

Section A: Core Questions

- 1. What modification does the school's Board of Directors wish to make to the term(s) of the charter? Identify the page number(s) on which the term(s) is/are stated in the currently approved charter. If the term(s) of the charter the school wishes to modify is/are conditions placed on the charter by the Secretary of Education and members of the State Board of Education, state the condition(s) and the date(s) on which the condition(s) was/were placed on the school's charter.***

Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School would like to decrease their student enrollment by more than 15%. The school would like to modify their student enrollment between years 1 and 4 of operation. Current enrollment before the modification is listed in the original charter application on page 2. The updated enrollment numbers are listed in ***Appendix A***.

- 2. What is the effective date of the proposed modification? (Please note: if this is a request for an enrollment expansion of greater than 15%, the applicant must provide an impact analysis pursuant to 14 Del. Code Chapter 5 §511(b)3 as an Attachment See Section B Question 3 in this application.)***

The effective date of the proposed modification is Sept. 30th, 2014

- 3. The authorizer will review your most recent Performance Review Reports as part of your application. Discuss the school's academic performance, its compliance with the terms of its charter, and its financial viability as measured by the Performance Framework.***

Not Applicable

- 4. Describe the rationale for the request(s). Discuss any relevant research-based or evidence that supports this type of request. (Attachments may be provided.)***

The reduction in student enrollment would have significant positive impact on the school climate and learning environment as well as providing greater financial flexibility in the first two years of operation. The lower student enrollment is allowing for a smaller class size and decreased student to teacher ratio in the primary grades. Originally the class size was 25, with a 1:25 ratio. The new class size will be capped at 22 in the primary grades K-2, with a 1:22 teacher to student ratio. As several notable research studies have pointed out, "Young students benefit more when reduced class size programs span grades K-3. The achievement of students in small classes outpaces that of students in larger classes by a widening margin for each additional year spent in small classes (Fidler, 2001; Nye, Hedges, & Konstantopoulos, 2001a)."

Lowering student enrollment for year two of operation would also allow Academia Antonia Alonso to remain on one floor of the Community Education Building, versus expanding to a second floor as originally planned. Having all students on one floor will make it easier for

the school to ensure the implementation of its Expeditionary Learning school culture of High Quality Work, Character, and Mastery of Content.

5. ***Describe how the proposed modification will impact the operation of the school. Include how student achievement, staffing, facilities, and the financial viability of the school may be impacted in the current school year and for the remainder of the school's charter term.***

To serve 325 students on one floor Academia Antonia Alonso will increase the number of classrooms from 12 to 15 by using the art, music and teacher center as classrooms. This change will decrease the rent for the 2015-2016 school year which will provide cash flow relief for the school in its second year of operation. This postponement will allow the school to redirect some of its funding into program support areas (staffing and materials). The proposed modification generates annual surpluses over and beyond the required 2% contingency reserve. The updated budget and budget narrative are presented in *Appendix B*.

6. ***Indicate the projected impact, if any, of the proposed modification on the school's present financial position, and its financial position going forward. If the modification promises to create financial challenges, indicate how those will be remedied.***

The school's financial position will be enhanced as annual enrollment will be increased by 25 students per year (after accounting for the modification – e.g. 325 students versus 300). This positive impact on revenues together with the reduction in rent resulting from the delay in the use of the second floor allows the school to significantly strengthen its programmatic investments in the early years of school operations. The increase in the number of students to 325 for year two will trigger additional staff positions further strengthening the school in its ability to deliver its operational and academic programs.

Section B Questions:

1. ***Discuss your objective in seeking the proposed modification.***

The objective of lowering La Academia's enrollment in years 2 through 4 is primarily to allow the school to lower class size in the primary grades while establishing a positive and strong school culture. Decreasing the classroom ratio to 1:22 in the primary grades (K-2) will contribute to allowing leadership and staff to establish the culture and climate required by a successful implementation of the EL model. Delaying the takedown of the second floor has a positive contribution to the school's financial viability, allowing it to repay the CEB for its deferral of rent expenses in year 1 and start repaying deferred CMO expenses. Furthermore, adding 25 students in the 3rd year (425 versus the original 400) reduces the financial burden on the school in the expansion year in light of the increased revenue generated by the additional 25 students.

With second year operations contained on one floor the school leader, and the enhanced support staff will be able to more effectively engage teachers and students in the culture building and educational program delivery, helping ensure a successful implementation of the Expeditionary Learning school model. This close monitoring of teaching and learning is essential for a successful school, especially in the early years of start-up.

2. *Describe the nature and extent of the proposed changes to the school's current grade configuration. Indicate whether you seek to add or cease offering a grade or grades, substantially increase or decrease current enrollment practices and/or projections for future enrollment, etc. (Please make sure to indicate whether you seek an increase or reduction of enrollment of between 5% and 15% or more than 15% of the currently approved total enrollment and note that modification requests that fall into those ranges must be received by the Department of Education's Charter School Office between November 1 and December 31.)*

Academia seeks to decrease enrollment by more than 15%. In the initial charter application the school proposed starting with 300 Kindergarten and 1st graders, and then enrolling an additional 100 students each subsequent year, capping the final enrollment at 600. This modification will result in the school reaching their maximum enrollment one year later than proposed in their original Charter. Moving forward, each year the school will bring in an additional 110 Kindergarten students. The proposed enrollment is presented in Appendix A, and includes consideration for student attrition in grades 2 through 5. Most, if not all of attrition in K and 1st grade will be offset by student recruitment.

3. *If your proposed modification involves an expansion of greater than 15% of your currently approved enrollment and the change will be effective within 18 months of the date of this application, please provide as an Attachment and impact analysis that discusses both the positive and negative impacts this expansion will have on the surrounding school districts and community.*

Not Applicable

4. *Describe the projected impact of the enrollment modification on the school's program, mission, culture and offerings (both academic and non-academic). Please note: any projected financial impact should be addressed in Core Question #6.*

The overall mission and culture of the school will not change. The school's charter is centered on Expeditionary Learning and Two-Way Dual Language Immersion. This will continue to be true; the modification will allow the school to better build its human capital capacity and more effectively build a successful implementation in years two through four.