The following public charter school definitions are included in Act 2015-3 and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) public charter school permanent rules and regulations adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education (SBOE).

**ACT.** The *Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act* enacted as Act No. 2015-3 to provide for public charter schools.

**APPLICANT.** A group with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status or that has submitted an application for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status that develops and submits an application for a public charter school to an authorizer.

**APPLICATION.** A proposal from an applicant to an authorizer to enter into a charter contract whereby the proposed school obtains public charter school status.

**AT–RISK STUDENT.** A student who has an economic or academic disadvantage that requires special services and assistance to succeed in educational programs. The term includes, but is not limited to, students who are members of economically disadvantaged families, students who are identified as having special education needs, students who are limited in English proficiency, students who are at risk of dropping out of high school, and students who do not meet minimum standards of academic proficiency.

**AUTHORIZER.** An entity authorized under the Act to review applications; approve or reject applications; enter into charter contracts with applicants; oversee public charter schools; and decide whether to renew, not renew, or revoke charter contracts.

**CHARTER CONTRACT.** A fixed-term renewable contract between a public charter school and an authorizer that outlines the roles, powers, responsibilities, and quantitative and qualitative performance expectations for each party to the contract.

**COMMISSION.** The Alabama Public Charter School Commission.

**CONVERSION PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL.** A public charter school that existed as a non-charter public school before becoming a public charter school. A conversion public charter school shall adopt and maintain a policy giving enrollment preference to students who reside within the former attendance zone of the public school.

**DEPARTMENT.** The Alabama State Department of Education.

**EDUCATION SERVICE PROVIDER.** An entity with which a public charter school intends to contract with for educational design, implementation, or comprehensive management. This relationship shall be articulated in the public charter school application.
GOVERNING BOARD. The independent board of a public charter school that is party to the charter contract with the authorizer. A governing board shall have at least 20 percent of its membership be parents of students who attend or have attended the public charter school for at least one academic year. Before the first day of instruction, the 20 percent membership requirement may be satisfied by parents who intend to have their students attend the public charter school.

GUIDELINES. The guidance for public charter schools issued by the Department.

LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD. A city or county board of education exercising management and control of a city or county local school system pursuant to state law.

LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM. A public agency that establishes and supervises one or more public schools within its geographical limits pursuant to state law. A local school system includes a city or county school system.

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AUTHORIZING STANDARDS. Standards for high-quality public charter schools issued by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.

NON–CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL. A public school other than a school formed pursuant to the Act. A public school that is under the direct management, governance, and control of a local school board or the state.

PARENT. A parent, guardian, or other person or entity having legal custody of a child.

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL. A public school formed pursuant to the Act.

RESIDENCE. The domicile of the student’s custodial parent.

START–UP PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL. A public charter school that did not exist as a non-charter public school prior to becoming a public charter school.

STUDENT. Any child who is eligible for attendance in public schools in the state.

STATE SUPERINTENDENT. The State Superintendent of Education.

NOTE: This working document “highlights” definitions included the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act (Act 2015-3) and the ALSDE public charter school permanent rules and regulations. If additional definitions are created as the ALSDE develops specific guidelines for public charter schools, this document will be updated, as needed. Please send questions to pcs@alsde.edu.