The Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act (Act 2015-3), Section 4(16)(f), indicates:

A public charter school provides an educational program that satisfies the following:

- Includes any grade or grades from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade.
- May include a specific academic approach or theme including, but not be limited to, vocational and technical training; visual and performing arts; liberal arts and classical education; or science, mathematics, and technology.
- Operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives as defined in its charter contract, such as college or career readiness, or both.
- Operates under the oversight of its authorizer in accordance with its charter contract.

Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI)

Public charter, start-up public charter, and conversion public charter schools are eligible for services from the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) if they meet AMSTI criteria. AMSTI serves math and science teachers and their administrators in Grades K-12. Services include summer institutes that provide subject- and grade-specific professional development, access to equipment and materials needed for hands on learning, and on-site mentoring and coaching by AMSTI specialists. Services may be requested by contacting the AMSTI site within the region that the school resides. Contact information may be found at www.amsti.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

May a school receive support without becoming an official AMSTI School?

Yes. Schools/systems may contact their regional AMSTI site and request customized services. Services are prioritized based on need with priority and focus schools receiving the majority of support. AMSTI also provides opportunities for math and science teachers and administrators to participate in Professional Learning Communities/Professional Learning Teams (PLCs/PLTs). Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are often awarded to teachers and Professional Learning Units (PLUs) are awarded to administrators for this participation.

What is an official AMSTI School?

An AMSTI School is a school that receives all of the benefits of the initiative including extensive professional development, equipment, supplies, and materials, and customized at-school support by math and science specialists. Students in AMSTI Schools learn math, science, and technology through activity-based, inquiry approaches consistent with the latest research on effective math and science instruction.
How does a school become an official AMSTI School?

Applications to become an AMSTI School are submitted to the regional AMSTI site director within the region where the school is located. Once accepted, teachers and administrators attend two-week long Summer Institutes for two consecutive summers. Professional development at the Summer Institutes is subject- and grade-specific. Once trained, teachers are provided all of the material and equipment needed for their students to learn through hands-on, inquiry-based instruction. AMSTI specialists are also available to assist teachers in this new way of teaching. Funding is the limiting factor in accepting new schools into AMSTI.

How may a school receive the complete AMSTI program if AMSTI funds are not sufficient to accept the school?

Many schools now “buy in” to AMSTI by purchasing the equipment and resources (textbook funds may be used for this) and have their teachers agree to attend training without stipends or provide the stipends for the teachers. Once trained, schools are eligible for continued AMSTI support and refurbishment of equipment and materials. The AMSTI site director is available to assist schools in estimating costs.

If I need additional information about AMSTI, who do I contact?

Additional information may be found at www.amsti.org, including contact information for the regional site that serves the region where your school is located. Additional information may also be obtained by calling the Alabama State Department of Education AMSTI Section at 334-353-9151.

NOTE: This working document “highlights” some components of the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act (Act 2015-3), but does not attempt to address all content specific to educational objectives, math, science, and technology. Information included in this working document will be updated as the Alabama State Department of Education develops specific guidance regarding Alabama public charter schools. Please send questions to pcs@alsde.edu.