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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 19, 2008

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Comptroller reports on charter school practices and viability

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Comptroller’s Office of Education Accountability released a report today that discusses characteristics of Tennessee’s charter schools, student achievement and teaching methods in Tennessee’s charter schools, and elements of charter school legislation.

The report, titled “Tennessee’s Charter Schools: Issues of Innovation and Sustainability,” found student eligibility restrictions and limited facilities funding may compromise the long-term viability of individual charter schools.

The report also found that neither the Tennessee Department of Education nor local school districts have established methods to share charter schools’ best practices with traditional public schools.

To compare student achievement in Tennessee’s charter and traditional public schools, the Office of Education Accountability contracted with the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) at the University of Memphis. CREP found evidence that some charter schools are helping students succeed academically.

The report compares charter schools and traditional public schools and notes that successful schools of both types share some common characteristics.

The report recommends that the General Assembly consider making eligibility for charter school enrollment less restrictive and consider more precisely defining state and local charter school facilities funding responsibilities. The state should also identify charter school best practices and implement a system for dissemination.

An electronic copy of the report is available at the Comptroller’s Office of Research website: <http://comptroller.state.tn.us/cpdivorea.htm>.

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