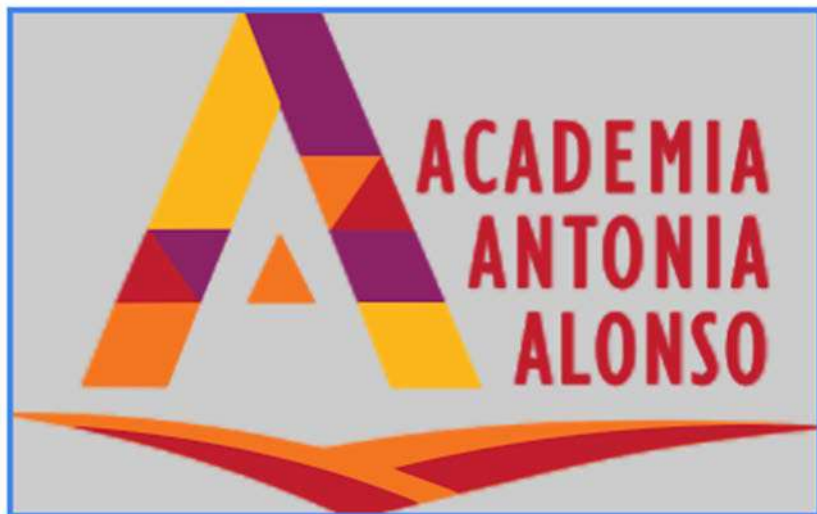


DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
APPLICATION TO MODIFY AN APPROVED CHARTER
2017-18



DE Department of Education
Charter School Office
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I. INTRODUCTION

Opportunities for schools to grow and change do not always conveniently occur at the time of a charter school's renewal. As a result, we have developed this Modification Application to allow charter schools an opportunity to propose areas they would like to amend in their approved charters.

Modifications include any change to a school's original charter, such as increasing/decreasing student enrollment capacity, adding/subtracting additional grades, changing the school's mission, and moving to a new facility. Table 1 below outlines the most common types of modification requests and identifies them as either minor or major modifications.

The Delaware Department of Education's Charter School Office has developed specific application questions based on your school's desired change. These questions are designed to provide schools with an opportunity to demonstrate how this proposed modification will enhance their program's success and viability.

As required by law, charter schools shall be modified by the same procedure and based on the same criteria as they are approved. Minor modifications to a charter may be approved by the Secretary of Education with the assent of the State Board of Education. Most major modifications to a charter must be considered through the application process with recommendation for approval or denial made initially by the Charter School Accountability Committee, which is then considered by the Secretary of Education and a final decision is presented to the State Board of Education for assent.

Table 1

Type of modification	Minor Modification	Major Modification	Application Deadline	Charter School Accountability Committee Required
Enrollment change(increase or decrease) between 5 and 15%	X		Applications only accepted between November 1 st and December 31 st	
Enrollment change(increase or decrease) of greater than 15%		X	Applications only accepted between November 1 st and December 31 st	X
Grade configuration (adding grade levels or reducing grade levels)		X	Recommended: March 1 st	X
Educational Program (i.e. curriculum)		X	Recommended: March 1 st	X
Mission (includes At-Risk designation)		X	Recommended: March 1 st	X
Replace, remove, or add EMO/CMO, or transfer of authorizer		X	Recommended: March 1 st	X
Change agreement with EMO/CMO	X		None	
Enrollment preferences		X	Recommended: March 1 st	X
Location change		X	Recommended: March 1 st	X
Goals for student performance		X	Recommended: March 1 st	X
Performance Agreement		X	None	
Start date (one-time) delay	X		None	
Name of charter school	X		None	
Existing or planned school facilities or structures (including any plan to use temporary or modular structures)	X		None	
Change in terms to current site facility arrangement (i.e. lease to purchase)	X		None	
Educator Evaluation Process	X		None	
A change to the current authorized number of hours, either daily or annually, devoted to actual school sessions.	X		None	

II. MODIFICATION PROCESS

Application Submission: A completed application must be emailed to the Department of Education's Charter School Office email at infocso@doe.k12.de.us between November 1 and December 31 if requesting an *increase or reduction of enrollment of between 5 and 15% OR more than 15% of the currently approved total enrollment*. Please note that all other modification requests do not have statutory deadlines, but the Charter School Office has provided *recommended* deadlines in order to facilitate a more efficient application process. Incomplete applications, or applications received after the deadline, will not be considered.

Applicants submitting a minor modification will answer the "Core Questions" only and provide evidence of fiscal viability as it applies to the modification request.

Applicants submitting a major modification will answer the "Core Questions" *and any additional related questions*, including evidence of fiscal viability, as applicable to the modification request. These additional questions are identified in Table 2.

Application Review: All applications must be complete to be evaluated. The application for modification will be reviewed and evaluated by the approving authority as outlined in 14 Del. C. ch. 5 and applicable provisions of 14 DE Admin. Code § 275.

III. APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

The prescribed content and format for the modification application are specified below.

Document Length: The application may not exceed 20 pages, not including the cover page, table of contents, or appendices.

Format: All pages must be typed with 1-inch page margins and 12-point font, single-spaced (Helvetica or Arial font and left justification), and include consecutive page numbers in the footer. Charts may use single spacing and a type size of 10-point font.

Cover Page: Provide a cover page that includes the school's name, the date of submission and the type of modification requested (minor or major).

Table of Contents: Provide a clearly labeled table of contents naming all major sections and appendices with corresponding page numbers.

Appendices: All supplementary documents should be identified appropriately and labeled as appendices at the end of the application.

IV. CHARTER SCHOOL MODIFICATION APPLICATION QUESTIONS

There are core questions that must be answered by the applicant, regardless of whether the modification is considered a minor or major modification. Additional questions are determined by the specific nature of the request, for example expansion or reduction by more than 15%, change of name, change of location, etc. Please provide clear, complete, and accurate information in response to each question.

Please indicate the type(s) of modification(s) you are requesting by checking all applicable boxes below:

Table 2

Minor Modification (Section A Only)		Major Modification (Section A <u>AND</u> 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
	Educator Evaluation Process		Enrollment preferences Section G
	A change to the current authorized number of hours, either daily or annually, devoted to actual school sessions.		Location change Section H
X	Other		Goals for student performance Section I

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 La Academia Board of Directors, in conjunction with its Charter Renewal Application, is requesting to discontinue its certification-focused expeditionary learning educational program, currently in partnership with EL Education, replacing it with a Project-Based Learning framework and principles that we believe will be considerably more supportive of the school's mission to have bilingual, biliterate and bicultural students when they complete 5th grade.

References to the educational program currently in place for the school can be found in Section 6 of the original Charter Application, starting on page 30 of the document.

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

November 1, 2017

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.

Please refer to La Academia's Charter Renewal Application for detailed responses,

- Section 5.II – Academia Performance Framework assessment and discussion regarding school's past performance.
- Section 5.III – Organizational Performance Framework assessment and performance discussion.
- Section 5.IV – Financial Performance Framework assessment and discussion regarding the school's performance over the past three years.

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*)

Consistent with our commitment to the school's original charter application, La Academia focused on delivering pedagogies and related initiatives to both two-way language immersion and Expeditionary Learning practices. This created unanticipated challenges regarding time for teacher training and professional development, human capital management, and retention of trained teachers and leaders. In addition, lack of resources to appropriately support the high

levels of psychological, social and emotional needs of our at-risk student population meant teachers and school leadership spent more classroom time attending to these areas. Many students needed these supports to be able to engage in meaningful and focused learning.

On the curricular front, La Academia implemented IDEL as its assessment tool, only to discover that it was inadequate to measure growth in language acquisition. In addition, within the EL framework, teachers were expected to create curriculum content in two languages, based on their expeditions. This proved to be a greater than expected challenge for faculty and leadership alike. Professional development in our first three years focused almost exclusively on the implementation of EL certification practices and processes, which left limited training time to prepare teachers for the effective delivery of two-way immersion curriculum and pedagogy. These challenges also negatively affected teacher retention.

La Academia's attempt to implement a two-way language immersion curriculum while becoming an EL Education certified school was a considerably more complex and challenging undertaking than school founders originally projected. Over the school's first three years, with the support of EL Education, La Academia showed progress in incorporating expeditionary learning approaches to instruction across all grades, and in building a school culture of student engagement, empowerment, and creativity. However, these achievements came at the expense of progress toward our mission of developing bilingual, biliterate and bicultural learners. To focus on meeting school academic achievement targets in 2017-18 and beyond, we are refocusing teacher development and instructional emphasis around dual language pedagogical best practices.

To provide us with the flexibility and time needed to meet our goal of being the best two-way immersion program in Delaware, we have decided to shift the focus of our EL Education partnership from becoming an EL Certified School to being a school inspired by Project Based Learning (PBL) principles. As a school inspired by these principles, La Academia will continue to benefit from a revised level of professional development and supports from institutions focused on the latter. This move will allow us to redirect resources and efforts to implementing the *Maravillas/Wonders* immersion curriculum and providing robust teacher development and supports in two-way immersion pedagogy. *Maravillas/Wonders* is scoped and sequenced according to Common Core standards, which will help teachers better align instruction and student performance to meet State standards.

Please refer to Supplemental Attachment 3 for further details regarding the transition from what EL Education proposed in the Original Charter to La Academia's equivalent Renewal project-based learning strategies and action plans.

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 proposed modification will have no impact on the school's facilities. We expect that it will

also offer some financial relief, as the school will be able to redirect its EL Education fees, estimated at some \$90,000, to professional development activities and supports that are better aligned with the delivery of La Academia's mission, of having bilingual, biliterate and bicultural students by the time they complete their 5th grade year at the school. School leadership does not expect to spend the same amounts to implement professional development activities in project based learning, mindfulness and other culture and character building endeavors.

The Board and the School Leader believe strongly that this modification will allow the organization to better focus on the school's mission, develop and align professional development initiatives to build faculty and staff capacities to successfully deliver data-driven instruction that is timely and responsive to student intervention needs.

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 Board of Directors, school leadership and financial advisors do not see this modification as having any significant impact on La Academia's financial position for the 2017 – 2018 school year, and in future years.

Section B Questions:

1. Describe the nature and extent of the proposed changes to the school's current grade configuration, if applicable. 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.)*
2. 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, identify the impacts of this expansion on the surrounding school districts and community for consideration.

****Please note:** In addition to meeting the approval criteria established in 14 Del. C. § 512, an authorizer considering a charter school's application for **expansion by more than 15% occurring less than 18 months from the date of the modification application** shall also consider impact of the proposed new school or expansion. **"Impact"** is the positive and negative effect that a new charter school or charter school expansion, if it should be approved, is projected to have upon the surrounding area and the education system of the state. Information regarding Impact may, by itself or in combination with other factors,

form the basis for conditions being placed on the approval of a new charter school or modification. Impact shall include educational, financial, and community information.

Pursuant to 14 Del. C. § 511(b)(4), “information regarding impact may, by itself or in combination with other factors, form the basis for conditions being placed on the approval. Those conditions may include but shall not be limited to restrictions or prohibitions on geographic location, programmatic offerings, academic focus or emphasis, and grade levels served.”

For each application, members of the public will have the opportunity to submit public comments that describe the positive and negative impact that the proposed charter school will have on the surrounding area and the education system of the state. Based on the information submitted in these public comments, the Department of Education and the State Board of Education may propose conditions relating to impact. A charter applicant will have opportunities to respond to any proposed conditions at the CSAC Final Meeting, a public hearing, and in writing prior to the decision on whether the charter is approved.

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

Section C Questions:

1. 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.)*
2. Provide an overview of the planned curriculum, including one scope and sequence per subject area per grade band (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) for each grade level that will be affected by this modification. The scope and sequence documents should identify course outcomes and demonstrate clear alignment with the Delaware Content Standards (including Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, and Next Generation Science Standards) in all content areas. Summarize curricular choices, by subject, and the rationale for each choice, including research and other evidence of effectiveness. If the modification includes a commitment to join the Social Studies Coalition, then a signed MOU would replace the scope and sequence requirement for Social Studies.
3. Provide one Mathematics unit of instruction with corresponding summative assessments and scoring rubrics, and one ELA unit with corresponding summative assessment and scoring rubrics to demonstrate alignment of instruction to the Delaware Content Standards (Common Core State

Standards in ELA and Mathematics). If the school does not intend to join the Delaware Science or Social Studies Coalitions, then 1 Science unit and 1 Social Studies unit with corresponding summative assessments and scoring rubrics to demonstrate alignment of instruction to the Next Generation Science Standards and Delaware Social Studies Content Standards are also required.

Section D Questions:

1. Present evidence that the proposed educational program is research based and has been or will be rigorous, engaging, and effective for the anticipated student population. If evidence of effectiveness in other schools serving similar populations is not available, explain why the proposed program is likely to succeed with your anticipated population.
2. Describe how the proposed educational program will serve the diverse needs of students, such as those with disabilities, gifted and talented learners, and English Language Learners.
3. Provide an overview of the planned curriculum, including one scope and sequence per subject area per grade band (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) for each grade level that will be affected by this modification. The scope and sequence documents should identify course outcomes and demonstrate clear alignment with the Delaware Content Standards (including Common Core State Standards in ELA and Mathematics, and Next Generation Science Standards) in all content areas. Summarize curricular choices, by subject, and the rationale for each choice, including research and other evidence of effectiveness. If the modification includes a commitment to join the Social Studies Coalition, then a signed MOU would replace the scope and sequence requirement for Social Studies.
4. Provide one Mathematics unit of instruction with corresponding summative assessments and scoring rubrics, and one ELA unit with corresponding summative assessment and scoring rubrics to demonstrate alignment of instruction to the Delaware Content Standards (Common Core State Standards in ELA and Mathematics). If the school does not intend to join the Delaware Science or Social Studies Coalitions, then 1 Science unit and 1 Social Studies unit with corresponding summative assessments and scoring rubrics to demonstrate alignment of instruction to the Next Generation Science Standards and Delaware Social Studies Content Standards are also required.

Section E Questions:

1. Describe the school's current educational philosophy and how the proposed mission will be integrated into the current educational program.
2. Describe how the proposed mission will result in higher academic achievement for the school's student population.

Section F Questions:

1. If you are seeking to transfer from your current authorizer to another, detail the rationale and identify the projected benefits to the school and its students. Identify any prospective challenges and indicate your plans for remediation.
2. Detail the reason(s) for seeking to add, replace or remove an EMO/CMO Identify any prospective challenges and indicate your plans for remediation. Include the projected benefits. (Note: Pursuant to 14 DE Admin. Code § 275.9.4.3, an application to replace, remove or permit the school to operate without an educational management organization providing administrative, managerial or instructional staff or services to the charter holder at any time before the First Instructional Day is considered an application for a new charter and shall not be processed or considered as a modification application.)
3. If the proposed modification will entail costs that the school is not currently carrying, please identify them and present financial information indicating that such costs are viable and how the school will address them.
4. If the school seeks to add or replace an EMO/CMO, please present evidence that its program is sound, and that affiliation with that organization is likely to improve academic performance for students. If the EMO/CMO works or has worked with other schools within or outside the state, provide evidence of its record of such performance. (Note: Pursuant to 14 DE Admin. Code § 275.9.4.3, an application to replace, remove or permit the school to operate without an educational management organization providing administrative, managerial or instructional staff or services to the charter holder at any time before the First Instructional Day is considered an application for a new charter and shall not be processed or considered as a modification application.)

Section G Questions:

1. Describe the reasons why the current enrollment preference practices are problematic and require revision.
2. Discuss how the modification will solve the current problems and ultimately benefit the school.
3. Identify any changes to the school's program that will likely result from the modified preference practices.

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.

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

Section I Questions:

1. Explain how the school's current goals for student performance are problematic. Discuss how the modification you seek will likely remedy those problems, including any established evidence or research base. Provide evidence that the proposed student performance goals are academically sound and will benefit all students.
2. Discuss your students' current performance as measured by the Performance Framework and how the proposed change will improve academic performance.
3. If the modification is approved, discuss any new challenges this would present and how you will address them.