Provision of academic programs to at-risk students, including students with disabilities, English Language Learners, students who are academically behind, and gifted students;
6. Co-curricular and extracurricular programs and how those programs will be funded and delivered post-merger; and
7. Any additional anticipated impact on students post-merger.

Section H: Staff

1. Describe how the merger will affect staff with respect to:
    - Hiring and termination processes;
    - Utilization of staff at the merged school; and
    - Any additional anticipated impact on staff post-merger.

2. Provide evidence that the merged school will retain sufficient staffing to implement the key design elements of the school's mission and vision.

3. Provide certifications for all teachers and an analysis of how the merged school will comply with applicable Alabama teacher certification requirements under the Act and ALSDE regulations.

Section I: Charter School Program Grant

1. Identify whether any school participating in the merger has received federal Charter Schools Program (CSP) funds, either directly or through a state entity.
2. For each school that received CSP funds, provide:
    - The grant award period;
    - The amount awarded;
    - The current status of the grant (active or closed);
    - A description of any equipment, materials, curriculum, technology, or other assets acquired with CSP funds.
3. Describe how assets purchased with CSP funds will be accounted for and transferred following the merger. Applicants must demonstrate compliance with all applicable federal grant requirements and inventory controls.
4. Describe how student records, financial records, procurement records, and grant documentation associated with any CSP-funded activities will be maintained and retained following the merger.
5. If a CSP grant remains active at the time of the merger, provide:
    - Evidence that the merger will not adversely affect the approved grant project;
    - A plan for continuing grant activities;
6. Certify that the merger will not be used to circumvent federal grant requirements, repayment obligations, audit findings, or other conditions associated with CSP funding.

REPLICATION AND EXPANSION POLICY

Alabama Public Charter School Commission Charter Replication and Expansion Policy

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.

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.

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:

- Provides evidence when requested to confirm compliance with all provisions of the Act and other state and federal laws.
- 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
- 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:
    - 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.

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.

COMMUNICATIONS APPROVAL WORKFLOW PROCEDURES POLICY

Communications Approval Workflow Procedures

Internal Administrative Procedures

Purpose and Scope

These procedures establish the internal administrative framework governing the coordination, review, approval, and distribution of official communications issued on behalf of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission (APCSC).

These procedures are intended to promote coordinated public messaging, organizational awareness, operational alignment, and consistent communications practices throughout APCSC operations. They also provide a structured framework for executive oversight, communications workflow management, and the effective administration of official communications activities conducted on behalf of APCSC.

These procedures apply to official APCSC communications including, but not limited to, press releases, media statements, public statements, newsletters, social media communications, website updates, digital communications, stakeholder communications, grant related communications, public informational materials, organizational announcements, and externally distributed APCSC messaging.

These procedures are intended to establish clear expectations regarding communications operations, communications approval procedures, public messaging coordination, media response procedures, and internal communications workflow processes.

Definitions

For purposes of these procedures, the following definitions apply:

Official APCSC Communications
Communications issued on behalf of APCSC regarding Commission activities, organizational initiatives, public information, operational matters, approved announcements, public statements, or official APCSC business.

Communications Operations
Administrative communications activities involving drafting, review coordination, publication coordination, messaging support, communications planning, media coordination, and distribution of official APCSC communications materials.

Administrative Review
Internal review procedures intended to support operational awareness, communications consistency, professionalism, factual accuracy, and alignment with APCSC priorities and communications expectations.

Public Statements
Externally distributed communications representing official APCSC messaging, organizational positions, Commission activities, or public information distributed on behalf of APCSC.

Digital Communications
Electronic communications including website updates, social media communications, newsletters, electronic announcements, digital graphics, and online informational materials.

Emergency Communications

Time sensitive communications involving urgent operational matters, emergency notifications, safety related messaging, or rapidly developing situations requiring expedited communications coordination.

Grant Related Communications
Communications involving Charter Schools Program (CSP) Grant activities, federally required communications, grant announcements, grant visibility materials, grant related website postings, or approved communications initiatives.

Communications Governance Structure

Official APCSC communications shall operate through a centralized administrative coordination structure under the direction of the APCSC Executive Director.

Executive Director Responsibilities
The APCSC Executive Director serves as the Commission's chief administrative officer and is responsible for the strategic oversight, approval, and coordination of organizational communications and operations, including:

- Supervising and directing Commission staff.
- Coordinating executive review and approval processes.
- Ensuring operational alignment with Commission goals, policies, and priorities.
- Providing oversight and approval of public messaging and official communications.
- Establishing and enforcing communications approval procedures.
- Reviewing and approving media engagement and external communications activities.
- Ensuring consistency, accuracy, and professionalism across all organizational communications.

Communications and Marketing Specialist Responsibilities
The Communications and Marketing Specialist supports the implementation and coordination of the Commission's communications and marketing efforts, including:

- Drafting and distributing press releases and media materials.
- Coordinating newsletters and stakeholder communications.
- Overseeing social media platforms and content development.
- Scheduling, publishing, and monitoring communications across multiple channels.
- Providing communications support to internal and external stakeholders.
- Coordinating communication workflows and project timelines.
- Promoting and maintaining brand identity and messaging consistency.
- Maintaining communications records and supporting documentation.

The Communications Specialist operates under the direction of the APCSC Executive Director and CSP Grant Project Director regarding official APCSC communications activities and approval procedures.

Charter Schools Program (CSP) Communications Specialist Responsibilities
The CSP Communications Specialist may coordinate communications and outreach activities related to the Charter Schools Program (CSP) Grant, consistent with federal grant requirements and APCSC communication protocols. Responsibilities may include:

- Developing and coordinating grant-related press releases and public announcements.
- Supporting compliance with federally required communications, acknowledgments, and public notices.
- Creating and disseminating approved promotional and informational materials.
- Submitting CSP-related website content and updates.
- Supporting communications with grant stakeholders, partners, and participating schools.
- Implementing grant visibility and public awareness initiatives.
- Managing CSP-related digital communications, including email campaigns and social media content.
- Assisting with the documentation and reporting of communications activities required under the grant.

CSP grant communications remain subject to established APCSC review and approval procedures coordinated through the APCSC Executive Director and APCSC Grant Director.

Commissioners, staff members, and affiliated representatives may recommend communications topics, organizational announcements, public recognitions, informational items, or stakeholder engagement opportunities through established APCSC communications coordination procedures.

Communications Approval Authority

All official APCSC communications distributed on behalf of the Commission shall be subject to established administrative review and approval procedures coordinated through the APCSC Executive Director and APCSC Communications Specialist.

The APCSC Executive Director maintains final administrative review authority for official APCSC communications unless otherwise delegated through established operational procedures.

Official APCSC communications should support:

- Organizational consistency
- Professionalism
- Operational awareness
- Coordinated public representation
- Communications accuracy
- Messaging alignment with APCSC priorities

Communications requiring additional operational coordination may involve review by:

- Designated leadership personnel
- Legal counsel
- Administrative representatives
- Commission leadership when appropriate

Communications Approval Authority

Communication Type	Draft Coordination	Administrative Review
Press Releases	APCSC Communications Specialist	APCSC Executive Director
Social Media Communications	APCSC Communications Specialist	Executive Director or Designee
Website Updates	APCSC Executive Director ALSDE Liaison APCSC Communication Specialist CSP Grant Communication Specialist	APCSC Executive Director or Designee
Grant Related Communications	CSP Communications Specialist	APCSC Executive Director CSP Grant Project Director
Newsletters	APCSC Communications Specialist	APCSC Executive Director
Public Statements	APCSC Executive Director APCSC Commission Chair and Co-Chair	APCSC Executive Director

	Individual Designated by APCSC Executive Director	

Official communications shall not be distributed publicly until established review, and approval procedures have been completed.

Communications Request Procedures

Communication requests should be coordinated through established APCSC communications procedures and should include sufficient information to support drafting, review, formatting, publication coordination, and administrative approval procedures.

Whenever operationally possible, requests involving website updates, public postings, digital communications, newsletters, social media communications, or grant related communications should be submitted with adequate lead time to support:

- Communications coordination
- Formatting preparation
- Operational review
- Accessibility review when appropriate
- Publication scheduling
- Administrative approval coordination

Requests should include, when applicable:

- Purpose of communication
- Requested communication platform
- Intended audience
- Requested publication timeline
- Supporting documentation
- Operational considerations
- Organizational relevance

Certain operational, grant related, or time sensitive communications may require expedited coordination depending on compliance deadlines, organizational priorities, or operational necessity.

Communications Request Coordination Expectations

Request Type	**Recommended Coordination Timeline**
Website Content Requests	3–5 Business days when possible
Social Media Posting Requests	Same Business Day
Press Release Requests	1-2 Business days when possible
Newsletter Content Requests	Based on publication schedule
Grant Related Communications	Based on operational or grant deadlines

These coordination timelines are intended to support operational awareness, communications preparation, review coordination, and publication scheduling whenever possible.

Press Release Coordination Procedures

Official APCSC press releases shall be coordinated through APCSC communications operations under the direction of the APCSC Executive Director.

Press release coordination may involve:
- Executive by APCSC Executive Director
- Communications formatting
- Messaging review
- Publication preparation
- Media distribution coordination

Press releases involving Commission actions, organizational approvals, public recognitions, major announcements, grant awards, or public matters will be shared with Commission leadership or commissioners for awareness and coordination purposes prior to public distribution when appropriate.

The Communications and Marketing Specialist will assist with drafting, formatting, distribution preparation, and publication of coordination of official APCSC press releases under the direction of the APCSC Executive Director. The CSP Communications Specialist will assist with grant related press releases, federally required grant communications, and CSP related announcements under established APCSC approval procedures under the direction of APCSC Executive Director and Grant Project Director.

No official APCSC press release shall be publicly distributed without completion of established administrative review and approval procedures.

VII. Newsletter Coordination Procedures

APCSC communications specialist will distribute recurring organizational newsletters to support stakeholder engagement, public awareness, organizational transparency, and communication regarding APCSC initiatives and charter school related information.

Newsletter communications may include:
- Organizational updates
- School recognitions
- Grant announcements
- Commission actions
- Public informational updates
- Approved communications highlights
- Stakeholder information
- Approved charter school related updates

Newsletter content submissions should be coordinated through the Communications and Marketing Specialist and should include sufficient supporting information and requested publication considerations when appropriate. Whenever operationally possible, newsletter submissions should be provided sufficiently in advance of publication deadlines to support:
- Drafting coordination
- Formatting preparation
- Communications review
- Administrative approval procedures
- Publication scheduling

Newsletter content remains subject to established APCSC review and approval procedures coordinated through APCSC Communications Specialist and the APCSC Executive Director.

VIII. Website and Digital Communications Procedures

Digital communications distributed through APCSC platforms shall operate under established APCSC communications review and approval procedures.

Digital communications may include:

- Website updates
- Social media communications
- Newsletters
- Digital graphics
- Public informational postings
- Electronic announcements
- Grant related postings
- Stakeholder messaging

Website updates, digital postings, and public informational materials may require:

- Administrative review
- Formatting coordination
- Publication scheduling
- Accessibility review when appropriate
- Operational verification
- Grant compliance coordination when applicable

Whenever operationally possible, requests involving website updates or digital communications should be submitted with reasonable lead time to support coordinated review and publication procedures.

All digital communications should maintain:

- Branding consistency
- Professionalism
- Communications accuracy
- Organizational alignment
- Visual consistency with APCSC standards

IX. Official Statements and Public Messaging

Official APCSC statements and communications issued on behalf of the Commission shall be coordinated through authorized APCSC communications channels and established administrative procedures.

Authorized spokesperson responsibilities may include:

- APCSC Executive Director
- Designated communications representatives
- Authorized designees operating within assigned responsibilities
- Commission leadership when appropriate

No employee, contractor, representative, or affiliated party should independently issue official APCSC communications representing APCSC positions unless authorized through established APCSC administrative procedures.

X. Media Relations and Public Statement Coordination

The APCSC Executive Director serves as the primary administrative authority responsible for coordinating official APCSC public messaging, media response procedures, and communications review processes.

Media inquiries involving official APCSC matters should be routed through APCSC communications operations and the APCSC Executive Director to support operational awareness, coordinated messaging, and communications consistency.

The Communications and Marketing Specialist may assist with:
- Drafting media responses
- Preparing press statements
- Coordinating interviews
- Communications logistics
- Communications distribution procedures
- Media coordination support

The CSP Communications Specialist may assist with media coordination and public communications specifically related to Charter Schools Program (CSP) Grant initiatives, federally required grant communications, approved grant related messaging, and CSP announcements under established APCSC approval procedures.

When appropriate, communications involving significant organizational announcements, Commission actions, high profile matters, or sensitive public issues may involve additional coordination with Commission leadership or designated administrative representatives prior to public distribution.

XI. Sensitive Communications and Escalation Procedures

Certain communications may require additional administrative review due to operational sensitivity, legal considerations, public controversy, or heightened public attention.
Examples may include:
- Legal matters
- Personnel matters
- Public complaints
- Investigations
- Pending Commission actions
- Crisis communications
- Safety related matters
- Operational matters involving significant public interest

Sensitive communications may require review coordination involving:
- APCSC Executive Director
- Designated leadership personnel
- Legal counsel
- Administrative representatives when appropriate

Sensitive Communications Escalation Examples

Communication Matter	**Additional Review May Include**
Legal Matters	Legal Counsel APCSC Executive Director
Personnel Matters	Executive Leadership

Crisis Communications	APCSC Executive Director APCSC Communication Specialist
Pending Commission Actions	Commissioners
High Profile Public Matters	APCSC Executive Director Executive Leadership

The APCSC Executive Director may designate additional APCSC staff, leadership personnel, legal counsel, consultants, or other appropriate representatives to assist with the review, coordination, or approval of communications matters addressed within these procedures when deemed necessary or appropriate. Additional review procedures may be implemented as necessary to support organizational awareness, communications accuracy, and coordinated public representation of APCSC.

XII. Communications Distribution and Internal Awareness Procedures

When appropriate, official APCSC communications involving Commission actions, organizational approvals, major announcements, public recognitions, initiatives, or public statements may be shared with Commissioners and other appropriate internal or external parties for awareness, coordination, review, or operational purposes prior to public distribution.

Communications operations may maintain:

- Publication records
- Communications archives
- Distribution documentation
- Press release files
- Newsletter records
- Digital communications records
- Internal communications coordination documentation

XIII. Branding and Visual Identity Coordination

Official APCSC communications materials should maintain visual consistency with established APCSC branding standards and organizational identity expectations.

Communications materials may include:

- APCSC logos
- Digital graphics
- Newsletters
- Social media graphics
- Press release formatting
- Public informational materials
- Presentations and publications

APCSC communications operations may coordinate branding consistency, formatting alignment, and visual presentation standards for official communications materials distributed on behalf of APCSC.

XIV. Communications Records Management and Archiving

APCSC communications operations may maintain records of approved communications materials, public statements, newsletters, media responses, digital communications, website postings, and

communications related documentation in accordance with applicable operational procedures and records management expectations.
Communications records may be retained for purposes including:
- Operational continuity
- Communications reference
- Organizational consistency
- Historical reference
- Administrative documentation
- Public records considerations when appropriate

Communications records may be retained and managed in a manner that supports operational continuity, organizational accountability, historical reference, and applicable records management requirements.

XV. Review and Revision of Procedures

These procedures may be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to support:
- APCSC operational priorities
- Communications best practices
- Organizational needs
- Governance expectations
- Legal considerations when appropriate
- Evolving communications operations

The APCSC Executive Director may recommend procedural revisions or administrative updates as necessary to support effective communications operations, organizational needs, and evolving communications practices.

Through centralized communications coordination, executive oversight, and established review procedures, APCSC seeks to maintain consistent, accurate, and professionally managed communications that support organizational priorities, operational alignment, and effective public engagement.
These procedures should be reviewed periodically and may evolve as organizational needs; communications practices, grant requirements, public engagement expectations, and operational priorities continue to develop.

COMPLAINT PROCESS AND RESOLUTION PROCEDURES POLICY

Complaint Process and Resolution Procedures

Purpose

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("APCSC") is committed to maintaining professional, transparent, organized, and consistent procedures for receiving, documenting, reviewing, and responding to concerns related to APCSC operations, responsibilities, official actions, oversight activities, administrative procedures, and commission governance matters. As Alabama's statewide public charter school authorizer, APCSC recognizes the importance of establishing clear procedures that support public accountability, administrative consistency, and appropriate stakeholder communication while also clarifying the distinction between matters that fall within APCSC's oversight and matters that remain under the direct authority and administration of individual charter schools. These procedures are intended to provide guidance regarding complaint intake, administrative review procedures, referral pathways, confidentiality considerations, records coordination, and complaint resolution processes related to APCSC operations and oversight.

Legal Authority

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("APCSC") operates pursuant to the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act, Alabama Code § 16-6F-1 et seq., which establishes the legal framework for public charter schools and charter authorizers within the State of Alabama. Alabama Code § 16-6F-6 establishes the Alabama Public Charter School Commission and provides authority for the Commission to serve as a statewide authorizer responsible for charter authorization, oversight, accountability, and related governance responsibilities established under Alabama law. Alabama Code § 16-6F-6 provides that the Alabama Public Charter School Commission *"is hereby created as an independent state entity"* and further provides that the Commission *"shall be responsible for authorizing high quality public charter schools throughout the state."* APCSC recognizes its responsibility to conduct authorizer operations and oversight activities consistent with the authority and responsibilities established under Alabama law.

APCSC also conducts official commission operations in accordance with applicable Alabama transparency, public governance, and administrative accountability requirements of the Alabama Open Meetings Act, Alabama Code § 36-25A-1(a), provides that *"it is the policy of this state that the deliberative process of governmental bodies shall be open to the public during meetings."*

APCSC recognizes the importance of conducting official commission governance activities in a manner consistent with public transparency and accountability requirements established under Alabama law.

Alabama Open Records Law, Alabama Code §§ 36-12-40 through 36-12-46, as amended by Act 2024-278 provides that *"Every citizen has a right to inspect and take a copy of any public record of this state, except as otherwise expressly provided by applicable law."*

APCSC acknowledges that certain complaint related records, communications, or administrative documentation may constitute public records subject to disclosure requirements unless otherwise protected by applicable law.

Certain complaint matters may also involve student information protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. FERPA generally provides protections regarding the privacy of student education records and limits unauthorized disclosure of protected student information maintained by educational agencies and institutions receiving applicable federal funding.

Nothing contained within these procedures shall be interpreted to expand APCSC authority beyond applicable law, charter contract authority, or established oversight responsibilities.

Guiding Principles

APCSC is committed to administering complaint review procedures in a professional, consistent, and transparent manner. Administrative reviews should support appropriate documentation, objective consideration of information provided, and clear communication regarding APCSC authority, responsibilities, and jurisdiction. APCSC also seeks to ensure that concerns are directed to the appropriate entity or authority for review when matters fall outside the Commission's oversight of responsibilities.

APCSC Oversight Role and Jurisdiction

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission serves as Alabama's statewide public charter school authorizer and oversight entity. APCSC responsibilities generally include charter school authorization, charter contract oversight and monitoring, accountability oversight responsibilities, charter renewal and revocation procedures, commission governance and administrative operations, compliance monitoring responsibilities established under applicable law and charter contracts, and administration of certain statewide charter related initiatives and programs.

APCSC does not directly manage, supervise, employ, or operate individual charter schools and is not responsible for the routine day-to-day administration of charter school operations. Individual charter schools maintain authority over school level administrative decisions, personnel matters, instructional operations, student discipline procedures, school policies, and campus management responsibilities consistent with applicable law and charter contract authority.

Accordingly, APCSC complaint procedures are intended to address matters involving APCSC operations, charter oversight authority, commission governance responsibilities, or significant matters involving charter contract compliance rather than routine school level grievances or campus operational disputes.

Matters Generally Outside APCSC Complaint Authority

Many concerns involving individual charter schools fall under the authority and responsibility of the individual charter school administration and governing board rather than APCSC. APCSC generally does not investigate, adjudicate, or resolve routine school level grievances, disputes, personnel matters, or operational concerns.

Examples of matters generally handled at the school level may include classroom concerns, student discipline matters, grading disputes, attendance concerns, transportation issues, extracurricular activity concerns, student scheduling matters, staff or teacher disputes, employment matters involving school personnel, parent communication concerns, student handbook matters, campus operational concerns, school specific policies or procedures, and routine school administration concerns. Stakeholders are encouraged to first contact the applicable charter school administration or governing board regarding these matters.

Consistent with their operational authority, individual charter schools and governing boards are generally responsible for addressing routine school level concerns through established school procedures.

APCSC **DOES NOT** accept, review, investigate, adjudicate, or resolve complaints involving public charter schools that are not authorized by the Alabama Public Charter School Commission. Concerns involving charter schools authorized by a local board of education or another authorizing entity must be directed to the applicable school administration, governing board, or authorizer responsible for oversight of that school.

Matters That May Be Appropriate for APCSC Review

APCSC may review concerns that directly relate to APCSC operations, official commission actions, charter oversight responsibilities, or significant matters involving charter contract compliance or regulatory obligations. Such concerns may include matters involving APCSC administrative operations or official procedures, APCSC public meetings, APCSC governance matters, contract noncompliance, accountability, financial, reporting, oversight, concerns

involving official APCSC communications or records procedures, or compliance issues related to APCSC authorizer responsibilities.

The submission of a complaint **DOES NOT** guarantee that APCSC will initiate a formal investigation, enforcement action, hearing, or administrative review process. APCSC retains administrative discretion regarding the scope, manner, and extent of any review conducted within its authority.

Complaint Submission Procedures

Concerns related to APCSC operations or oversight responsibilities may be submitted through officially designated APCSC communication channels. Complaints should include sufficient information to allow APCSC to understand and appropriately evaluate the concern presented. Such information may include the name and contact information of the individual submitting the concern, the school, meeting, department, or APCSC matter involved, a detailed description of the concern, relevant dates or events, supporting documentation if available, information regarding prior efforts to address the matter through appropriate channels, and any additional information relevant to APCSC review.

All official complaints submitted to APCSC shall be directed to APCSC Executive Director or the Executive Director's designated administrative representative for intake, administrative coordination, and review determination purposes. The APCSC Executive Director shall serve as the **PRIMARY** administrative authority responsible for coordinating complaint intake procedures, determining appropriate administrative routing, facilitating referrals when applicable, and coordinating responses or additional review processes consistent with APCSC authority and operational responsibilities.

Complaints submitted through other channels **WILL NOT** be considered administratively received until they have been referred to and processed through the Executive Director's Office.

Official complaints and supporting documentation may be submitted to:

APCSC Executive Director
Mrs. Logan Searcy

logan.searcy@alchartercommission.com

Alabama Public Charter School Commission
Gordon Persons Building
50 North Ripley Street
Suite 5227
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Complaints that do not provide sufficient information may limit APCSC's ability to review, assess, or respond appropriately. APCSC does not respond to anonymous complaints. While anonymous information may be reviewed at APCSC's discretion, the absence of identifying or contact information may limit APCSC's ability to evaluate the concern, request additional information, communicate findings, or take further administrative action.

Complaint Intake and Administrative Review

Upon receipt, complaints may undergo an administrative review process to determine whether the concern falls within APCSC authority or oversight responsibilities, whether the matter should be referred back to the charter school or another entity, whether additional information is necessary, whether the matter warrants additional administrative review or monitoring, or whether referral to another agency, authority, or legal entity may be appropriate.

APCSC may close complaints that fall outside APCSC jurisdiction or authority, involve routine school level operational matters, lack sufficient supporting information, involve matters previously addressed through appropriate procedures, or are otherwise determined not to warrant additional administrative review.

Referral and Escalation Procedures

If APCSC determines that a concern is more appropriately handled at the school level, the complainant may be directed to contact the applicable charter school administration or governing board. Depending upon the nature of the concern, APCSC may also refer matters to legal counsel, law enforcement agencies, state or federal agencies, regulatory authorities, other governmental or oversight entities, or appropriate administrative personnel.

Referral of a concern does not necessarily indicate wrongdoing, violation, or formal enforcement action and may instead reflect APCSC's determination that another entity maintains primary authority or jurisdiction over the matter presented.

Confidentiality and Privacy Consideration

APCSC will make reasonable efforts to maintain confidentiality consistent with applicable law, operational necessity, and administrative review procedures. However, APCSC cannot guarantee complete confidentiality in all circumstances.

Certain records, communications, or complaint related documentation may constitute public records subject to disclosure requirements under Alabama law. Alabama Code § 36-12-40 provides that, *"Every resident has a right to inspect and take a copy of any public record of this state, except as otherwise expressly provided by applicable law."* APCSC acknowledges that complaint related documentation may be subject to disclosure requirements unless otherwise protected by applicable law or confidentiality provisions.

Certain student records, personnel information, or legally protected information may remain confidential pursuant to applicable federal or state law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. FERPA generally protects the privacy of student education records and restricts unauthorized disclosure of protected student information maintained by educational agencies and institutions receiving federal funding.

Communication Expectations

Individuals submitting concerns are expected to maintain professional and respectful communications throughout the complaint process. APCSC may provide acknowledgment of receipt or general status updates when appropriate; however, APCSC may be limited in the information it may disclose regarding confidential personnel matters, student information, legal matters, pending reviews or investigations, matters outside APCSC authority, or protected records.

APCSC reserves the right to discontinue communications that become abusive, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, or substantially disruptive to agency operations.

Complaint Resolution and Closure

Potential outcomes may include referral to the appropriate school or entity, administrative clarification or response, closure due to lack of jurisdiction or authority, closure due to insufficient information, additional monitoring or oversight review if warranted, or referral for additional administrative or legal review.

Nothing contained within these procedures creates an entitlement to a formal hearing, appeal, investigation, enforcement action, or specific resolution of outcome.

Questions Regarding These Procedures

Questions regarding APCSC Complaint Process & Resolution Procedures may be directed to the Alabama Public Charter School Commission Executive Director.

APCSC complaint procedures may continue to evolve as organizational needs, operational practices, legal requirements, oversight responsibilities, and stakeholder engagement expectations develop over time. The APCSC Executive Director may recommend procedural updates, administrative revisions, or implementation modifications as appropriate to support effective complaint administration and organizational operations. APCSC reserves the authority to revise these procedures as necessary to maintain alignment with applicable laws, Commission priorities, and operational needs.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION, SENSITIVE MATTER RESPONSE AND STUDENT PRIVACY POLICY

Crisis Communication, Sensitive Matter Response and Student Privacy Policy

Purpose & Scope

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("APCSC") is committed to maintaining professional, accurate, lawful, and responsible communications practices during high visibility incidents, sensitive matters, emergency situations, and public inquiries involving authorized public charter schools.

This guidance establishes expectations regarding crisis communications coordination, media inquiry procedures, sensitive matter response practices, confidentiality protections, student information privacy expectations, public communications boundaries, records management considerations, and communications coordination with schools and external agencies.

This guidance is intended to support lawful, professional, and coordinated communications practices while recognizing the operational independence of authorized public charter schools and the APCSC's role as Alabama's statewide public charter school authorizer.

This guidance does not replace school level emergency operations plans, student discipline procedures, law enforcement procedures, transportation procedures, or internal school crisis management protocols.

Authorizer Authority & Operational Distinction

Authorized public charter schools operating under the oversight of the APCSC are governed by independent governing boards and maintain responsibility for day-to-day school operations, including operational decision making, student supervision, personnel administration, transportation operations, school safety procedures, family communications, and incident response activities. As stated in the APCSC Charter School Handbook:

"The charter school is governed by an independent board of directors ("the board"), which serves as the accountable governing authority of the organization."

The APCSC serves as the public charter school authorizer and oversight entity and does not assume direct operational control of authorized schools except as permitted by applicable law, charter contract provisions, , or other legally authorized oversight responsibilities.

Communications issued by the APCSC during sensitive matters or high visibility incidents shall remain consistent with the APCSC's authorizer role and shall not improperly interfere with school operations, law enforcement activities, emergency response efforts, personnel matters, or ongoing investigations.

Nothing within this guidance shall be interpreted to authorize APCSC staff, commissioners, contractors, consultants, or representatives to direct school operational response activities unless otherwise authorized by law or official APCSC action.

Crisis & Sensitive Matter Communications

The APCSC recognizes that incidents involving authorized public charter schools may generate media attention, public interest, stakeholder inquiries, or requests for information regarding the APCSC's oversight role. Examples of crisis communications or sensitive matters may include student or staff injuries, transportation incidents, school safety concerns, facility related incidents, significant property damage, emergency response situations, allegations of misconduct, law enforcement investigations, litigation matters, personnel matters, data security incidents, significant operational disruptions, public controversy or reputational concerns, and matters involving substantial media attention. These examples are provided for illustrative purposes and are not intended to represent every situation that may arise.

***The APCSC may acknowledge, monitor, coordinate, and communicate regarding matters within its authorizer oversight responsibilities but does not serve as the primary operational spokesperson for authorized public charter schools during incidents, emergencies, investigations, or other school level operational matters*.**

As Alabama's statewide public charter school authorizer, the APCSC may communicate regarding its oversight responsibilities when appropriate. Authorized public charter schools remain responsible for day-to-day operations, incident response activities, family communications, emergency procedures, and other operational matters. Questions regarding school-specific operational matters may be more appropriately directed to the school, law enforcement agencies, emergency management officials, or other responsible authorities.
Public communications issued by the APCSC should remain accurate, professional, and consistent with applicable confidentiality requirements, student privacy protections, legal considerations, and established APCSC communications procedures.

When information is limited due to confidentiality requirements, investigative concerns, student privacy protections, or legal considerations, APCSC representatives may acknowledge awareness of a matter without disclosing protected information, investigative details, or operational information reserved to the school or appropriate authorities.

Nothing within this guidance shall be interpreted as requiring the APCSC to issue a public statement regarding every school level incident or operational matter. The nature, timing, and extent of APCSC communications may vary based upon the circumstances of the event, legal considerations, student privacy protections, public interest, and APCSC oversight responsibilities.

Media Inquiry & Communications Coordination Procedures

All significant media inquiries, crisis related communications, or sensitive public response matters involving APCSC oversight responsibilities should be coordinated through the APCSC Executive Director or designated communications personnel consistent with established APCSC communications approval procedures.

APCSC staff, commissioners, consultants, contractors, and affiliated representatives should avoid issuing unofficial statements, speculative commentary, or unauthorized public responses regarding sensitive matters involving authorized schools.

Public communications issued on behalf of the APCSC should remain professional and factually accurate, comply with applicable confidentiality laws, maintain consistency with approved communications procedures, avoid disclosure of protected information, avoid interference with ongoing investigations or operational response activities, and accurately reflect APCSC oversight responsibilities and operational limitations.

When appropriate, APCSC communications may acknowledge awareness of a matter while limiting additional details due to confidentiality requirements, student privacy protections, legal considerations, or ongoing review processes.

Communications involving legal matters, litigation, investigative activity, or potentially sensitive liability concerns may require coordination with legal counsel prior to public release.

Student Information & Privacy Protections

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, protects the privacy of student education records.

The United States Department of Education states:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or FERPA (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) provides certain rights for parents regarding their children's education records. Generally, under FERPA, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any information from a student's education record. *See* 20 U.S.C.

§ 1232g. *See also* 34 C.F.R. § 99.30 ("The parent or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, except as provided in § 99.31.").

Protected or confidential student information may include, but is not limited to, student names connected to confidential matters, personally identifiable student information, student identification numbers, disciplinary records, medical information, counseling information, disability related information, transportation records tied to identifiable students, protected educational records, confidential family information, and records protected under applicable federal or state law.

APCSC representatives shall not improperly disclose protected student information obtained through oversight activities, records review, investigations, public communications processes, monitoring activities, or other official functions.

The APCSC may publicly release aggregated, non-identifiable, or otherwise lawfully reportable information including school level enrollment data, demographic information, accountability data, academic performance information, publicly reportable compliance information, commission approved reports, and publicly accessible board materials and records provided such information does not improperly disclose personally identifiable student information or otherwise violate applicable confidentiality protections.

When records or materials require public release, redactions may be necessary to remove protected or confidential information consistent with applicable law and legal guidance.

Public Records, Confidentiality & Protected Information

The APCSC recognizes the importance of transparency, accountability, and lawful public access to governmental records while also maintaining compliance with applicable confidentiality protections and privacy laws.

Certain records or information may be subject to limitations on disclosure due to FERPA protections, attorney client privilege, confidential personnel matters, active investigations, legally protected student records, security related information, protected financial or operational records, or other applicable confidentiality requirements under federal or state law.

Records requests, communications inquiries, and requests involving potentially protected information may require administrative review and consultation with legal counsel prior to release.

Nothing within this guidance shall be interpreted to authorize the release of information prohibited from disclosure under applicable federal law, state law, court order, or legally recognized confidentiality protections.

Coordination with Schools & External Agencies

During sensitive matters or high visibility incidents, the APCSC may coordinate communications related activities with authorized public charter schools, school leadership, governing boards, legal counsel, law enforcement agencies, emergency management personnel, the Alabama State Department of Education, governmental agencies, contracted communications personnel, or other appropriate entities involved in the matter.

Communications coordination activities conducted by the APCSC shall not be interpreted as an assumption of direct operational control over authorized public charter schools.

The APCSC shall continue to recognize the operational independence of authorized public charter schools while carrying out its lawful oversight, accountability, monitoring, and public stewardship responsibilities as Alabama's statewide public charter school authorizer.

GUIDANCE FOR COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION POLICY

Guidance for Commissioner Communication Policy

Introduction

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("APCSC") values transparent, collaborative, and effective communication practices that support public trust, informed public engagement, and organizational consistency regarding official APCSC matters.

Commissioners regularly engage with school leaders, families, educators, stakeholders, elected officials, community members, members of the media, and members of the public through meetings, events, school visits, conferences, and other engagement opportunities connected to the work of the Commission.

Consistent with the Code of Alabama 1975, Chapter 25 of Title 36, which recognizes that "public service is a public trust" and that "it is necessary that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government," APCSC recognizes the importance of communication practices that support professionalism, collaboration, organizational integrity, and informed public engagement regarding official commission matters.

The communication guidance outline within this document is not intended to restrict the independent role or authority of individual Commissioners. The guidance outlined in this document is intended to serve as a general communication resource for Commissioners regarding communication coordination, media engagement, stakeholder interactions, public statements, and communication practices associated with official APCSC matters. The guidance is designed to support communication consistency, organizational awareness, and coordinated public information sharing while recognizing the independent role and responsibilities of individual Commissioners.

The APCSC Executive Director serves as the primary administrative point of coordination regarding official APCSC communications, media engagement, organizational messaging, stakeholder communications, and public information related to Commission business. The APCSC Communications Specialist assists the Executive Director with communication coordination, media support, stakeholder communications, and public messaging related to official APCSC operations and initiatives.

Media & Reporter Inquiries

A Commissioner may occasionally receive emails, phone calls, interview requests, or other inquiries from reporters, media organizations, or external parties seeking comments related to APCSC business, commission decisions, charter schools, or public matters involving the agency.

When appropriate, Commissioners are encouraged to coordinate media related communications through the APCSC Executive Director to support communication consistency, accurate public information sharing, and coordinated messaging regarding official commission matters.

The Executive Director and Communications Specialist will assist with media coordination, background information, communication context, public messaging support, clarification regarding official APCSC actions or decisions, and coordination regarding press related matters.

Public Statements

Consistent with the Code of Alabama 1975, § 36-25-2, which recognizes that "public officials and public employees must be independent and impartial" and that "the public interest therefore requires that the law protect against such conflicts of interest and establish appropriate ethical standards with respect to the conduct of public officials and public employees," APCSC encourages thoughtful public engagement practices regarding official commission related matters.

Commissioners may participate in a variety of professional, educational, civic, community, and public engagement activities throughout their service. These opportunities may include interviews, presentations, conferences, public events, podcasts, community discussions, leadership activities, or other engagements connected to their professional expertise, public service, or involvement with APCSC.

During such engagements, Commissioners may have opportunities to discuss the work of the Commission, Alabama public charter schools, or their service as an APCSC Commissioner. APCSC values these opportunities to share information, increase public awareness, and support meaningful engagement regarding public education and charter schools across Alabama.

When discussions involve official APCSC matters, Commissioners are encouraged to remain mindful of the distinction between personal viewpoints and official APCSC positions, decisions, actions, or communications and to consider whether additional coordination or context may be beneficial when appropriate.

Commissioners may consider coordinating significant public statements regarding official APCSC matters through the APCSC Executive Director to support communication awareness, context, and organizational coordination.

Social Media Considerations

Commissioners may choose to maintain personal social media platforms or participate in online public discussions regarding education, public policy, community issues, or other topics of interest.

When referencing matters connected to APCSC business, charter schools, Commission actions, or agency related discussions, Commissioners are encouraged to remain mindful that public social media activity may be interpreted as reflecting upon APCSC operations or official Commission positions.

Consistent with the Code of Alabama 1975, § 36-25-2, which recognizes that "public office should not be used for private gain other than the remuneration provided by law" and that "the attainment of one or more of these ends is impaired whenever there exists a conflict between the private interests of a public official and his or her duties as such," Commissioners are encouraged to consider whether social media posts, comments, shared articles, or online discussions could unintentionally create confusion regarding official APCSC communications, positions, or actions. Commissioners may also consider whether public commentary regarding pending, sensitive, or active APCSC related matters could benefit from communication coordination or additional context prior to public engagement.

Communication Coordination

The APCSC Executive Director and Communications Specialist assist with coordinating official agency communications, stakeholder communications, public information requests, media engagement, organizational messaging, and public communications related to official APCSC business and commission activities.

In support of communication and coordinated public information sharing, Commissioners are encouraged to coordinate significant external communications related to official APCSC matters through the Executive Director, particularly regarding:

- Pending Commission actions or discussions
- Application cycle planning or timelines
- Grant application cycles
- Organizational announcements
- Sensitive operational matters
- Public messaging related to official APCSC decisions, actions, or activities
- Information that has not yet been formal voted upon

Questions regarding official APCSC communications, media related matters, external communication coordination, or public messaging connected to APCSC business may be directed to the APCSC Executive Director for guidance, coordination, or additional clarification when appropriate. The APCSC Communications Specialist will assist the Executive Director with public messaging related to official APCSC operations and initiatives.
https://www.ethics.alabama.gov/news/ethicslaw.pdf

OPEN RECORDS REQUEST POLICY

Open Records Request Policy

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to establish formal procedures governing requests for public records maintained by APCSC and to provide guidance regarding the agency's handling, review, production, and protection of records subject to Alabama law. This policy applies to records maintained by APCSC in connection with the agency's official governmental duties and responsibilities as Alabama's statewide public charter school authorizer.

This policy is intended to promote transparency and accountability in government operations, establish consistency in the handling of public records requests, maintain centralized agency procedures for records management and disclosure, protect confidential or exempt information from improper disclosure, clarify the responsibilities of APCSC staff and commissioners regarding public records requests, minimize undue disruption to agency operations resulting from records requests, and maintain compliance with Alabama law and applicable federal privacy protections.

*Pursuant to **Alabama Code § 36-12-44**, APCSC is not required to create a new record in response to a request if such record does not already exist.* Nothing within this policy shall be interpreted to require APCSC to create a record that does not already exist, compile information in a manner not ordinarily maintained by the agency, or disclose records exempt from disclosure under applicable law.

Alabama Open Records Law

*The Alabama Open Records Law, **Alabama Code § 36-12-40**, provides that, "Every resident has a right to inspect and take a copy of any public record of this state, except as otherwise expressly provided by applicable law."*

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("APCSC") recognizes the importance of transparency, accountability, and public access to governmental records in accordance with Alabama law. APCSC is committed to conducting agency operations in a manner that promotes public trust while also protecting confidential information, maintaining compliance with state and federal law, and ensuring the efficient administration of agency functions. As Alabama's statewide public charter school authorizer, APCSC maintains records relating to commission governance, charter school authorization, accountability oversight, public meetings, administrative operations, compliance monitoring, contracts, communications, and official agency business. APCSC acknowledges the public's right to inspect and obtain access to applicable public records maintained by the agency consistent with Alabama law.
Alabama law contains additional provisions governing the custody, maintenance, inspection, and production of public records, including the following:

*Pursuant to **Alabama Code § 36-12-41**, "Every public officer having the custody of a public writing which a citizen has a right to inspect is bound to give him, on demand, a certified copy of it, on payment of the legal fees therefor."*
*Pursuant to **Alabama Code § 36-12-44(c)**, "A public officer shall not be obligated to respond to a public records request that is vague, ambiguous, overly broad, or unreasonable in scope."*
*Pursuant to **Alabama Code § 36-12-44(d)**, "A public officer shall not be required to create a new public record if the requested record does not already exist."*
*Pursuant to **Alabama Code § 41-13-1**, public records include written, typed, printed, electronic, or digitally stored materials created or received in connection with official governmental business.*

APCSC interprets and administers this policy in a manner intended to balance the public's right to access governmental information with the agency's obligation to protect confidential records, preserve operational integrity, safeguard student privacy, and ensure compliance with applicable state and federal law.

Our Public Records Policy

It is the policy of APCSC to provide reasonable public access to applicable public records maintained by the agency in accordance with Alabama law and applicable administrative procedures. APCSC recognizes that public access to governmental records is an important component of public accountability and transparency. At the same time, APCSC must also ensure the protection of confidential information, preserve the integrity of agency operations, and maintain compliance with state and federal privacy laws.

APCSC serves as Alabama's statewide public charter school authorizer for approved public charter schools operating throughout the State of Alabama. APCSC does not operate schools directly and does not function as a local school district or traditional local board of education. Authorized public charter schools operate as independent Local Education Agencies ("LEAs") pursuant to Alabama law. Accordingly, certain records relating to day-to-day school operations, personnel matters, student records, instructional activities, or campus level operations may be maintained directly by the applicable public charter school rather than APCSC.

APCSC maintains records associated with commission governance and operations, public meetings and official actions, charter application review and authorization, accountability and oversight activities, compliance monitoring, contracts and agreements, financial oversight, administrative policies and procedures, public communications and correspondence, and electronic communications relating to official agency business.

APCSC may direct requestors to the appropriate public charter school, governmental entity, or records custodian when requested records are not maintained by APCSC.

Records Maintained by APCSC

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission serves as an independent statewide authorizing entity responsible for reviewing, approving, overseeing, and monitoring public charter schools operating pursuant to Alabama's charter school laws. As part of its statutory responsibilities, APCSC conducts public meetings, reviews charter applications, monitors charter school performance, evaluates compliance with charter contracts, and carries out various administrative and governance functions related to charter school oversight.

APCSC maintains records associated with the agency's statutory and administrative responsibilities as Alabama's statewide public charter school authorizer. Records maintained by APCSC may include commission meeting agendas and approved minutes, public notices and meeting materials, charter school applications and supporting documentation, charter contracts and amendments, charter renewal documentation, accountability and compliance reports, financial oversight records, procurement and purchasing documentation, administrative policies and procedures, official correspondence and communications, electronic communications relating to agency business, and public reports, memoranda, and presentations.

Records maintained by APCSC may exist in paper, digital, electronic, audio, or other formats. Electronic records may include emails, electronic meeting packets, electronic correspondence, digital reports and memoranda, website content, social media content associated with official APCSC operations, and electronically stored records relating to public business.

*Pursuant to **Alabama Code § 41-13-1**, public records may include written, typed, printed, electronic, or digitally stored materials created or received in connection with official governmental business.*

APCSC shall maintain records in accordance with applicable Alabama records retention requirements and agency operational procedures.

Because APCSC maintains a limited staff structure, centralized coordination of public records requests is necessary to ensure consistency, legal compliance, records tracking, confidentiality review, and orderly administration of agency operations. APCSC shall administer public records requests in a manner that promotes accountability,

transparency, and compliance with Alabama law while recognizing the operational demands placed upon a small statewide agency.

Records Not Maintained by APCSC

APCSC serves as a statewide charter school authorizer and oversight body. APCSC does not directly operate schools and does not function as a traditional local school district or local board of education. Public charter schools authorized by APCSC operate as independent Local Education Agencies ("LEAs") pursuant to Alabama law.

Accordingly, certain records relating to daily school operations may not be maintained by APCSC, including individual student academic records, daily instructional records, school level personnel records, campus operational records, school specific discipline records, student transportation records, classroom level instructional materials, school maintained medical records, and internal school administrative records.

In circumstances where requested records are not maintained by APCSC, the agency may direct requestors to the appropriate public charter school or governmental entity believed to maintain the requested records. Nothing in this policy shall require APCSC to obtain records from independent charter schools that are not otherwise maintained by APCSC in connection with the agency's official oversight responsibilities.

Designated Records Coordinator

The APCSC Executive Director serves as the designated records coordinator and official point of contact for all public records requests submitted to APCSC. All public records requests directed to APCSC shall be submitted through the Executive Director. Requests directed to individual commissioners or staff shall not constitute official submission of a public records request under this policy. Commissioners are not designated custodians of APCSC public records and are not authorized to independently release, distribute, or respond to public records requests on behalf of APCSC.

Individuals seeking public records shall not attempt to bypass APCSC procedures by requesting records directly from commissioners, individual staff members, contractors, or affiliated parties outside the agency's established procedures. The Executive Director may coordinate internally with appropriate APCSC staff members to identify, review, retrieve, or prepare records responsive to a request as necessary to carry out agency operations and ensure compliance with applicable law.

Centralized coordination of requests through the Executive Director is intended to ensure consistency in agency responses, protect confidential or exempt information from unauthorized disclosure, maintain accurate records tracking procedures, support APCSC's compliance with Alabama law and federal privacy protections, minimize disruption to agency operations, and maintain orderly administration of records requests.

The Executive Director may coordinate with APCSC staff, legal counsel, and other appropriate parties as necessary to facilitate the review, processing, and lawful administration of public records requests consistent with agency responsibilities and applicable law.

Submitting a Public Records Request

Public records requests submitted to APCSC should be made in writing whenever reasonably practicable in order to promote clarity, consistency, and efficient processing of requests. Requests may be submitted by email, U.S. mail, or official APCSC public records request forms if adopted by the agency.

Requests should reasonably identify the records being requested with sufficient detail to assist APCSC in locating responsive records. To assist in processing requests efficiently, requestors are encouraged to provide their full name, mailing address or email address, telephone number or preferred contact information, a description of

requested records, an approximate date range of requested records if known, and a preferred method of receiving records if applicable.

APCSC may request clarification regarding vague, ambiguous, duplicative, overly broad, or unreasonably burdensome requests.

*Pursuant to **Alabama Code § 36-12-40**, APCSC may request reasonable verification that the requestor is an Alabama resident consistent with Alabama law.*

Requests submitted to APCSC do not guarantee that responsive records exist, are maintained by APCSC, or are subject to disclosure under applicable law. APCSC reserves the right to determine the appropriate manner in which records shall be inspected, reviewed, copied, or produced consistent with Alabama law and agency operational procedures.

What to Expect

APCSC strives to respond to properly submitted public records requests as promptly as reasonably possible consistent with Alabama law, agency operational responsibilities, and the protection of confidential information. Requests may vary significantly in scope, complexity, and volume. Accordingly, response times may differ depending upon the nature of the request.

APCSC generally intends to acknowledge receipt of requests within ten (10) business days and provide a substantive response within fifteen (15) business days following acknowledgment when reasonably practicable. However, response timelines may vary depending upon the scope, complexity, and volume of the request, the need for legal review or redaction, retrieval of archived records, review of electronic communications, operational demands placed upon agency staff, and other factors reasonably affecting agency operations.

Because APCSC maintains a limited staff structure, extensive or time intensive requests may require additional processing time in order to avoid undue disruption to agency operations. APCSC reserves the right to prioritize agency operations, commission responsibilities, statutory deadlines, public meetings, and oversight obligations when processing requests.

Inspection and Production of Records

Records may be produced electronically when reasonably practicable and consistent with the way records are ordinarily maintained by APCSC. APCSC is not required to create new records in response to a request, compile information in a manner not ordinarily maintained by the agency, convert records into a different format not regularly used by APCSC, produce records not maintained by APCSC, or produce records exempt from disclosure under applicable law.

APCSC may redact portions of records determined to contain confidential, exempt, or legally protected information prior to inspection or production.

The Executive Director may review, revise, update, interpret, or modify administrative procedures associated with this policy, as appropriate, to maintain compliance with applicable law, operational needs, administrative practices, and organizational requirements.

Payment of Fees

*Pursuant to **Alabama Code § 36-12-41**, APCSC will condition its response to a request for public records upon the "payment of a reasonable fee."*

APSCS will impose a reasonable fee to process any public records record. The fee charged by APSCS in responding to a public records request will be reasonable and based on actual costs incurred. However, APSCS may waive this fee when a request does not require significant time or resources to process. APSCS will provide advance notice of any fees to be charged in connection with a request for public records. Extensive requests for public records may increase the fee to cover the retrieval and preparation of the requested records.

PUBLIC MEETING GUIDELINES POLICY

Public Meeting Guidelines Policy

Purpose

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("APCSC") is committed to conducting meetings in a manner that promotes transparency, professionalism, public accessibility, operational efficiency, and the orderly conduct of official Commission business. Public meetings of the APCSC are intended to provide opportunities for public observation and structured participation while ensuring that meetings remain safe, respectful, and focused on official Commission matters.

These procedures establish guidelines governing the APCSC public meetings, public comment participation, virtual meeting procedures, in person meeting procedures, conduct expectations, photography and recording practices, and meeting safety protocols.

Authority and Governance

The APCSC operates pursuant to applicable provisions of the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act and applicable to Alabama open meetings requirements.

The APCSC recognizes the public policy of the State of Alabama that the deliberative process of governmental bodies be conducted openly and transparently. Consistent with the Alabama Open Meetings Act, Code of Alabama 1975, § 36-25A-1, et. seq., APCSC meetings shall be open to the public except for executive sessions permitted under Section 36-25A-7(a) or as otherwise expressly authorized by applicable federal or state law. APCSC meetings shall be noticed in accordance with the requirements of Section 36-25A-3 and other applicable provisions of the Alabama Open Meetings Act. Although the APCSC may enter executive session when authorized by law, no executive session is required under the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

Official meeting notices, agendas, and related meeting information are posted through the State of Alabama Open Meetings Notice Website at https://www.openmeetings.alabama.gov/generalpublic/display_notices.aspx. Meeting information is also be shared through the APCSC website, social media platforms, email communications, or other public communication channels; however, the Alabama Open Meetings Notice Website serves as the official public notice location for APCSC meetings and meeting agendas.

The APCSC reserves the authority to establish reasonable rules and procedures governing participation, conduct, public comment, meeting access, technology usage, security measures, and administrative operations necessary for the orderly conduct of Commission meetings.

Meeting format determinations, including whether meetings are conducted virtually, in person, or through a hybrid format, shall remain solely within the discretion of the APCSC Chairperson and APCSC Executive Director based upon operational, administrative, technological, security, accessibility, and organizational considerations.

Meeting Format and Participation

APCSC meetings may be conducted in one or more of the following formats:

- Virtual meetings conducted through digital meeting platforms
- In person meetings conducted at designated meeting locations
- Hybrid meetings consisting of both virtual and in person participation components

The APCSC reserves the right to determine the meeting format for any scheduled meeting.

Public meetings of the APCSC remain open to the public consistent with applicable law and established meeting procedures.

Attendance at an APCSC meeting does not automatically grant participation privileges outside officially designated public comment procedures or recognized meeting activities.

Virtual Meeting Procedures

The majority of APCSC meetings are conducted virtually utilizing digital meeting platforms, including Zoom or other authorized meeting technology systems.

Virtual meetings are subject to platform participant limitations and operational capacity restrictions. Current APCSC virtual meetings are generally limited to approximately one hundred (100) participants.

Within virtual meeting capacity limitations:

- Thirteen (13) participant spaces may be reserved for APCSC Commissioners
- Additional participant spaces may be reserved for APCSC staff, presenters, legal counsel, technical support personnel, and authorized meeting participants
- Remaining participant access shall generally be made available for public participation consistent with operational capacity and meeting management procedures

Participation in APCSC virtual meetings constitutes acknowledgment and acceptance of APCSC meeting participation procedures and conduct expectations.

Individuals participating virtually are responsible for securing their own internet access, compatible devices, audio capabilities, and technological access necessary for participation in virtual meetings.

The APCSC is not responsible for providing individual devices, internet access, hardware, software, or technological accommodations necessary for virtual participation.

Participant Identification Requirements

Individuals participating in APCSC virtual meetings must utilize a legitimate and identifiable participant name when joining a meeting.

The APCSC may deny access to or remove participants utilizing:

- False identities
- Misleading participant names
- Anonymous usernames
- Offensive screen names
- Disruptive identifiers
- Unauthorized automated participation systems
- Artificial intelligence note taking bots or automated recording assistants
- Unauthorized third party meeting monitoring software

The APCSC reserves the right to verify participant identity when necessary to maintain meeting security, integrity, operational efficiency, or participant safety.

Public Comment Procedures

The APCSC may provide designated public comment periods during official meetings consistent with meeting agendas and operational considerations.

Meeting agendas are prepared in advance and may be modified when operationally necessary.

Public comment opportunities may be limited to designated agenda periods.

Submission of a request for public comment does not guarantee placement on a meeting agenda or approval for verbal participation.

Individuals wishing to participate in public comment are **REQUIRED** to register or submit requests for participation in advance of the meeting.

Unless otherwise authorized by the APCSC, requests scheduled public comment participation should generally be submitted no later than fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting date.

The APCSC may accept written public comments submitted through designated procedures. Written submissions may be retained as part of official meeting materials or administrative records when appropriate.
APCSC reserves the authority to:

- Establish public comment deadlines
- Limit speaking time
- Limit repetitive testimony
- Require agenda relevance
- Establish procedures for written submissions
- Limit the total number of speakers when operationally necessary
- Maintain orderly meeting operations

The APCSC reserves the right to establish reasonable time limitations for public comment presentations in order to maintain orderly meeting operations and agenda efficiency.

Individuals who did not properly register for public comment prior to the established deadline may not be permitted to address the Commission during the meeting.

Nothing within these procedures prohibits the APCSC Commission, APCSC Executive Director, or authorized staff from responding to operational questions, administrative matters, or communications from currently authorized charter school leaders, charter school representatives, or other recognized participants when appropriate.

Public comment periods are intended for the orderly presentation of comments and information relevant to APCSC business and are not intended to serve as unrestricted debate forums.

Conduct Expectations and Removal Authority

All meeting participants are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, professional, lawful, and orderly manner.

To preserve orderly meeting operations, participants shall not interrupt speakers, engage in shouting, create unnecessary disruptions, or interfere with presentations or official Commission business.

Public comments, presentations, or meeting participation shall not include the improper disclosure of confidential student information, protected educational records, confidential personnel matters, ongoing investigations, protected health information, or other information protected by applicable law or policy.

The APCSC reserves the right to remove, restrict, mute, deny access to, or otherwise limit participation of any individual whose conduct disrupts meeting operations, threatens participant safety, interferes with the orderly conduct of Commission business, or violates established meeting procedures.

Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Profanity or vulgar language
- Harassment or intimidation
- Threatening behavior or statements
- Disruptive interruptions
- Abusive conduct toward Commissioners, APCSC staff, charter school leaders, presenters, or members of the public
- Hate speech or discriminatory conduct
- Unauthorized meeting disruptions
- Attempts to interfere with official meeting operations
- Repeated violations of meeting procedures
- Conduct reasonably determined to present a safety, security, or operational concern

The APCSC further reserves the right to deny meeting access or participation privileges to individuals whose conduct is reasonably determined to pose a threat, safety concern, operational disruption, or potential harm to Commissioners, APCSC staff, charter school leaders, presenters, meeting participants, or APCSC operations.

Removal from a meeting or denial of participation access may occur without warning when necessary to protect participant safety, meeting integrity, or operational continuity.

Photography, Recording, and Media Usage

Public meetings of the APCSC may be photographed, recorded, livestreamed, archived, or otherwise documented for governmental, public information, transparency, media, historical, operational, or educational purposes.

Members of the public and media representatives may photograph or record APCSC meetings provided such activity:

- Does not disrupt meeting operations
- Does not interfere with participants or presenters
- Does not obstruct visibility, movement, or safety
- Remains consistent with applicable law and APCSC procedures

Photographs, screenshots, video recordings, livestreams, audio recordings, or other meeting related content obtained during APCSC meetings shall be used in a respectful, professional, lawful, and non-deceptive manner.

Meeting recordings, screenshots, excerpts, photographs, audio clips, or other meeting related content shall not be falsely represented as official APCSC statements or manipulated in a misleading, deceptive, defamatory, or

malicious manner.

The APCSC reserves the right to address inappropriate, misleading, harassing, manipulated, defamatory, threatening, or malicious use of meeting related media content to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Security and Administrative Authority

The APCSC Executive Director, Commission Chair, legal counsel, authorized meeting administrators, and designated staff may implement additional administrative procedures necessary to maintain meeting order, participant safety, technology integrity, accessibility, operational continuity, and compliance with applicable law.

Such procedures may include:

- Waiting rooms
- Participant muting
- Participant removal
- Restricted screen sharing
- Registration requirements
- Security monitoring
- Meeting locks
- Controlled participant entry
- Capacity limitations
- Agenda management procedures
- Time limitations
- Technical moderation procedures

Reservation of Rights

The APCSC reserves the right to revise, amend, interpret, suspend, or update these procedures as necessary to support lawful meeting administration, organizational operations, participant safety, technological needs, or evolving operational requirements.

Nothing within these procedures shall be interpreted to waive any authority, discretion, legal protection, governmental immunity, or administrative right otherwise available to the APCSC under applicable law.

SOCIAL MEDIA RULES OF ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Social Media Rules of Engagement Guidelines

Rules of Engagement and Terms of Use

The Alabama Public Charter School Commission ("APCSC") recognizes the important role social media and digital communications play in supporting transparency, public engagement, and public access to information regarding Commission activities and Alabama public charter schools.

APCSC utilizes its official social media platforms to share announcements, Commission updates, public meeting information, agency initiatives, charter school highlights, and news related to Alabama public charter schools.

The purpose of APCSC social media platforms is to inform, engage, and support public awareness regarding Commission activities and Alabama public charter schools. Through these platforms, APCSC may also share the accomplishments and achievements of Alabama public charter schools, students, educators, and communities.

Official APCSC social media platforms are managed by designated APCSC communications personnel. APCSC reserves the right to moderate comments and interactions in accordance with these Rules of Engagement and applicable platform standards.

Notices

While APCSC may utilize social media platforms to communicate important information and public updates, official APCSC social media accounts are not intended to replace official Commission notices, formal meeting documentation, or emergency communication systems.

For official Commission information, meeting materials, public notices, or agency inquiries, users should refer to the official APCSC website or contact APCSC directly through official communication channels.

If you have an immediate concern or require direct assistance, please do not rely on social media comments or direct messages. Instead, please contact APCSC directly through official agency communication channels.

Community Comment Rules

Any comment may be removed at the discretion of APCSC social media administrators in accordance with these Rules of Engagement, platform standards, and applicable guidelines.

APCSC maintains a professional and respectful environment across its social media platforms. Comments or content may be removed if they:

- Include profanity or discriminatory language
- Promote violence or unlawful conduct
- Contain personal attacks, harassment, or intimidation
- Violate the privacy of students, staff members, or stakeholders
- Include spam, solicitation, or unauthorized advertising
- Include false or misleading information
- Include external links unrelated to APCSC business
- Are political campaign related in nature
- Are unrelated to the original topic or intended to disrupt discussion
- Constitute bullying, intimidation, or targeted harassment

Repeated violations may result in restricted access to APCSC social media platforms where permitted by applicable platform policies.

Content Standards and Platform Expectations

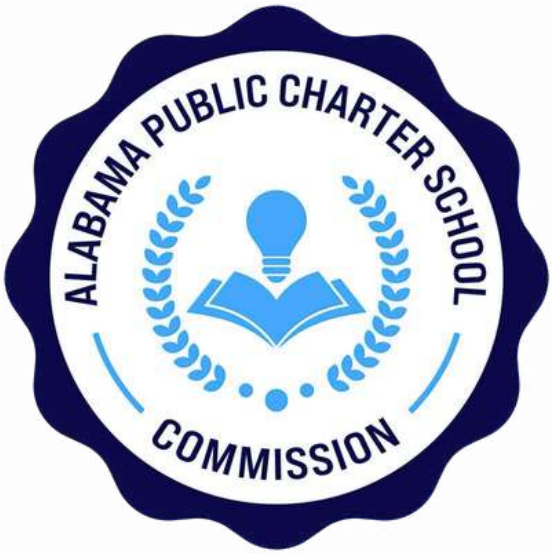
Content and comments shared through APCSC social media platforms should remain appropriate for broad public audiences and consistent with respectful public discourse.

Users engaging with APCSC social media platforms should understand that public comments and interactions may be retained in accordance with applicable public records and records retention requirements.

APCSC also upholds the Terms of Service and community standards established by each social media platform utilized by the agency, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X.

Links to external organizations or third party websites shared through APCSC social media platforms are provided for informational purposes only and do not necessarily constitute endorsement by APCSC.

APCSC reserves the right to update or modify these Rules of Engagement and Terms of Use as communication technologies, agency needs, or operational practices evolve.



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