



**Delaware Design-Lab High School
2015-2016**

Report Date: 1 March 2015

**DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
APPLICATION TO MODIFY AN APPROVED CHARTER
2014-15**

DE Department of Education
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Table 2

Minor Modification (Section A Only)		Major Modification (Section A <i>AND</i> additional questions identified below)	
	Enrollment change (increase or decrease) between 5 and 15%		Performance Agreement Section A only
	Change agreement with EMO/CMO		Enrollment change (increase or decrease) of greater than 15% Section B
	Start date (one-time) delay		Grade configuration (adding grade levels or reducing grade levels) Section C
	Name of charter school		Educational Program (i.e. curriculum) Section D
	Existing or planned school facilities or structures (including any plan to use temporary or modular structures)		Mission (includes At-Risk designation) Section E
	Change in terms to current site facility arrangement (i.e. lease to purchase)		Replace, remove, or add EMO/CMO, or transfer of authorizer Section F
	Other		Enrollment preferences Section G
		X	Location change Section H
			Goals for student performance Section I

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Section A Core Questions:

1. What modification does the school's Board of Directors want 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 wants 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.

The Board of Directors of Delaware Design-Lab High School requests approval for a change in the location of the school to 179 Stanton Christiana Road, midway between Wilmington and Newark. On page 2 of the Charter Application the proposed location had been identified as Wilmington.

2. What is the effective date of the proposed modification?

The modification is requested as soon as possible to secure a Certificate of Occupancy for the start of the 2015 school year.

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

N/A

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

On 17 April 2014, the Delaware Secretary of Education approved Delaware Design-Lab High School's request to delay school opening until 2015. As a result we were not able to successfully negotiate an extension of our start date with the site we had secured in downtown Wilmington. The Landlord terminated that lease in December 2014 causing us to seek another location. There were no suitable school locations available to us in the city of Wilmington. A new location emerged about nine miles away.

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

The operation of the school will be positively impacted by the change in location. There is no negative impact on student achievement and staffing in the current school year

and in the years for the remainder of the school's charter term. The change in facilities improves the school's financial viability. Square foot costs are lower, ample parking is free, and access to several acres of grounds that provide opportunities for recreation and sports are included without charge.

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 modification improves the school's financial position because the cost for space and amenities are more favorable to the school budget than those of the previous location. Square foot costs are lower. There are no additional charges for parking, outside grounds for recreation and sports, and use of an auditorium.

Section H Questions:

1. Please describe any challenges that the current school facility presents. If the modification is approved, will it generate any new challenges and describe how you will address them.

The Delaware Secretary of Education approved Design-Lab High School's request to delay school opening until 2015. We were not able to successfully negotiate an extension of our start date with the site we had secured in downtown Wilmington. As a result, the Landlord terminated that lease.

We were able to locate an excellent alternative site outside of the city that still serves the same population of students. The new site is an overall improvement with an attractive wooded campus and a long setback from the road. The new site eliminates many of the challenges with the downtown site such as safety, security, parking, transportation, cafeteria, large-group meeting space, outdoor activities, and cost.

2. Please describe the proposed location of the school. Include information about siting, space available, costs to the school (and how they differ from the current facilities arrangement), safety, any co-located programs sharing the same facility, the quality of the instructional and non-instructional space and any other significant factors impacting the attractiveness and viability of the proposed facility.

The new location is about nine miles from the Wilmington site. The property has an 11-acre secure wooded campus with ample free parking and a secure drop-off point for students, at a lower lease rate than the previous site. Parents who had already registered students, thinking we would be located in the city, expressed relief that we had secured a more convenient and secure site that was even easier for them to get to.

Compared to the city location, the layout and design of the proposed building better meet the needs of high school aged students. Classrooms have larger square footage, hallways are wider, and ceilings are higher. The parking lot will accommodate our Driver's Education classes and students who drive.

Two previous charter schools have successfully used the site in their startup years so it has already been inspected and approved twice before as meeting DOE requirements for a school location. There are ample classrooms for the first years with additional outside acreage to bring in modular classrooms or to build additional annex buildings as indicated by enrollment increases in future years. The new site offers safe and secure space for sports and other outdoor activities right on the campus that were not available at the previous site.

The site is known as "Faith City" and is owned by a non-profit church. It is made clear to the students and parents that the school is not affiliated with the church in any way. Design-Lab High students and staff will not come in contact with church-related activities or visitors because the lease outlines specific hours of use for both parties. In addition to the separate wing that makes up the school, the facility includes a 600-seat auditorium that is also available for free to the school except for Sundays and Wednesday evenings. There is also a large and attractive multipurpose room with a commercial grade kitchen that will be used for student lunch periods, special events, faculty meetings, and professional development.

Having leased to two other charter schools before, the landlord is helpful regarding the needs and expectations of schools in their startup years. We were able to negotiate a fair and reasonable 5-year lease that meets the financial and programmatic needs of the school at about half the cost of the previous site.

3. Describe the projected impact of the location modification on the school's program, mission, culture and offerings (both academic and non-academic).

The new location has already had a favorable impact on student and parent expectations and has immediately boosted enrollment rates. There is no negative impact or changes to the school's program, mission, culture or offerings.

The site enhances the school's program. Since there are several acres of wooded area included on the campus the program is better able to provide onsite environmental and nature oriented activities including environmental awareness, horticulture, a wildlife and nature center, walking trails, park design, biology, visual science and outdoor classes.

There will be strengthened affiliations with community organizations such as Delaware Greenways, the Nature Conservancy, Wilmington Trail Club, the Delaware Nature Society, the Delaware Museum of Natural History and the Guild of Natural Science

Illustrators. A radio station located on the property offers opportunities for student produced radio and television productions as part of the students' career pathways.

4. Articulate a facility usage plan for the school going forward. Will the proposed location solve space needs for a limited amount of time or permanently? Will further modifications be required?

The lease is for a five-year term, with the option to renew for an additional ten-years in five-year increments. The landlord is eager to work with Design-Lab High School in a long-term relationship with the understanding that the site has previously accommodated portable classrooms and has space for additional construction as necessary. As enrollment grows we anticipate a need to submit a minor modification to add temporary or modular structures and ultimately additional permanent facilities on the campus.

Christiana Mall

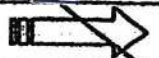
Entrance



179 Stanton Christiana Rd
Newark DE 19702
"Faith City"

- 11 acres
- parking, free
- recreation/fields
- commercial kitchen
- 30K sq. ft usable space (excludes offices & auditorium)
- ~~∅~~ taxes

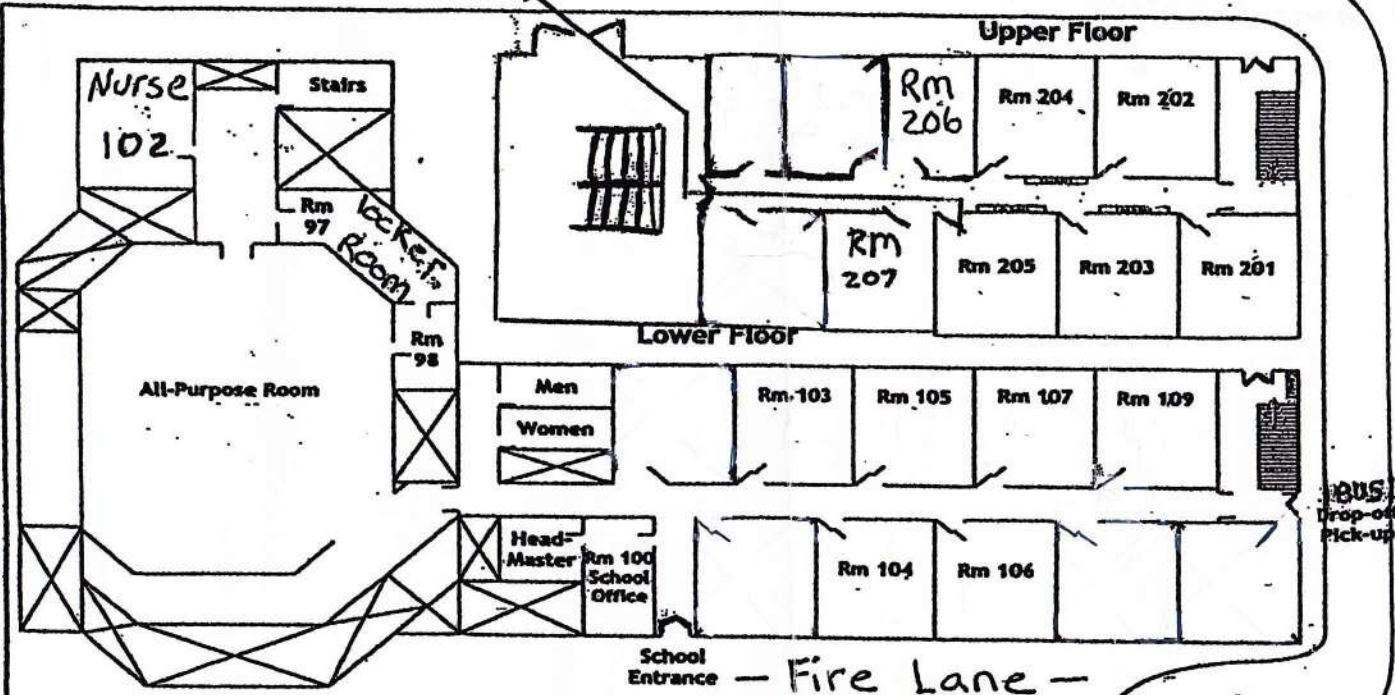
One - Way



No Parking

15 MPH

Upper Floor



- additional buildings for future enrollment
- space for modulars for future enrollment

No Parking

No Parking

15 MPH

Parent Parking

office staff parking

student drop-off & pick-up

Parent Parking

Faculty - Staff Parking

Faculty - Staff Parking

No Parking

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