

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FORM FOR

A NEW SCHOOL TO BE OPENED

2008 DEC 31 AM 9 02

IN AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER 2010

Las Americas ASPIRA Academy

Name of Proposed School

MariBeth Welch

Name of Contact Person

Jaime H. Rivera, M.D.

Name of the Head of the Board of Directors

mwelch@aspirail.org

Mailing Address of Contact Person

AUGUST 16, 2010

Proposed Opening Date

773-733-3632 x 135 (ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois)

Telephone Number of Contact Person

K-8

Grades for School

773-733-3632

Fax Number of Contact Person

mwelch@aspirail.org

E-mail Address of Contact Person

First Year Enrollment

340

Total Number

K-1 & 5

First Year Grade Span

Second Year Enrollment

540

Total Number

K-2 & 5-6

Second Year Grade Span

Third Year Enrollment

740

Total Number

K-3 & 5-7

Third Year Grade Span

Fourth Year Enrollment

940

Total Number

K-8

Fourth Year Grade Span

Note: If this application is approved by the Department of Education and State Board of Education, with or without amendment, the final approved application and any amendments and conditions will serve as the approved charter for the school. Once granted, a charter cannot be modified without the approval of the Secretary of Education (see 14 Delaware Code, Section 511).

Enrollment Breakdown by Grades

List the enrollment per grade for each of the first four years of school operation.

First Year Enrollment

Grade	Number
K	120
1	120
5	120
Total 1st Year Enrollment	360

Second Year Enrollment

Grade	Number
K	120
1	100
2	120
5	100
6	120
Total 2nd Year Enrollment	560

Third Year Enrollment

Grade	Number
K	120
1	100
2	100
3	120
5	100
6	100
7	120
Total 3rd Year Enrollment	760

Fourth Year Enrollment

Grade	Number
K	120
1	100
2	100
3	100
4	120
5	100
6	100
7	100
8	120
Total 4th Year Enrollment	960

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Las Americas ASPIRA Academy Narrative (one page).

The *mission* of the **Las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA)** is to provide a world-class education that prepares students through a dual language project-based learning curriculum, to become healthy productive community members and leaders, with an *expectation* that *every* child, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic level, is college bound. In the initial four year authorization of the charter, LAAA will serve students K-8, beginning in the initial year with grades K-1 and 5. To be located in New Castle County, the school will seek to achieve a student body that is 50% First language Spanish - English Language Learners & 50% First Language English - Spanish Language Learners, and will serve 940 K-8 students of diverse ethnic, racial and socio-economic backgrounds, by FY2014.

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA) is the direct outgrowth of the mission of ASPIRA of Delaware, Inc., an associate office of the national ASPIRA Association. ASPIRA, since its start with ASPIRA New York, has had over forty-seven years of experience creating and implementing formal and informal education programs that build up youth self-esteem, cultural awareness, and leadership abilities. ASPIRA associate offices successfully operate nine charter schools in 3 cities: Philadelphia, Miami and Chicago. Originally founded as a Puerto-Rican organization, ASPIRA Associate Offices in the 6 states of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Florida and Illinois and the commonwealth of Puerto Rico now serve a diverse population of youth, with the specific mission to empower the Puerto Rican and Latino community through advocacy and the education and leadership development of its youth.

A 2008 report¹ released by the Delaware Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs states that "over the last ten years the number of Hispanic children in Delaware's schools has grown significantly with an overall increase of about 60% between the '97-'98 and '07-'08 school years. Forty-four percent of Hispanic students enrolled in English language learner programming. Data from the Department of Education show that they continue to experience significant achievement gaps. For instance, when examining the annual Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP) scores, we find that across all test subjects, Hispanic ethnicity and limited English proficiency (LEP) are both associated with low testing scores." The LAAA dual language immersion project-based learning curriculum, where students learn language while learning academic content aligned to Delaware standards, is a proven approach for English Language Learners to attain both English literacy and to meet and exceed state learning standards.

The academic, physical, social, and emotional development of our students rests on:

- ***ASPIRA Principles*** of Awareness, Analysis and Action;
- The belief that the defining feature of a superb education rests on *what happens in the classroom*. Everything starts in the classroom and must be built around it;
- Setting *high expectations* that *every* student is college-bound;
- ***Building on the first language*** of English Language Learners to increase their academic performance and enriching the education of English-speaking children by having them achieve *literacy and fluency in a second language*;
- Creating *strong partnerships* among parents, community, private sectors, teachers and staff to increase overall educational achievement and attainment.

¹ **The Education Status of the Hispanic Community in Delaware: An Issue Brief Presented by the Governor's Consortium on Hispanic Affairs** In Collaboration with the University of Delaware Center for Community Research and Service Issue Brief 2 | October, 2008.

Q#1. Applicant Qualifications

ASPIRA of Delaware, Inc. is the founding community-based organization which decided to create the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA), in response to the critical need for culturally relevant and pedagogically effective small schools that will set high education expectations and deliver a world class curriculum to Hispanic students and other underserved youth currently experiencing low academic outcomes. Dr. Jaime Rivera, the Chairperson of the ASPIRA of Delaware Board of Directors, the ASPIRA Board Members, and the parents and community members of the Wilmington Area Latino Communities have reached out to community partners¹ who have responded very positively to the LAAA proposal to locate a K-8 dual language project-based learning charter school in the New Castle County area where there are emerging and growing diverse income communities with growing Hispanic populations.

- a. Describe the involvement of each of the Delaware certified teachers, parents, and community members who have participated in the preparation of the application and the development of the proposed school.**

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy charter school development team who participated in the groundwork and preparation of the application includes Delaware certified teachers, parents and community members, ASPIRA Association partners, and consultants, including ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois, Innovative Schools Development Corporation, The AXIS Group, and CB Richard Ellis.

Delaware certified teachers: Caridad Alonso is a Delaware certified teacher who is actively involved with ASPIRA's co-curricular programs promoting finishing high school and going to college, is the team leaders for LAAA curriculum development. Named 2007 Delaware Teacher of the Year, Caridad Alonso is a Spanish Reading Specialist in grades one through five at William C. Lewis Dual Language Elementary School in Wilmington. Ms. Alonso is the first Dual Language teacher to receive the Delaware's top educator honor and is the forty-third Teacher of the Year since Delaware's recognition program began in 1965. She also has been extremely active in improving the quality of education in Delaware. She has successfully authored numerous education grants for her school programs totaling nearly \$43,000. Ms. Alonso also developed an immersion foreign language program in Spanish for pre-K and first grade English native speakers. She has trained a cadre of teachers to implement this curriculum using effective instructional strategies. She also serves as an English Language Learner Elementary Support Specialist and provides district-wide monthly professional development workshops. Caridad will serve on the LAAA Board of Directors.

In addition, Margie Lopez Waite, part of the founding group and a member of the LAAA Board, is a Delaware certified K-8 teacher and a parent of two children enrolled in Delaware K-12 Public Schools. She brought these multiple perspectives to the table in developing the mission and vision of the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy.

¹ See Appendix 1A: Community partner letters of support from the University of Delaware, Westside Family Healthcare, and the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.

Delaware Parents of K-12 Students: To supplement the perspective brought by Margie Lopez Waite, ASPIRA Illinois, which has assisted throughout the process of developing the LAAA application, ASPIRA of Delaware also contracted with the Innovative Schools Development Corporation (ISDC) to conduct a feasibility study in Spanish and English,² interviewing potential parents regarding their concerns and interests related to the creation of a K-8 dual- language charter school. Findings included a high interest in the creation of a dual language charter school in the Bear Delaware area, with 22 out of the 23 parents interviewed stating that they are interested in the ASPIRA concept for their child(ren). The responses to the questionnaire, which asked a total of 25 questions ranging from school dual language concept to school location, school lunch, college expectations, email access and extended day programs were used to further inform and shape the design and offerings of the school.

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy Board of Directors set the mission and vision of the charter and has final approval of the application. Jaime H. Rivera, MD the Chairman of the LAAA Board of Directors has been the team leader for the project, and has been involved with every step of the LAAA charter school development. He has been the liaison with the ASPIRA National Board, with ISDC, and with ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois. He has also reached out to ASPIRA community partners: the University of Delaware, the Westside Family Health Center the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, the Latin American Community Center, and the Business Roundtable, among others. The Board of LAAA has also identified the probable site of the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy.

- b. Describe how the group that participated in the development of the application came together and if there are any partnership arrangement with existing schools, educational programs, business, non-profit organizations, or any other entities or groups. If any consultants or contractors were enlisted to help prepare this application, identify them, describe their qualifications, and indicate the areas where they provided information and assistance.**

The Board of Directors of ASPIRA of Delaware, Inc., which is an affiliate of the 40 year-old ASPIRA Association, a national Hispanic organization with affiliates in six states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, came together in Spring 2008 to discuss creating a charter school that would meet the educational needs of the growing Delaware Hispanic community. The AOD Board of Directors has been the wind behind the sails of the LAAA charter school launch. However, current members of the boards of directors of LAAA and Aspira of Delaware have been working together on a volunteer basis providing educational services to Hispanic Delawareans as Friends of Aspira for over a decade. Throughout this time, the group has been in active discussion regarding the need for Hispanic-serving charter schools in Delaware.

² See Appendix 1B: Innovative Schools Development Corporation feasibility survey summary. Surveys conducted at the Greater Newark Boys and Girls Club on 11-18-08 as well as the Westside Health Clinic in Brookside 11-25-08.

Community Partners: Identified community partners³ include Westside Family Health which will partner through providing family health support to the school; the Christina School District, which will partner by providing early childhood services; The University of Delaware, which will be a partner in curriculum and professional development; and the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, among others.

ASPIRA Association affiliates in Miami, Philadelphia, and Chicago currently operate nine charter schools. The national ASPIRA Association, and two of the affiliates, ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois and ASPIRA of Pennsylvania, Inc., which currently operate a combined total of 6 charter schools⁴, partnered with ASPIRA of Delaware to produce this Charter School application, consult on instruction and facilities development, and provide back office support to the school for the first four years of its operations. All ASPIRA Charter Schools target underserved youth who are ESL learners and the schools have achieved distinction as charter schools showing significantly higher learning gains among schools serving similar populations. See attached profile of ASPIRA Charter Schools and their current standardized test score performances.⁵

ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois: ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois, which operates 4 charter schools in Chicago, IL, brought in their resources to assist ASPIRA DE in the preparation of its application and the start up of their school, including assigning MariBeth Welch, the ASPIRA IL Charter Management Organization Director to be the lead person on the writing and submission of the Las Americas ASPIRA Charter School Application. ASPIRA IL is also offering its back office support services to the ASPIRA DE charter, and will submit a proposal and bid to become the ASPIRA DE CMO at the time that the school becomes approved as a charter.

Innovative Schools Development Corporation: ASPIRA of Delaware, Inc. is working with Innovative Schools Development Corporation (ISDC), which is committed to strengthening community-based efforts to create and nurture innovative public schools in Delaware. ISDC was contracted by the ASPIRA Association to assist in the development of the charter school application.⁶ ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois, one of the ASPIRA Associations with charter schools became the lead on the development of the application, with ISDC contracted to conduct a feasibility study for the school and to read and comment on all aspects of the application. ISDC brought in additional consultants to assist in providing ground level work on behalf of the completion of the application, including The Axis Group, which provided facilities advisement.

CB Richard Ellis (CBRE): ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois also brought in CB Richard Ellis (CBRE) real estate and project management divisions for the identification of temporary and permanent facility properties. It is expected that if the charter is approved, the CBRE will submit a proposal bid to become the project managers for LAAA facilities development.

³ See Appendix 1A - Community Partner Letters of Support.

⁴ ASPIRA Philadelphia operates 2 K-8 Dual Language schools; ASPIRA Illinois operates 1 middle school 6-8, and 3 high schools, including 1 early college high school.

⁵ See Appendix 1C: The ASPIRA Association Schools: Synopsis of their History, Accomplishments, Structure & Function.

⁶ See Appendix 1D: ISDC - ASPIRA Letter of Agreement.

List the names, the places of residence, and the phone numbers of the founding board of directors and indicate which members are teachers currently certified in Delaware, parents, and community members. Describe how the location of the founding board members is related to the proposed location of the charter school.

**LAS AMERICAS ASPIRA ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL
FOUNDING BOARD OF DIRECTORS⁷**

BOARD MEMBERS	PLACE OF RESIDENCE & PHONE NUMBER	Occupation/ Professional Position	DE Cert Teacher/ Parent/ Community Member	Proximity to Charter School (proposed Bear DE site)
Dr. Jaime Rivera, M.D.	702 Cardiff Rd, Wilmington, DE 19803 302- 478-8332	Physician / Director, Delaware Division of Public Health, Delaware Department of Health and Social Services	Community Member	8 MILES
Margaret Lopez Waite	36 Peninsula Ct Bear, DE 19701 302-562-7283	DE Certified Teacher / Spanish Teacher, Everett Meredith Middle School, Appoquinimink School District.	Parent of DE K-12 Students / DE Cert Teacher / Community Member	1 MILES
Milton Delgado	217 North Broad St Middletown, DE 19709 302-376-1129	Nemours Health and Prevention Services, Newark, DE Program and Policy Analyst	Community Member	13 MILES
Andres Centellas	1401 Pennsylvania Ave Wilmington, DE 19806 (302) 379 9064	Marketing and Project Manager, Barclays - Wilmington	Community Member	18 MILES
Caridad Alonso	1113 North Franklin St Wilmington, DE 19806 (302) 589-4291	K-5 Spanish Reading Specialist at William C. Lewis Dual Language Elementary School & District K-5 ELL Support Specialist in the Red Clay Consolidated School District	DE Cert Teacher	18 MILES
Monica Gonzales Gillespie	13 Lehigh Ave, Wilmington, DE 19805 (302) 293-1019	Director of Personnel City of Wilmington	Community Member	18 MILES

⁷ LAAA Board will include a Delaware certified teacher employed full time at the school and a parent of a child attending the school.

- c. Describe the plans for further recruitment of board members of the school, especially teachers to be employed at the school and parents of students to be enrolled at the school.

The founding board of six members will recruit and appoint an additional five board members. The Board membership will include a Delaware certified teacher *who teaches full time at LAAA* and a *parent of a student enrolled in LAAA*. Teacher and parent board members will be nominated by the principal/head of school, parents of students attending the school, teachers hired to teach at the school and others. The final nominations will be submitted to the Nominating Committee of the Board of Directors and they in turn will submit candidates for consideration by the Board, which will appoint these members. Recruitment and nomination of the remaining 3 Director Appointed members of the Board will be conducted by the Nominating Committee of the Board. These candidates will be drawn from the business, corporate, and non-profit/social service communities, based on the needs of the organization at the time and what each of them bring to the board such that the board will collectively hold the experience and expertise needed to govern and provide oversight to an independent charter school. These skills and talents are inclusive of research-based curriculum and instructional strategies, to particularly include the curriculum and instructional strategies of the proposed educational program; Diversity issues, including but not limited to outreach, student recruitment, and instruction; Business management, including but not limited to accounting and finance; Facilities Acquisition; Personnel management; At-risk populations and children with disabilities, including but not limited to students eligible for special education and related services; and School operations, including but not limited to facilities management.

- d. Describe how the background of each member of the founding group makes him or her qualified to operate a charter school and implement the proposed educational program.
- e. Describe how the board of directors has and will maintain collective experience, or contractual access to such experience, in the following areas:

The founding group of the Board of Directors of the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy is made up of two members (Jaime H. Rivera, MD & Caridad Alonso) of the ASPIRA of Delaware Board of Directors, which developed a task force to explore opening up a charter school in New Castle County in the area south of Wilmington, targeted toward Latinos and other underserved youth. Four other Founding Members were drawn from the community after a careful and thorough search for candidates and establishing criteria for Founding Board Membership. ASPIRA of Delaware (AOD) delivers programs developed by the ASPIRA Association national youth and community development and youth leadership initiatives. Since its inception, ASPIRA has been what today is considered a "youth development" organization. Rather than following the traditional deficit model of youth services (intervention or services for youth to remedy deficiencies in education and development), the cornerstone of ASPIRA's program philosophy is a focus on the positive, highlighting the potential of each young person. This focus involves the development of self-esteem and leadership skills, enhancing academic achievement, cultural

awareness, and fostering a commitment to community service. In the ASPIRA model, each ASPIRANTE, the name for ASPIRA CLUB members and ASPIRA ALUMNI, is responsible for his/her own development in each of these areas, with ASPIRA providing the resources he/she needs to develop this potential. In the Clubs, ASPIRANTES develop leadership skills, set educational and career goals, plan for college and participate in community service activities throughout the year.

The Board of Directors of ASPIRA of Delaware, Inc. is composed of Hispanic Delawareans and others with a passion for education and commitment to the educational and leadership needs of Hispanic students and parents. Many of the state's Hispanic leaders are members of ASPIRA of Delaware Board of Directors and include physicians, educators, attorneys, elected and appointed officials, business persons, government employees, parents, grassroots community volunteers and leaders with a strong history of community involvement.

ASPIRA OF DELAWARE, INC. (AOD) Board of Directors:

- o Dr. Jaime Rivera, Chair, Director Public Health – State of Delaware. Dr. Rivera has served on many community nonprofit boards including several terms on the United Way of Delaware Board and the Board of the Latin American Community Center. He is a former W. K. Kellogg Foundation National Leadership Fellow. During his fellowship with Kellogg Dr. Rivera focused his studies on public education. Dr. Rivera also served on the Board of Directors of Wilmington Charter School – a very successful 9-12 charter in Wilmington, DE.
- o Peter Gonzales, Esq. –Attorney, Rapposelli & Gonzales, Esq. Mr. Gonzales has extensive expertise in immigration law and brings a deep understanding of the immigrant community to the table.
- o Aida Waserstein, Esq. – Ms. Waserstein is the only Hispanic judge in the state of Delaware. She is a judge in Family Court. She previously practiced family law in Delaware. As an immigrant from Cuba, she brings a deep understanding of immigrant and language issues to the table as well as a deep understanding of Hispanic family dynamics.
- o Valentina Vera, Student Representative. Ms. Vera is an Aspirante having gone through the Aspira process while in high school. She is currently an undergraduate at the University of Delaware.
- o Dr. Jari Santana-Wynn, Bilingual Outpatient Therapist, Holcomb Behavioral Health. Ms. Santana-Wynn has a deep understanding of the Hispanic family and children and their educational needs. She has expertise in psycho educational testing.
- o Dr. Havidan Rodriguez, Vice-Provost, Academic Affairs and International Programs, University of Delaware. Dr. Rodriguez has been instrumental in helping Aspira of Delaware forge relationships and collaborations with the academy. We anticipate that the charter school will have deep ties to the University of Delaware School of Education.
- o Margie Rivera, Senior Manager, AA/EEO, Astra Zeneca. Ms. Rivera, not related to Dr. Rivera, brings a deep understanding of EEOC and labor relations to the table.
- o Lourdes Puig, DuPont – Technology Manager. Ms. Puig is a senior manager at DuPont who holds worldwide responsibility in her area of expertise. She brings a deep understanding and experience in management to the table.
- o Eli Oriol, Newspaper Support Services, Treasurer. Mr. Oriol handles millions of dollars in cash transactions daily for his. He is an expert in cash management and treasury operations.
- o Caridad Alonso, K-5 Spanish Reading Specialist, Red Clay Consolidated School District, Lewis Elementary School. Ms. Alonso is an experienced educator and teacher trainer. She is the 2007 Delaware Teacher of the Year.

The following members serve on the Founding Board:

- Dr. Rivera – See above.
- Caridad Alonso – See above.
- Margaret Lopez-Waite – Is an experienced teacher in Delaware and also brings a long history of business expertise to the table. She spent 16 years in the banking industry as a senior manager.
- Andres Centellas – Is an MBA graduate of the University of Delaware with significant financial and marketing expertise.
- Milton Delgado – Works for the Nemours Foundation Health and Prevention. He is a candidate for a Ph.D. in 2009. He has extensive expertise in interior design and purchasing.
- Monica Gonzales Gillespie – Is the Director of Personnel for the City of Wilmington. She brings years of personnel and labor relations experience to the table and is a former Executive Director of the Governor's Advisory Council on Hispanic Affairs.

All members of the AOD Board of Directors have been involved in the concept development of the charter school, and in making the decision to go forward and submit an application to gain charter school approval for a K-8 dual language project-based learning charter school. The **founding group** is composed of some members of the AOD board, the LAAA founding Board, Community members, and the Consultants, current and future, who will assist the founding board in carrying out their fiduciary duties as board members and school governors.

The **founding group** also reached out to local community members and to local and national professionals for the development of the application, as well as to potentially operate the charter school and implement the proposed educational program. The founding group has within its own membership a collective experience enhanced through contracts with consultants, in the following areas:

- Real Estate
- Business and Finance
- Public Health
- Behavioral and Mental Health
- K-8 Education (Teaching, Professional Development and Curriculum Development)
- School Architectural Design & Construction
- Charter School Development & Management

FOUNDING GROUP COLLECTIVE EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE

Area of expertise/ professional skills:	Dr. Jaime Rivera (Board Chair)	Caridad Alonso (Teacher)	Margie Lopez Waite (Parent)	MariBeth Welch (ASPIRA ILLINOIS)	John Villamil (ASPIRA ASSOC)	CB Richard Ellis (Real Estate & Proj Management)	ISDC & THE AXIS GROUP
Organizational and financial management	X		X	X	X	X	X
Community development	X			X		X	X
Administration	X		X	X			X
Academic/ education		X	X	X			
Business/ corporate	X		X	X	X	X	X
Accounting				X			
Banking and trusts			X	X			
Investments			X	X			
Fundraising experience	X			X	X		X
Charter school law/regulations	X	X		X	X		X
Government representative	X				X		
Law					X		
Marketing			X	X	X		X
Human Resources				X			X
Facilities – Physical Plant				X		X	X
Strategic or long- range planning	X			X		X	X
Public relations				X			
Real Estate				X		X	X
Community resident	X	X	X				
Business owner	X						
Prospective Faculty/Staff		X	X				
Other:	Public Health Executive, Gubernat orial Appointee	Teacher Reading Specialist Curriculum Prof Dev.	K-8 Teacher, Former Banker	Chief Operations Officer of large Aspira Associate (IL)			

LAS AMERICAS ASPIRA ACADEMY

The school board of directors has and will maintain collective experience, or contractual access to such experience, in the following areas:

Area of expertise/ professional skills:	LAAA BOARD MEMBERS						Advisor	CONSULTANTS (Provisional)		
	Dr. Jaime Rivera (Chair)	Margie Lopez Walte (Vice Chair)	Milton Delgado (Sec'y)	Andres Centellas (Treasurer)	Monica Gonzales Gillespie (Director)	Caridad Alonso (Director)		Marl Beth Welch (ASPIRA CMO ILLINOIS)	CB Richard Ellis (Real Estate & Proj Management)	ISDC & THE AXIS GROUP
Organizational and financial management	X	X			X		X	X	X	X
Community development	X		X					X	X	X
Administration	X	X		X	X			X		X
Academic/ education		X				X		X		
Business/ Corporate	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Accounting								X		
Banking and trusts		X		X				X		
Investments		X						X		
Fundraising experience	X		X				X	X		X
Charter school law/regulations	X					X	X	X		X
Government representative	X				X			X		
Law								X		

LAS AMERICAS ASPIRA ACADEMY

Area of expertise/ professional skills:	LAAA BOARD MEMBERS						Advisor	CONSULTANTS (Provisional)		
	Dr. Jaime Rivera (Chair)	Margie Lopez Waite (Vice Chair)	Milton Delgado (Sec'y)	Andres Centellas (Treasurer)	Monica Gonzales Gillespie (Director)	Caridad Alonso (Director)		Marl Beth Welch (ASPIRA CMO ILLINOIS)	CB Richard Ellis (Real Estate & Proj Management)	ISDC & THE AXIS GROU P
Marketing		X	X	X			X	X		X
Human Resources	X	X			X		x			X
Facilities – Physical Plant			X				X		X	X
Strategic or long-range planning	X				X		X		X	X
Public relations	X		X				X			
Real Estate							X			
Community resident	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Parent of prospective child		X		X						
Business owner	X		X							
Prospective Faculty/Staff		X								
Other	Strong Community & Govt Contacts	K-8 Teacher & 15 yrs exp in Marketing & Human Resources	Design & Purchase Furniture & Art	Business – Finance – Marketing Manager at Barclaycard	Director Personnel City of Wilmington Personnel & Union Experience	Teacher Reading Spec. Curriculum Prof Dev				

2. Form of Organization

Identify the name of the organizing corporation, date of incorporation, and names of the corporation's officers and the office held by each. Attach a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation⁸ and a copy of the bylaws⁹ of the corporation. The bylaws must be consistent with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 29 Delaware Code, Chapter 100 (related to public bodies, public records, and open meetings) and *provide for representation of the school's teachers and parents of students on the board of directors*. The by-laws must demonstrate that the applicant's business is restricted to the opening and operation of charter schools, before school programs, after school programs and educationally related programs offered outside the traditional school year.

NAME OF ORGANIZATION: LAS AMERICAS ASPIRA ACADEMY

DATE OF INCORPORATION: 12/5/2008

CORPORATION OFFICER	OFFICE
DR. JAIME RIVERA	CHAIR
MARGARET LOPEZ-WAITE	VICE CHAIR
MILTON DELGADO	SECRETARY
ANDRES CENTELLAS	TREASURER

⁸⁸ See Appendix 2A: ASPIRA of Delaware Charter Operations, Inc. Certificate of Incorporation.

⁹ See Appendix 2B: ASPIRA of Delaware Charter Operations, Inc. Bylaws.

Q#3. Mission, Goals and Educational Objectives

- a. **Describe the purpose, mission, goals, and core philosophy of the proposed school. Indicate how the mission, goals, and educational objectives are consistent with the legislative intent of 14 Delaware Code, Section 501, and the restrictions on charter schools set forth in 14 Delaware Code, Section 506.**

Mission

The mission of the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA) is to provide a world-class education that prepares students through a dual language project-based learning curriculum, to become healthy productive community members and leaders, with an expectation that every child, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic level, is college bound.

Vision

The LAAA vision is to create a high tech multi-cultural dual language learning community of parents, students, teachers and staff that nourishes and develops the mind and the health of each child, promoting academic excellence, multicultural awareness and appreciation, where students obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to become bilingual, bi-literate, productive, healthy and caring stewards of their communities.

Three Core LAAA Philosophies

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy follows the core philosophy of ASPIRA Charter Schools. The ASPIRA Charter Schools educational approach is rooted in the youth development principles of the "ASPIRA Process," a well-regarded and proven youth development intervention strategy that has been the heart of ASPIRA's programs for over 47 years. Through the ASPIRA process, youth learn about and become aware of their own culture and history, are motivated to analyze the circumstances surrounding the issues that face them and are challenged to take appropriate and positive action. ASPIRA connects youth to positive community role models, imbue the youth with the experience of being contributors, not just recipients of their education, and clear, fair and high expectations are set for them and their roles in the school community and beyond.

The LAAA dual language learning approach underscores a second core LAAA philosophy that a world-class education in a global economy demands the development of students as bilingual bi-literate individuals who speak and write in a second or third language, and who, at an early age, have developed technological literacy and leadership and a knowledge of and a life-long appreciation for a multicultural society. Research shows that students' language abilities in either their primary or second language, are best developed when developed along with their knowledge of content area subject matter, i.e., when academic subjects are

taught to ELL students through both English and the non-English home language. Two-way immersion is an educational model that integrates native (primary) English speakers and native speakers of another language (e.g. Spanish) for all or most of the day, with the goals of promoting high academic achievement, first- and second-language development, and cross-cultural understanding for all students.

In two-way immersion dual language programs, language learning takes place primarily through content instruction. Longitudinal research findings from studies of one-way and two-way dual language enrichment models of schooling demonstrate the substantial power of dual language programs for enhancing student outcomes and fully closing the achievement gap for ELL students. Dual language schooling also can transform the experience of teachers, administrators, and parents into an inclusive and supportive school community for all.

The third core LAAA philosophy is that students learn best when they are "learning by doing." ASPIRA Charter Schools, in the tradition of Dewey and other progressive education philosophers, emphasizes the importance of "learning by doing," and making learning "authentic" or connected to the "real-world." In order to organize the curriculum to enhance learning, the psychological foundation of our curriculum is rooted in cognitive-field theories of learning such as Tyler (1949). Tyler's (1949) theory of education includes the following guiding principles for student learning: (1) Students learn through doing (2) Students experience success and derive satisfaction with their learning experiences so they will continue to be motivated. Recognizing differences in learning styles and preferences, teachers use a variety of methods to meet individual needs and promote satisfaction; and (3) multilevel (differentiated) instruction is used to address different stages of student cognitive development. The teacher, in the constructivist education approach, is the facilitator of the student's learning and critical thinking/meta-cognitive processes, rather than the disseminator to the student of a pre-set collection of facts and figures that must be written into notebooks and recited from memory. This is accomplished by having: (1) engaged teachers as role models in the classrooms (2) youth as contributors in their education, not just recipients of information (3) clear, fair and high expectations in both the classroom and school community for students and staff.

The academic, physical, social, and emotional development of our students rests on:

- ASPIRA Principles of Awareness, Analysis and Action
- setting high expectations for each K-8 student, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or socio-economic level, where every student is college-bound;
- building on the first language of English Language Learners to increase their academic performance;
- enriching the education of English speaking children by having them achieve literacy and fluency in a second language;

- making real-world connections for all learning;
- creating a healthy personalized school environment that is positive and student centered, focused on cross-cultural understanding;
- facilitating learning through investigations, interactions, and dual language instruction that is intellectually challenging and developmentally appropriate;
- providing ongoing professional development to teachers and staff in order to keep them abreast with the best research-based teaching practices;
- using systematic qualitative and quantitative student assessment to drive and strengthen instruction;
- creating a strong partnership between parents, community, private sectors, teachers and staff to increase overall educational achievement and attainment

Educational Goals and Objectives

In the initial four year authorization of the charter, LAAA will serve students K-8, beginning in FY2011 with grades K-1 and 5. To be located in New Castle County, the school will seek to achieve a student body that is 50% First language Spanish - English Language Learners & 50% First Language English - Spanish Language Learners, and will serve 940 K-8 students by FY2014.

The objective is to create an innovative K-8 educational program in the state of Delaware whereby:

- all students develop proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing in English and Spanish;
- all students master content area subjects and understand the interconnections across subject areas;
- all students demonstrate skills in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, technology, working collaboratively and leadership;
- all students understand the importance of healthy choices, including taking care of their bodies and their minds;
- all students understand their civic responsibilities through community studies and community involvement;
- all students acquire knowledge about the Latino culture and develop a positive multicultural attitude toward other cultures and languages;
- all teachers and staff work closely with families to promote student achievement;
- All children acquire the skills, knowledge, and understanding to thrive academically and socially, find personal health and fulfillment, and take responsibility as productive members of their community.

The LAAA mission, goals, and educational objectives are in accordance with the legislative intent of 14 Delaware Code, Section 501 and with the restrictions on charter schools set forth in 14 Delaware Code, Section 506 in the following ways;

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy will:

- establish open enrollment for all students at the entry grades of K-1 and 5
- provide a full day of kindergarten
- have minimum 1060 hours of instruction
- have a minimum of 7 hours of instruction per day
- meet measurable standards of student performance
- design and implement innovative curriculum based on research and proven teaching and learning methods
- provide parents and students with measures of improved school and student performance
- provide parents and students, especially ELL students, with greater opportunities in choosing public schools within and outside their school districts;
- provide opportunities for parent involvement within the school and in classroom and out of school learning activities;
- create a (PTPO) Parent-Teacher-Principal Organization as a vehicle for parent input into the activities and programs of the school;
- establish at least one LAAA parent and one LAAA teacher position on the LAAA Board of Directors
- Contribute toward creating a well-educated community.

And in accordance with the restrictions on charter schools set forth in 14 Delaware Code, Section 506, the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy shall not:

- Charge tuition or collect fees not permitted to be assessed by other school districts;
- Be home-based
- engage in any sectarian or religious practices in its educational program, admissions policies, employment policies or operations;
- circumvent a court-ordered desegregation plan;

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy will NOT restrict student admissions except:

- By age and grade;
- By lottery in the case of over-enrollment;

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy will not discriminate against any student in the admissions process because of race, creed, color, sex, handicap, or national origin, or because the student's school district of residence has a per student local expenditure lower than another student seeking admission;

- b. Describe the plan (including timetable) to be used for recruiting students. Describe how the school will publicize its program and admission procedures. Describe how the school will recruit a sufficient number of students to be financially viable.

Student recruitment already began with the process of preparing the application, as part of conducting a feasibility study to determine community interest. As part of the survey process, parents had the opportunity to state their interest in having their child enroll in the school in its opening year that starts fall 2010 and to request further information, by mail and/or by email.

Upon approval of the Charter, The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy will produce marketing materials to advertise the school's opening through the Spanish and English media, including brochures, flyers, placed stories and ads in local community papers; will conduct school informational sessions at community centers, early childhood centers and kindergartens and churches serving the Latino and non-Latino communities; and to recruit 5th graders, set up school presentations to 4th graders and their parents at area district elementary schools; and leave materials at churches, Laundromats and community centers. LAAA will also create an introductory video/PowerPoint presentation that provides an overview of the school design and philosophy. The video/PowerPoint will be shown at schools and at open houses conducted through the fall (2009) and early spring (2010).

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA) is committed to recruitment reflecting the community makeup in which the school will be located. While there is a growing Latino population in the area, the school will make a concentrated outreach to students of all races to insure that the school reflects the community. Thus, active recruitment will take place at the Bear Library, Bear YMCA, and to other community groups, such as the Bear MOMS Club to ensure awareness of LAAA's rigorous academic and language program that may be of interest to those outside of the Latino community. The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy faces a particular challenge in that the location where the school initially opens will possibly not be the permanent location for the school. Therefore those students recruited to the school need to be willing to continue to travel to the school when the school is no longer located in its original location.

By April 1, 2010 The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy will certify that it has recruited 80% of the first year 360 students (288 students) -- approximately 100 kindergarteners, 100 first graders and 100 5th graders.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT PLAN AND TIMETABLE

Fall 2008	Preparation of Application
November 2008	Feasibility Study – Interview with 25 parents in the Newark and Brookside communities regarding interest in school concept
December 31, 2008	Submission of LAAA Application
April – May 2009	Approval of the LAAA Charter School Application
June – July 2009	Development of marketing materials to advertise the school's opening through the Spanish and English media, including brochures, flyers, placed stories and ads in local community papers; Development of brochure materials and school multi-media and/or power point presentation to publicize the program and admission procedures, including the publication of the lottery date. The video/PowerPoint will be shown at schools and at open houses conducted through the fall (2009) and early spring (2010).
August – December 2009	Intensive recruitment and outreach, will conduct school informational sessions, to be conducted at community centers, early childhood centers and kindergartens and churches serving the Latino and non-Latino communities; To recruit 5 th graders, set up school presentations to 4 th graders and their parents at area district elementary schools; and leave materials at churches, Laundromats and community centers;
January 2010	Lottery (Date TBD)
February – March, 2010	Continued recruitment and outreach through media to create a waiting list of at least 20% (waiting list of 70-75 students)
April 1, 2010	80% of students recruited and enrolled into school
June 1, 2010	Achieve 100% of enrollment into LAAA; Continue to recruit to develop final waiting list of 60 students, 20 students for each entering grade.

- c. **List all the admissions preferences authorized by this statute the school will use. If more than one preference will be used, describe how the various preferences will be employed together.**

Preferences in student admissions will be applied in the following order (#1-5):

1. Children of LAAA school's founders, ($\leq 5\%$ of the school's total student population)
 2. Siblings of students currently enrolled at the LAAA.
 3. Children of persons employed on a permanent basis for at least 30.0 hrs per week during the school year by the LAAA.¹
 4. Students who have a specific interest in the LAAA's teaching methods, philosophy, and educational focus
 5. Students residing within the regular school district in which LAAA is located
- d. **If the proposed school will give admissions preference to children of the school's founders, describe how the school will identify the founders and how the preference will be used in the enrollment process.**

School founders will be defined as the directors and members of ASPIRA of Delaware, Inc., and members of the founding Board of the Las Americas ASPIRA Association. The founding board of the Las Americas ASPIRA Association will be defined as the board directors in place on the LAAA Board when the school opens its doors.

- e. **Describe the plan for selecting students if more students seek admission than space allows. If a lottery is used, describe how it will be conducted.**

If more students seek admission than space allows, a lottery will be held in January of each school year. The lottery will be conducted as follows:

- 1) After the students admitted through the first three preferences, the remaining applications for the open enrollment grades of K, 1 and 5 will be divided by the two

¹ LAAA founding group informed by Linda Fleetwood that currently this preference is limited by Federal Charter Law to full time Delaware certified teachers employed at the school, but the LAAA Board would like to have this preference extend to all permanent LAAA employees employed at least 30 hours per week during the school year.

remaining preference categories and "all others – no preference" and by open grade level, for a total of 9 boxes.

- 2) Each application will be placed in the appropriate lottery box. Applications will be drawn randomly, first from the Preference #4 boxes, then from the Preference #5 boxes, and then from the "all others-no preference." If there are more applications than seats for the grade level, then the lottery waiting list will be rank ordered in the order that the applications are pulled.

- f. **Describe the methods of internal evaluation that will be used by the board of directors to ensure that the school is meeting its stated educational mission and objectives.**

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy Board of Directors will use both formal and informal evaluative measures to ensure that the school is meeting its mission and objectives. First, the Board will meet regularly in scheduled open board meetings and workshops. Agenda will be established and posted. The Board will routinely receive reports on school operations, performance and finances.

The Board will have a committee structure comprised of board members, staff, and parents. The Board committee structure will include the Personnel, Finance and Audit Committees that will work to provide oversight to our fiscal viability and sustainability. The Board will routinely examine such data and information as DSTP, School Improvement Plan, the Annual Report, the Annual Audit, and the School Profile. Every month the Principal and Business manager will report on academic and compliance benchmarks and the board will review monthly financial reports. In addition, the Board will maintain a linkage with the PTPO (Parent Teacher Principal Organization). The PTPO, after one year of school operations, will elect its representatives, who will make a report at each Board meeting.

- g. **Describe the procedures the school will use to ensure compliance with the requirements of 14 Delaware Code, Section 506, related to enrollment.**

(1) The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy shall have enrolled, on or before April 1 of each school year, at a minimum, 80% of its total authorized number of students. The principal/head of school shall provide a written certification of that enrollment to the Department of Education and to the superintendent of each public school district in which 1 or more of the charter school's students reside.

(2) The principal's certification shall contain an updated roster of students who are enrolled at the charter school, together with their home address and district of residence.

(3) The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA) shall obtain a written confirmation, signed by a parent or guardian of each student in that student's initial year of attendance at the charter school, that the student will remain in the charter school for at least 1 school year.

(4) A pupil accepted for enrollment in LAAA shall remain enrolled therein for a minimum of 1 year unless, during that 1-year period, good cause exists for the failure to meet this requirement. LAAA will place a statement to this effect on the application form, requiring the parent to sign, to ensure "informed consent." "Good cause," which is determined by the receiving school district, shall be defined as a change in a child's residence due to a change in family residence, a change in the state in which the family residence is located, a change in the marital status of the child's parents, a change caused by a guardianship proceeding, placement of a child in foster care, adoption, participation by a child in a foreign exchange program, participation by a child in a substance abuse or mental health treatment program, mutual agreement by the board of directors of the charter school, the superintendent or board of the receiving district and the parent or parents or guardian of such child to the termination of such enrollment, or a set of circumstances consistent with this definition of "good cause."

- h. Describe how the school will ensure that by April 1 each year, it has enrolled at least 80% of the total authorized number of students and that it has notified each school district of information about enrolled students.**

The LAAA Board will require a monthly report from the Principal/Head of School on the progress of recruitment, and will require an adjustment in the recruitment plan and timetable stated in the response to question b, if warranted, to ensure that by April 1 LAAA has enrolled at least 80% of the total number of authorized number of students; The registrar will be trained on the DELSIS/ *eSchoolPlus* student data management system in February-March to effectuate that enrollment.

Also by April 1, the LAAA Board will ensure that the Principal/HOS submits Preliminary Pupil Rosters to the Department of Education and to the superintendent of each public school district in which 1 or more of the charter school's students reside, and going forward up to and beyond the first day of school, as additional students are enrolled.

- i. Describe how the school will ensure that parents sign statements that meet the requirements of 14 Delaware Code, Section 506(c).**

As part of the application & enrollment process, parents will sign a statement, included on the LAAA application form, stating that by enrolling their child into the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy, that the student will attend the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy for the minimum of one year. That confirmation shall include a statement reading: "I understand that my child is required to remain in this charter school, in the absence of any condition constituting good cause, for at least 1 school year" and shall be kept on file at the school and made available for inspection to Department of Education officials or representatives from the public school district in which the student resides.

- j. **Describe how the school will establish a student application and admissions process that will enable the school to provide the local districts in which the students reside with a preliminary roster of students for the subsequent year on or before April 1 each year.**

Following the lottery and/or once the student is officially accepted, the Registrar (who will receive training on DELSIS/ *eSchoolPlus* in February/March) will enter the student and student home address onto the statewide student information system DELSIS/ eSchoolPlus student information system and the roster of students from each district will be generated utilizing the GIS system. The preliminary roster of students will be generated by the registrar prior to the April 1 deadline, and submitted to the local districts in which the students reside. (Kindergarten students will be entered as new enrollments into DEDOE through entry into the DELSIS system.)

- k. **Provide the timetable for the school's application and admissions process. Demonstrate how it is consistent with the timetable set forth in 14 Delaware Code, Chapter 4, for the public school choice program.**

August 1, 2009 – July 31, 2010 -- Applications accepted

August 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009 – Intensive recruitment and outreach

January, 2010 – Lottery conducted for school (Exact date TBD)

February – March, 2010 – Continued recruitment and outreach to create a waiting list of at least 20% (waiting list of 70-75 students)

February-March 2010 – Registrar receive training on DELSIS/ eSchoolPlus system.

February – March 2010 – Registrar enter in the names, student numbers, addresses into the school's database.

April 1, 2010 – 80% of students recruited and pre-enrolled into DELSIS/ eSchoolPlus;
Submit Preliminary Pupil Rosters to Department of Education and to the superintendent
of each public school district in which 1 or more of the charter school's students reside.

June 1, 2010 – School Goal to achieve 100% of enrollment into LAAA.

Q#4. Goals for Student Performance

- List the specific student performance goals for students for the initial four years of operation and describe the assessment instruments that will be used to measure whether students meet or exceed those goals.
- Describe how each of the student performance goals relates to the State's content standards.

ANNUAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE GOALS
STUDENT PERFORMANCE BY GRADE CLUSTER

DSTP ¹	GRADES K-3 (grades 2-3)	GRADES 4-6	GRADES 7-8
READING (% Meet or Exceed)	>= state average	>= state average	>= state average
READING (annual mean learning gain) ²	>= state mean	>= state mean	>= state mean
MATH(% Meet or Exceed)	>= state average	>= state average	>= state average
MATH (annual mean learning gain)	>= state mean	>= state mean	>= state mean
WRITING (% Meet or Exceed)	>= state average	>= state average	>= state average
WRITING (annual mean learning gain)	>= state mean	>= state mean	>= state mean
SCIENCE(% Meet or Exceed)	>= state average	>= state average	>= state average
SCIENCE(annual mean learning gain)	>= state mean	>= state mean	>= state mean
SOCIAL STUDIES(% Meet or Exceed)	>= state average	>= state average	>= state average
SOCIAL STUDIES (annual mean learning gain)	>= state mean	>= state mean	>= state mean

¹ DSTP The Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP)

- To serve as a measure of progress toward the Delaware Content Standards
- To ensure students apply their academic skills to realistic, everyday problems
- To promote better instruction and curriculum by providing timely reports of students' strengths and weaknesses
- To serve as a primary indicator in the statewide accountability system.

² Annual Learning Gain based on longitudinal student information on Delaware *eSchoolPlus* Student Data System

POSITIVE BEHAVIORS	K-3	4-6	7-8
AVER DAILY ATTENDANCE	Average daily attendance will <i>increase</i> by at least 1% over the previous year's average attendance		
INCIDENTS OF STUDENT MISCONDUCT	The number of reportable incidents of student misconduct will <i>decrease by 10%</i>		
STUDENT ANNUAL COMPLETION RATE	$\geq 80\%$ of the students on the September 30 th enrollment roster will complete the school year		

MARKET ACCOUNTABILITY	K-1	2-5	6-8
ADMISSIONS TO LEVEL OF CAP	Total Number Enrolled $\geq 95\%$ of Total Number Authorized		
STUDENT ATTRITION	# Returning Students $\geq 80\%$ Non-Graduating Student Body Grades 1-8		
STUDENT ENROLLMENT	Maintain at least 90% of the authorized total enrollment throughout school year (through student retention and mid-year enrollees)		
COMPLETION RATE (GRADES 1-8)	NA	NA	70% Complete Program

Specific student performance goals:

1. School will demonstrate that its students are increasing in academic achievement as measured by the state assessment (DSTP) and other standardized assessments through the achievement targets listed below:
 - a. The school will participate in the DSTP in each subject area (reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and science) at each grade required by the Department of Education.
 - b. For each subject assessed, school average performance on the DSTP will *meet or exceed* the state average (or mean, as appropriate) each year.
2. School will demonstrate that its students exhibit positive behavior related to academic success through the following:
 - a. *For each year* of operation, average daily attendance will *increase* by at least 1% over the previous year's average attendance.
 - b. *For each year* of operation, the number of reportable incidents of student misconduct will *decrease by 10%* over the previous year's reportable incidents of misconduct.
 - c. *For each year of operation*, except for students that move out of New Castle County, at least 80% of the students on the September 30th enrollment roster will complete the school year at the school.

3. During the initial four years of operations, the school will demonstrate that it has strong market accountability through the following:

- a. Each year, the school will have at least enough students seeking admissions to the school to enroll at least 95% of the number of students authorized by the charter.
- b. Each year at least 80% of the non-graduating student body, grades 1-11, will return to the school the following school year.
- c. Each year, the school will maintain an enrollment of at least 90% of the approved enrollment throughout the school year (through retention or midyear recruitment and enrollment).
- d. Of all students entering the school, at least 70% will continue at the school through Grade 8 (the end of the educational program at the school.)

MARKET ACCOUNTABILITY

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Enrollment Targets				
GRADE K	120	120	120	120
GRADE 1³	120	100	100	100
GRADE 2		120	100	100
GRADE 3			120	100
GRADE 4				120
GRADE 5	120	100	100	100
GRADE 6		120	100	100
GRADE 7			120	100
GRADE 8				120
TOTAL	360	560	760	960
Annual Number of Applications by Open Enrollment Grade Levels				
GRADE K	145	155	165	175
GRADE 1	145	155	165	175
GRADE 5	145	155	165	175
TOTAL	435	465	495	525

- c. List the specific measurable performance targets for each student performance goal for each year of the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP) for the initial four years of the charter.

LAAA Board agrees and certifies that it will comply with the requirements of the State Public Education and Accountability System pursuant to 14 Delaware Code, Sections 151, 152, 153, 154, and 157 and Department rules and regulations implementing Accountability, to specifically include the Delaware Student Testing Program (Regulation 275, Subsection 4.2.1.1).

³ Total seats for first graders will be 120 seats; after the opening year space availability dependent upon attrition of students out of the previous year's Kindergarten class.

The LAAA Board, as part of the mission and vision of the school, sets high expectations for all students in all grade levels, and sets as a goal for the school to meet all AYP benchmarks. The first year of the charter, only 5th graders will be tested under the DSTP assessment, and a large portion of the 5th grade students are expected to be English Language Learners who are likely to come into the school below grade level. Therefore, LAAA sets as a performance target that the percentage of those students who have been enrolled in LAAA for *two or more years* and meet or exceed learning standards will be equal to or better than the state performance for students in the same grade. In addition, that the overall LAAA student performance on the DSTP for those students who have been enrolled in LAAA for two or more years will improve each year by a minimum of 5% of students meeting or exceeding standards.

**MINIMUM DSTP PERFORMANCE TARGETS
BY SUBJECT, GRADE LEVEL AND YEAR⁴**

GRADE 2	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOC STUDIES
FY2011	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2012	LAAA Baseline		NA	NA	NA
FY 2013	Increase by 5% over baseline & LAAA performance >= State Average / Mean		NA	NA	NA
FY 2014	Increase by 5% over 2013 LAAA performance >= State Average / Mean		NA	NA	NA
GRADE 3	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOC STUDIES
FY 2011	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2012	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2013	Increase by 5% over baseline & LAAA performance >= State Average / Mean			NA	NA
FY 2014	Increase by 5% over 2013 & LAAA performance >= State Average / Mean			NA	NA

⁴ ELL students participate in DSTP standard assessment, in accordance with state regulations. Standard assessment (DSTP) may be administered with the following accommodations/modifications:

- ☐ Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations
- ☐ Indirect Linguistic Support Accommodations.

In Math Only: ☐ Direct Linguistic Support Accommodations.

ELL students who also have disabilities may participate in an alternate assessment for ELL students (if available) in place of the standard reading and writing assessment if required criteria are met. In addition, if specified criteria are met, ELL students may not be required to take the reading and writing assessment, and may also be exempted from the science and social studies assessments in grade 11. All ELL students in grades 2-10 are to participate in the mathematics assessment.

GRADE 4	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOC STUDIES
FY 2011	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2012	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2013	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2014	Increase by 5% over 2013 & LAAA performance \geq State Average / Mean				
GRADE 5	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOC STUDIES
FY 2011	LAAA Baseline				
FY 2012	Increase by 5% over baseline				
FY 2013	Increase by 5% over 2012 (and for students 2+ years at LAAA performance \geq State Average / Mean)				
FY 2014	Increase by 5% over 2013 (and for students 2+ years at LAAA performance \geq State Average / Mean)				
GRADE 6	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOC STUDIES
FY 2011	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2012	Increase by 5% over baseline				
FY 2013	Increase by 5% over 2012 (and for students 2+ years at LAAA performance \geq State Average / Mean)				
FY 2014	Increase by 5% over 2013 (and for students 2+ years at LAAA performance \geq State Average / Mean)				

GRADE 7	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOC STUDIES
FY 2011	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2012	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2013	Increase by 5% over 2012 & LAAA performance \geq State Average / Mean			NA	NA
FY 2014	Increase by 5% over 2013 & LAAA performance \geq State Average / Mean			NA	NA

GRADE 8	READING	MATH	WRITING	SCIENCE	SOC STUDIES
FY 2011	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2012	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2013	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FY 2014	Increase by 5% over 2013 (and for students 2+ years at LAAA performance \geq State Average / Mean)				

- d. List the assessment tools that will be used including the DSTP, standardized, or performance assessments. *Describe why these particular assessment instruments have been selected and provide the timetable indicating when those instruments will be used.*

The following standardized and performance assessment tools and data will be used by the LAAA Charter School:

1) DSTP results in all five content areas

The DSTP results in the five content areas, Reading, Math, Writing, Science, and Social Studies, are the benchmark for measuring overall school performance and for determining whether an individual student is or is not meeting grade level expectations in the five tested content areas. Each year the principal and teachers will examine the individual test results in the five content areas to 1) determine which students are the closest to meeting or exceeding state standards as measured on the DSTP and 2) to determine what content area standards are weakest and need to be strengthened across the curriculum.

Timetable: DSTP administered annually in spring.

2) Web-based state aligned computerized adaptive assessment such as NWEA, Scantron Ed Performance, or similar computerized adaptive assessments

Both the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and the Scantron Ed Performance assessments are state-aligned computerized adaptive assessments that provide immediate, accurate, useful information about student achievement and growth. Both assessments use a measurement scale that has proven to be exceptionally stable and valid over time. The web-based assessments provide immediate results that are tailored to all members of a student's learning team. NWEA reports allow educators to investigate the impact they are making in each student's life.

The assessments available for Primary Grades system include Early Literacy and Early Numeracy Screening (diagnostic) tests, Skills Checklist (diagnostic) tests, and Survey with Goals (adaptive) tests in Reading and Mathematics.

These assessments:

- Provide teachers with an efficient way to assess achievement levels of early learners so they can spend more time teaching and less time administering individual diagnostic tests.
- Provide information to guide instruction during the early stages of a student's academic career. Early learners enter school with a wide variety of educational experiences. Early identification of achievement levels is foundational for teachers establishing an environment for early academic success.

- Identify the needs of all primary grades students, from struggling to advanced learners.
- Utilize engaging test items that encourage student participation for more accurate results.

Timetable: Web-based computerized adaptive assessment administered three times per year: early fall, midyear, and late spring.

3) Interim curriculum-based assessments

The Principal/HOS and Assistant Principal will work with lead teachers by subject areas to create interim curriculum-based assessments that are aligned to the Delaware State Standards. The curriculum-based interim assessments will be uniform across grade levels and K-8 vertically aligned. The assessment will be administered utilizing a computerized platform, e.g. Scantron Ed Performance Achievement Series or *Study Island*, that will provide an analysis of student responses by correct and incorrect answers by teacher, by section, by subgroups.

Timetable: Interim curriculum-based assessments administered quarterly.

4) Presentations of Learning/ Exhibitions of Learning (5th-8th Grade)

The LAAA follows a project-based learning educational design, which sets the expectation that every student will become a critical thinker, and will learn by doing through the creation, completion and presentation of projects. Presentations of Learning (POL) and Exhibitions of Learning (EOL) will occur in each content area as a part of the completion of educational units. Students will be evaluated based on student performance and exhibition rubrics that will be reviewed and correlated across classrooms, reflecting a consistent performance assessment of student learning and understandings. Presentations and exhibitions of learning that include public presentations to the school community, including invited guests such as parents and interested community observers, will be a regular part of the calendar of the school, occurring in each 5th – 8th grade classroom at minimum once per semester, or two times per year.

Timetable: Public Presentations/ Exhibitions of Learning 2-4 times per year.

5) Digital portfolios

All students from grades 3-8 will produce digital portfolios, which will include the projects – presentations and exhibitions – that the student participates in as well as an expression of what the student finds engaging and important in his/her own life. The student and teacher will jointly choose what to include in the portfolio and each semester the portfolio becomes part of the permanent student academic file. This provides both student and teacher a retrospective on the growth of learning being displayed by the

student. Each spring the student will be required to present his/her portfolio to his/her parents and to another adult trained to review portfolios.

Timetable: Digital portfolio reviewed and archived 2 times per year. Included as part of parent-teacher-student conferencing.

Q# 5. Evaluating Student Performance

- a. *Describe how student evaluation information will be used to improve student performance.*
- b. *Describe the corrective action that will be taken when students do not meet performance expectations.*

LAAA will use all available student data to track student performance and determine areas of student learning gaps. Student evaluation information will be used on both an aggregate and individual student basis by principal, teachers, parent and students. LAAA will provide a setting that expects students to be actively engaged in their own learning and parents to be involved in their child's school program. Sharing of student evaluation information with the parents will connect school to home, and with that connection improve student performance. The school will routinely hold parent conferences and open houses, including presentations and exhibitions of learning where parents will have the opportunity to see their children grow into confident public speakers and young scholars. Parents will receive interim progress reports midway through the quarterly grading period and report cards at the end. These formalized ways of communication are supplemented through the web-based *eSchoolPlus* student data system.

Student data sources *in addition to the student data derived from the variety of student assessments described in question/ response #4* include 1) the Delaware *eSchoolPlus* student data information system and 2) student progress reports and report cards.

1) The Delaware *eSchoolPlus* student data system

Student academic, attendance and behavioral performance will be collected through the Delaware *eSchoolPlus* student data system. This secure web-based data system will make student performance available for viewing by school, student, and parent on a "real time on-demand" basis. Teachers can update grades from home or school; add comments, track attendance and post assignments, progress reports and report cards. Class rosters and student emergency information are just a few clicks away. Administrators have access to district and family demographics, master schedules and state reports, among other information. Students can access *eSchoolPlus* from home or school to check grades, assignments and other information. Parents who do not have a computer could access one in a public area, like a library. If requested, written reports will still be issued.

Student Behaviors will also be monitored through the daily analysis of attendance statistics and behavior incidents, all recorded on the Delaware *eSchoolPlus* student data system. Both at the school level and at the team level, faculty review the data, and then establish a course of action. This review of student data occurs daily at the instructor level, weekly at the team level and quarterly at the school level.

In addition to real time availability of student data through the Delaware *eSchoolPlus* student data system, longitudinal data is gathered on each individual student from year to year which makes it possible to follow individual student academic growth, determine the value-added of specific programs, and identify consistently high-performing schools and systems.

The Delaware *eSchoolPlus* student data system has in place all ten essential elements recommended by Data Quality Campaign (DQC)¹ of a quality longitudinal data system. Those ten elements are:

- A unique statewide student identifier that connects student data across key databases across years.
- Student-level enrollment, demographic and program participation information.
- The ability to match individual students' test records from year to year to measure academic growth.
- Information on untested students and the reasons they were not tested.
- A teacher identification system with the ability to match teachers to students.
- Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned.
- Student-level college readiness test scores.
- Student-level graduation and dropout data.
- The ability to match student records between the P-12 and postsecondary systems.
- A state audit system assessing data quality, validity and reliability.

¹ The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) is a national, collaborative effort to encourage and support state policymakers to improve the collection, availability and use of high-quality education data and to implement state longitudinal data systems to improve student achievement. The campaign provides tools and resources that assist state development of quality longitudinal data systems, while providing a national forum for reducing duplication of effort and promoting greater coordination and consensus among the organizations focusing on improving data quality, access and use.

2) Progress report/report card grades.

Student grades are stored as permanent grades on the e-school student data information system on a quarterly basis, with a progress report issued every five weeks. Report cards and progress reports are printed out as a report on the *eSchoolPlus* student data system. Progress reports provide an opportunity for student, parents and teachers to discuss student progress at a point where a learning plan can be instituted and deficiencies addressed in the weeks remaining before grades are made permanent.

How student data will be used:

Student data will be used to create learning units and lesson plans, including the development of individualized learning plans. The annual DSTP exams provide a point in time measure of student performance on standardized exams, and as the summative measure of school performance set the benchmark and baseline for the overall student learning performance of the school. The standards-aligned NWEA type web-based assessment provides both a point-in-time diagnostic of student mastery and learning gaps, and classroom/ teacher level data that can be used to develop learning units that will optimize learning understandings in areas that the classroom as a whole show need for skill development and reinforcement and to set up small learning teams and/or work stations for students to work individually or in teams on the reinforcement of key learnings. Other criteria-referenced school assessments such as the curriculum-based interim assessments provide formative and real-time measures of student mastery of the curriculum which will inform teachers unit planning for the re-teaching or review of skills or the differentiation of instruction as the students move forward in tackling the challenges of the next project.

LAAA will follow the Wiggins and McTighe Understanding by Design (UbD) framework for improving student achievement. Emphasizing the teacher's critical role as a designer of student learning, the UbD framework works within the standards-driven curriculum to help teachers clarify learning goals, devise revealing assessments of student understanding, and craft effective and engaging learning activities. Developed by nationally recognized educators Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, and published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Understanding by Design is based on the following key ideas:

- A primary goal of education should be the development and deepening of student understanding.
- Students reveal their understanding most effectively when they are provided with complex, authentic opportunities to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize,

and self-assess. When applied to complex tasks, these "six facets" provide a conceptual lens through which teachers can better assess student understanding.

- Effective curriculum development reflects a three-stage design process called "backward design" that delays the planning of classroom activities until goals have been clarified and assessments designed. This process helps to avoid the twin problems of "textbook coverage" and "activity-oriented" teaching, in which no clear priorities and purposes are apparent.
- Student and school performance gains are achieved through regular reviews of results (achievement data and student work) followed by targeted adjustments to curriculum and instruction. Teachers become most effective when they seek feedback from students and their peers and use that feedback to adjust approaches to design and teaching.
- Teachers, schools, and districts benefit by "working smarter" through the collaborative design, sharing, and peer review of units of study.

In practice, the Understanding by Design framework offers:

- a three-stage "backward planning" curriculum design process anchored by a unit design template
- a set of design standards with attendant rubrics
- A comprehensive training package to help teachers design, edit, critique, peer-review, share, and improve their lessons and assessments.

LAAA recognizes that when students fail or struggle academically, it is the teacher and school's responsibility to determine how to best put together a learning program for that child. Further, if a number of students are failing or struggling in one classroom, and are not having the same learning challenges in another classroom with another teacher, then the principal/ head of school needs to critically assess why there are these challenges for one teacher over another, and whether that teacher needs additional supports in the classroom. Student data aggregated as classroom level data will provide considerable insight into necessary changes at the classroom, teacher and individualized learning plan level.

Finally, based on the data collected on an annual basis, and examined on a quarterly basis, LAAA will prepare its annual school improvement plan. Areas of improvement may include such teaching and learning areas as the use of student data to inform teaching and learning, the benchmarking of student learning, vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment, the development of common rubrics, and/or the improvement of the learning performance of ELL learners. The school improvement planning process will be inclusive of all faculty and staff, and its implementation will be monitored by the LAAA Board of Directors.

Corrective Actions:

LAAA will have several mechanisms in place to take corrective action when students do not meet performance expectations. The following is a list of interventions and a description of the ongoing methods to assist students who do not meet performance expectations:

- **Student Support Team** – When a teacher notices a student is struggling, he/she confers with the team members and provides interventions and determines the effect of those interventions. If those interventions fail after a sequence of trials, the teacher may refer that child to the Student Support Team. The teacher provides documentation of interventions and samples of the student's work and the teacher's evidence to verify the problem; develop classroom/family interventions, document such on the team-parent collaboration form. The teachers engage in another series of interventions and document results. If there is no improvement, they consult with the special education coordinator and may request further evaluation.
 - **Individualized learning plans** – Students' state test scores, other standardized measures, low classroom performance are screened to look for indicators of academic difficulty and to develop individualized learning plans.
 - **After-school tutoring** - Where indicated small group tutorials are established to address academic difficulties. Student grades are monitored on a weekly basis, and students assigned to tutoring if the student's grades fall below a C in any subject area. (After-school scheduling – who will attend, the weeks and hours of tutoring, etc. are dependent upon funding.)
 - **Summer School** – Summer School will be strongly encouraged of all students in grades 3-8 who score at a 2 or below (does not meet the standards) on the Spring DSTP in reading, writing and mathematics. (Note: Summer school scheduling – and who will attend, the weeks and hours of summer school, etc. are dependent upon funding. LAAA will seek outside sources of funding to ensure sufficient funds to support an annual summer school program).
- b. If the proposed school will be using an enrollment preference for students at risk of academic failure, describe the expected performance of each student on the Delaware Student Testing Program in each grade during the initial four year charter period.

LAAA is not using an enrollment preference for students at risk of academic failure.

6. Educational Program

Overview of Educational Program:

- a. Provide the scope and sequence of the school's curriculum, including the three representative units of instruction that will be covered in each content area in each grade cluster in which the school will provide instruction. The educational program must include provisions for extra instructional time for at risk students, summer school and other services pursuant to 14 Delaware Code, Section 153. If the applicant is proposing a secondary school, the following must be provided:

See Appendix 15 – Curriculum Scope and Sequence.¹

- b. Provide a detailed chart demonstrating the alignment between the school's educational program with the Delaware Content Standards and state program requirements, and in the case of a high school, the state graduation requirements.

Subject Areas	Grade Levels	Published Curriculum	Delaware Content Standards Alignment
ELA	K-8	Harcourt – Storybook	See Appendix 15- ELA Curriculum Scope and Sequence
Science	K-8	DELAWARE Recommended Science Curriculum	Delaware Science Coalition (See MOU) ²
Math	K-5	Kendall-Hunt Math Trailblazers	Delaware Math Coalition (See email re: Intended membership) ³
	6-8	Prentice Hall Connected Math OR Kendall-Hunt Middle School Math (Due to roll out Fall 2010)	
Social Studies	K-8 (Only Grades 2-8 Assessed)	DELAWARE Recommended Curriculum (in development)	Delaware Social Studies Coalition (See email regarding intended usage) ⁴
Visual & Performing Arts	K-8	Delaware Recommended Curriculum	See DRAFT Visual & Performing Arts Scope and Sequence ⁵
P.E./ Health	K-8	Delaware Recommended Curriculum	See P.E./Health Scope & Sequence ⁶

¹ Appendix 15 – Curriculum Scope and Sequence.

² See Appendix 6 A Delaware Science Coalition MOU

³ See Appendix 6 A Delaware Math Coalition email

⁴ See Appendix 6 A Delaware Social Studies Coalition email

⁵ See Appendix 15: Curriculum Units and Scope and Sequence

C. Describe how the instructional strategies are aligned with the school's curriculum and the assessment strategies that will be used. Describe how this alignment will enhance student learning.

The Las America's ASPIRA Academy (LAAA) will follow a dual language project-based learning educational design delivered in a high tech learning environment. The state standards aligned curriculum will draw from the successful ASPIRA curriculum frameworks in existing elementary, middle school and high school ASPIRA Charter schools in Chicago IL; Philadelphia, PA; and Miami FL. ASPIRA Charter Schools, in the tradition of Dewey and other progressive education philosophers, emphasizes the importance of "learning by doing," and making learning "authentic" or connected to the "real-world."

Key to the ASPIRA dual-language project-based learning curriculum frameworks is *contextualizing* the learning – based on the principle that students learn best, i.e. obtain critical thinking skills and enduring understandings when there is a real-life contextualized purpose to both the learning activity and to the assessment of the learning. This key principle of learning pertains to all learners and all contexts – whether learning math or learning a second language. The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA) mission is to serve both native speakers of English and native speakers of Spanish in the same classroom with the goal of 50% of the students coming from each language group. By alternating days between languages, each group of students' first language is used for teaching challenging academic content throughout the week. Thus, all students learn subject matter (core content classes such as social studies, English Language Arts [ELA], science, and mathematics) through their native language as well as through the second language and both language groups have the benefit of interaction with peers who are native speakers of the language they are learning. In addition to subject content mastery, English speaking students become functionally proficient in Spanish while the Spanish speaking students become functionally proficient in English. At the same time, all students continue to develop skills and proficiency in their native language while attaining high levels of bilingualism, bi-literacy and biculturalism.

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy curriculum model draws on three compatible contextually based curriculum development and instructional strategies: (1) Project-based Learning Design, which draws on constructivist approaches to learning; (2) Wiggins and McTighe "Understanding by Design"⁷, the same educational framework that underlies the Delaware

⁶ See Appendix 15: Curriculum Units and Scope and Sequence

⁷ Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
Online resources: ASCD at www.ascd.org/ Understanding by Design Exchange Resources
<http://www.ubdexchange.org/resources.html>.

recommended curriculum design, and (3) the highly regarded Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model⁸, which integrates academic language development, content area instruction and explicit instruction in learning strategies for both content and language acquisition. All three strategies are the keys to the success delivery of the LAAA curriculum design, and are viewed as extremely compatible with the Delaware Recommended Curricula, in particular the Delaware Science Coalition recommended curriculum, the Delaware Math Coalition Curriculum and the Delaware Social Studies Curriculum (in development), which LAAA has enthusiastically agreed to adopt and implement.

Science:

LAAA Academy K-12 will follow the State of Delaware Science Coalition constructivist learning by design curriculum, including the adoption of all educational units and usage of the science inquiry kits. (See attached MOU).

Social Studies

Per discussion with Preston "Dusty" Shockley on December 4, 2008, LAAA Academy K-12 will be a member of the State of Delaware Social Studies Coalition, and as such will be a participating curriculum development and implementation site for the now in progress recommended curriculum development being undertaken by the coalition. (Per discussion, coalition educational units will be designed, implemented and assessed in grades 2-12). The foundation of LAAA's social studies curriculum in the early years will be based on topics which will help us expand students' understanding of their continually widening circles of interaction - from themselves, to their families, communities, and the world. Topics will be rich enough to sustain a wide range of worthwhile questions and experiences and will incorporate the use of literature, math, art, writing, and scientific inquiry as tools for children to express what they have found out and learned. As it is not enough to simply memorize facts, we will employ the use of trade books and invite community members with various jobs into the classroom to help us discover our surroundings and apply our learning to real life situations. We will help children formulate questions, pursue interests and compile, analyze and present data. It is also not enough for children to gain skills and understanding as individuals. Children need to acquire the perspective and skills that will enable them to live and work effectively with other people. Technology will be integrated into the social studies curriculum especially in creating maps,

⁸ Center for Applied Linguistics (2006, August). Adapting the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) for Two-Way Immersion Education: An Introduction to the TWIOP. Retrieved December 6, 2008, from <http://www.cal.org/twi/TWIOP.pdf>; Cloud, N., Genesee, F. & Hamayan E. (2000). Dual Language Instruction: A Handbook for Enriched Education. United States: Heinle & Heinle.; Echevarria, J., Vogt, M. & Short, D. (2008). Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners. United States: Pearson Education, Inc.

graphs, tables, charts and timelines which will allow children to share their learning with others in a powerful and meaningful form.

Health & Nutrition

As a vital part of our mission, health and nutrition will have its own curriculum, goals and benchmarks. The aim of our health curriculum is to promote the understanding and application of the principles of good health and a healthy lifestyle in all aspects of the students learning. We will cover topics ranging from community to personal health. We will raise the consciousness of our students and the local community by involving families and outside speakers in the discussion of health and nutrition.

Physical Education & Health

The physical education program at LAAA will be integrated across the curriculum and school design, with a primary goal of the PE program is to provide students with the opportunity to participate in sustained physical activity everyday in order to develop and maintain a healthy body. However, our goals do not end there. In keeping with the holistic philosophy of education embodied at LAAA, the PE program seeks to develop cognitive, physical, and social/emotional growth in our students through the study of movement.

In the primary grades (K-2), students learn to understand movement concepts and develop a full repertoire of movement that will serve as a foundation for more developmentally advanced movement disciplines such as sports and dance training as they grow up. In addition, one day a week is specifically dedicated to understanding fitness concepts. Students learn to distinguish cardiovascular exercises, strength training, and flexibility and participate in a balanced fitness program. As they progress, students take on more responsibility for individualized fitness goals. Students learn the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle which includes at least a half hour of physical activity per day.

Another component of the PE program is skill development. One day a week is dedicated to teaching students specific skills. For example students develop hand-eye coordination through practicing throwing, catching, kicking, and striking. Students develop gymnastic skills through balancing and tumbling. Also, students develop yoga skills such as balance, strength, flexibility, concentration, and mindfulness.

Project-based Learning: "Learning by Doing"

The philosophical and psychological foundations of the project-based learning stem from progressivism and cognitive field theories. Progressivism places emphasis on teaching students "how" to think rather than "what" to think. In line with this philosophy, students are taught to recognize and apply information they have acquired in a variety of situations and to use prior

knowledge in complex and novel ways. With such an approach, students are more likely to become self-directed and lifelong learners. Passive learning methods such as traditional lecture and drill are minimally used and active learning methods such as projects, work-study and discussions are emphasized.

The ASPIRA Charter School (ACS) project-based curriculum design draws on the essential design principles of San Diego's highly successful High Tech High (HTH) funded since 2003 by the Gates Foundation to replicate the High Tech High model in locations throughout California and selected cities in the United States. ASPIRA Illinois' first charter school campus, founded in 2003, was a replication of the High Tech High school design, as part of the Gates-funded new small school replication initiative. Other High Tech High affiliate and replication sites are in Washington, Oregon, Colorado, New Mexico, and Massachusetts. Although the high tech high model is one born out of the mission to redesign the American High School, its design incorporates principles that are being implemented through K-12 classrooms, including the elementary, middle and high schools that now make up the High Tech High Learning Communities.⁹

The High Tech High model is based on a simple but compelling educational vision: provide each student with a rigorous and relevant academic curriculum, based in an authentic and real-life context, and you will build students with the understandings and skills they will need to live rewarding lives in our increasingly multicultural society and global economy. Academic subjects are taught through project-, problem-, and inquiry-based learning activities; contextual learning; interpersonal and interactive learning opportunities; authentic learning; engaged learning; participatory modes of instruction; team teaching; interdisciplinary teaching; seminars and group instruction; guest presentations; integrated math and science; and other alternative educational methodologies. Teachers are encouraged to recognize the importance of student experiences on subject matter and to incorporate these experiences in lessons where appropriate.

Brief subject overviews and direct instruction methods are used to disseminate new information and build upon prior knowledge. Discussions following overviews help students conceptualize new information and challenge their understanding. During class discussions the teacher serves as a facilitator and guide rather than an authoritarian pedagogue. Multi-level (differentiated) instruction is used to address different stages of student cognitive development. One way we accomplish multi-level instruction is to have students or groups of students work on different tasks to accomplish the same learning outcome, e.g. have students engaged in project learning.

⁹ See www.hightechhigh.org

Peer learning, problem and case-based learning, independent seatwork, performance, and student reflection also are used to give students the opportunity to practice and engage actively in the learning process. The use of guest speakers, field trips, work-study, and assignments on the Internet are other strategies for student learning engagement. Our instructional practices emphasize personal responsibility, social development, and career integration as well as self-discipline, community involvement, and economic literacy. By using an integration of such methods students become better prepared to deal with issues and situations in a changing world.

Teachers are expected to work as teams and create a project-based learning curriculum where learning flows out of teacher-facilitated integrated curriculum units that engage students through a merging of faculty and student interests and hands-on discovery, exploration and problem-solving. Assessments, both formative and summative, are contextualized as well, and include student presentations and exhibitions of learning, student projects such as plays, films, investigations, demonstrations and experiments, student digital portfolios of learning, and, when appropriate, more traditional measures of learning such as quizzes, book reports, papers, and even multiple choice or closed response curriculum-based interim assessments. All student data is then used to inform and appropriately differentiate instruction. Administration is expected to create the systems and structure that will optimally support adherence to these design principles.

Wiggins and McTighe "Understanding by Design"

Understanding by Design (UbD) is a framework for improving student achievement. Emphasizing the teacher's critical role as a designer of student learning, UbD works within the standards-driven curriculum to help teachers clarify learning goals, devise revealing assessments of student understanding, and craft effective and engaging learning activities.

Developed by nationally recognized educators Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, and published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Understanding by Design is based on the following key ideas:

- A primary goal of education should be the development and deepening of student understanding.
- Students reveal their understanding most effectively when they are provided with complex, authentic opportunities to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess. When applied to complex tasks, these "six facets" provide a conceptual lens through which teachers can better assess student understanding.
- Effective curriculum development reflects a three-stage design process called "backward design" that delays the planning of classroom activities until goals have been clarified and assessments designed. This process helps to avoid the twin problems of "textbook coverage" and "activity-oriented" teaching, in which no clear priorities and purposes are apparent.

- Student and school performance gains are achieved through regular reviews of results (achievement data and student work) followed by targeted adjustments to curriculum and instruction. Teachers become most effective when they seek feedback from students and their peers and use that feedback to adjust approaches to design and teaching.
- Teachers, schools, and districts benefit by "working smarter" through the collaborative design, sharing, and peer review of units of study.

In practice, Understanding by Design offers

- a three-stage "backward planning" curriculum design process anchored by a unit design template
- a set of design standards with attendant rubrics
- And a comprehensive training package to help teachers design, edit, critique, peer-review, share, and improve their lessons and assessments.

Operationally, the teachers will be organized into curriculum teams. To assist the teams in their curriculum design work, the teachers will utilize web-based software such as Rubicon Atlas¹⁰ to align the curriculum units with the Delaware state standards, establishing the enduring understandings and essential questions that will be explored through the curriculum content and skill-building units. Essentially, following the "Understanding by Design" process, the teachers will be led through a curriculum designing process, in which the teachers *first* explore "what works" in terms of student learning and understanding; second, employ a "backward design" process, beginning with what we expect the students to know, and then, planning backwards create a curriculum designed to engage students in inquiry & "uncovering" ideas. *Third*, collectively propose a set of design standards, or filters, for achieving quality control in curriculum & assessment design.

The Stages of "Backward Design" are:

- Identify Desired Results
- Determine Acceptable Evidence

¹⁰ Rubicon Atlas is a customizable, web-based application designed to electronically encompass the process of curriculum mapping which facilitates collaboration among teachers across subjects, grades and schools. Its extensions go beyond just recording and reporting, to the sharing of curriculum strategies with administrators, superintendents, boards of trustees and parents. Armed with the most current and enhanced curriculum information, educators and administrators alike are empowered to make complex curriculum decisions in order to advance and improve the learning experience of all students on a continuum. Atlas is a: Tool designed for teachers; Tool useful for administrators; and Tool for communicating with students and parents.

- Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction
- Establish evidence of student understanding through:
 - i. Performance tasks
 - ii. Other assessments

The Filters for Selecting Understandings:

- Represent a big idea having enduring value beyond the classroom.
- Reside at the heart of the discipline (involve “doing” the subject).
- Require un-coverage (of abstract or often misunderstood ideas).
- Offer potential for engaging students.

Big Picture of an “Understanding by Design” Approach

Key Design Question	Design Considerations	Filters (Design Criteria)	What the Final Design Accomplishes
Stage 1: What is worthy & requiring of understanding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * National Standards * State Standards * Teacher Expertise & Interest 	End * Enduring ideas. * Opportunities for authentic, discipline-based work. * “Uncoverage” * Engaging.	Unit framed around enduring understandings and essential questions.
Stage 2: What is evidence of understanding?	Six * Six facets of understanding. * Continuum of assessment types.	Valid * Valid. * Reliable. * Sufficient. * Authentic work. * *Feasible. * Student friendly.	Unit anchored in credible and educationally vital evidence of the desired understandings.
Stage 3: What learning experiences & teaching promote understanding, interest, and excellence?	Res * Research based repertoire of learning & teaching strategies. Less * Essential & enabling knowledge & skill.	WHERE * Where is it going? * Hook the students. * Explore & equip. * Rethink & revise. * Exhibit & evaluate.	Coherent learning experiences & teaching that will evoke & develop the desired understandings, promote interest & make excellent performance more likely.

TWO DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Thinking like an Assessor	Thinking like an Activity Designer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would be sufficient & revealing evidence of understanding? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would be interesting & engaging activities on this topic?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What performance tasks must anchor the unit and focus the instructional work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What resources and materials are available on this topic?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will I be able to distinguish between those who really understand and those who don't (though they may seem to)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will students be doing in and out of class? What assignments will be given?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Against what criteria will I distinguish work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will I give students a grade (and justify it to their parents)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What misunderstandings are likely? How will I check for those? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the activities work? Why or why not?

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Acquisition of Organized Knowledge	Development of Intellectual Skills	Enlarged Understandings of Ideas and Values
Didactic Instruction	Coaching, Exercises, and Supervised Practice	Socratic Questioning and Active Participation

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (*SIOP*) Model

All students at LAAA will be learning content through a non-native language, either in Spanish for the native English speakers or English for the native Spanish speakers. Over the first four years of the charter (2011-2014) students in grades K-4 will be taught using the Two Way Immersion (TWI) - modified *SIOP* approach referred to as the *TWIOp* Model. For the first four years, until the students who began the dual language program in K-1 reach the 5th grade level, the 5-8 grade curriculum at LAAA will be delivered in a more traditional approach, with native English speaking students receiving instruction entirely in English, with an inclusion of Spanish as World Language, and English Language Learners receiving instruction through a Transitional Bilingual Program where academic content will be taught in both English and Spanish using a sheltered instruction approach to make the subject matter concepts comprehensible. A Transitional Bilingual Program is most appropriate for these grades given the

students point of entry into LAAA. The goal for these students is to become functionally proficient in English and master subject content through English in order to fully prepare them for their high school experience.

SIOP is a model of sheltered instruction that integrates academic language development, content area instruction and explicit instruction in learning strategies for both content and language acquisition. It is a research based instructional model for making content comprehensible for English language learners while promoting their English language development. Highlighting key language features and incorporating strategies make the content comprehensible to students. It is an approach that extends the time students have for getting language support services while learning content. **SIOP** is a proven method of instruction that engages students in meaningful learning while improving the academic achievement of second language learners.

The **TWOP** Model is based on the **SIOP** Model. Modifications to the **SIOP** model were designed specifically for the **TWI** context by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in cooperation with experienced **TWI** teachers in 2005 with a grant from the Goldman Sachs Foundation. The modifications to the **SIOP** Model for the **TWI** context produced only two new features for the **TWOP** Model:

1. Inclusion of *cultural objectives* clearly defined, displayed and reviewed.
2. Specific learning activities to meet the cultural objectives for the lesson.

In addition to the above modifications, LAAA is committed to coordinating instruction in the two program languages in order to facilitate the transfer of skills and promote language and literacy development for students in both languages. To this end, similar instructional strategies and assessments are used in the two program languages and *coordinating language objectives* are complementary across language programs. Coordinating instruction by ensuring common planning times between teachers to avoid repetition of *content objectives* across program languages is a priority at LAAA. Furthermore, explicit teaching of strategies and techniques to support effective peer interaction and peer modeling is critical. Such techniques include teaching students use of slower speech, gestures and visual aids when working with peers.

LAAA will use the **SIOP Protocol** as a tool to observe, rate and provide feedback to teachers on whether teachers effectively use sheltered techniques in their lessons. The **SIOP** protocol consists of thirty features grouped into the following eight components:

1. Lesson Preparation
2. Building Background Knowledge

3. Comprehensible Input
4. Strategies
5. Interaction
6. Practice/Application
7. Effectiveness of Lesson Delivery
8. Review/Assessment

These components emphasize instructional practices that are *critical* for second language learners as well as best practices that benefit all students.

The ***SIOP Model*** is used for lesson planning and delivery. The model provides teachers a framework for well prepared and well delivered sheltered lessons in any subject area. In preparing lessons, teachers must identify the following:

1. Standards
2. Unit/Theme
3. Content Objective
4. Language Objective
5. Learning Strategies
6. Key Vocabulary
7. Materials
8. Motivation - Building Vocabulary
9. Presentation – Language and content objectives, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, feedback
10. Practice/Application – Meaningful activities, interaction, strategies, practice/application, feedback
11. Review/Assessment – Review objectives and vocabulary, assess learning
12. Extension

At LAAA, teachers will be professionally trained in incorporating all eight components and thirty features of the ***SIOP Protocol*** in their lesson planning and delivery.

Criteria for Success in Two-Way Bilingual Education¹¹

1. Programs should provide a minimum of four to six years of bilingual instruction to participating students.
2. The focus of instruction should be the same core academic curriculum that students in other programs experience.
3. Optimal language input (input that is comprehensible, interesting, and of sufficient quantity) as well as opportunities for output should be provided to students, including quality language arts instruction in both languages.
4. The non-English language should be used for instruction a minimum of 50 % of the time (to a maximum of 90 % in the early grades) and English should be used at least 10 % of the time.
5. The program should provide an additive bilingual environment where all students have the opportunity to learn a second language while continuing to develop their native language proficiency.
6. Classrooms should include a balance of students from the non-English and English backgrounds who participate in instructional activities together.
7. Positive interactions among students should be facilitated by the use of strategies such as cooperative learning.
8. Characteristics of effective schools should be incorporated into programs, such as qualified personnel and home-school collaboration.

DUAL LANGUAGE – K-4 Curriculum

The dual language curriculum will be guided by the "Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education" (2005) out of the Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, DC, a compendium of research and practice-based principles, anchored in the No Child Left Behind legislation, which allows programs to self-evaluate across strands and domains. The curricular approach follows exemplary practices in all pedagogical areas including program structure,

¹¹ Adapted from Lindholm, K. 1990. Bilingual immersion education: Criteria for program development. In A. Padilla, H. Fairchild, & C. Valadez (Eds.), *Bilingual education: Issues and strategies*. pp. 91-105. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

curriculum, instruction, staff quality, professional development, assessment and accountability, parental involvement, community involvement, support and resources.

The *Early Balanced Literacy* Framework is designed to ensure that all students are provided opportunities to develop reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking skills simultaneously. Literacy instruction emphasizes the acquisition of skills necessary to utilize literacy as a writing reciprocal as well as a meaning-making, problem solving process.

Students will be able to master the following skills in two languages:

- Use and appreciation of oral language through discussions, chants, songs, poems and games that involve talking, listening and following directions.
- Use and appreciation of printed language through activities that teach directionality of print, production of print, handling of books, word awareness and predictable and patterned languages.
- Listen to daily read-a-loud for the introduction of new words, places and ideas, hear vocabulary and text structures, support and extend oral language development and connect oral to written language.
- Understand and manipulate the building blocks of spoken language through rhyming games and auditory activities to manipulate sounds in words.
- Understand and manipulate the building blocks of written language through activities that teach names of letters, printing letters and experiment with and manipulate letters to make words and message.
- Understand the relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the letters of written language.
- Learn decoding strategies.
- Relate writing to spelling and reading.
- Accurate and fluent reading in decodable stories.
- Read and comprehend a wide assortment of books and other texts.
- Develop and comprehend new vocabulary through wide reading and direct vocabulary instruction.
- Apply comprehension strategies.

Delivery of Instruction – Kindergarten – 4th Grade

- Language of the Day
- Spanish Language Arts for All LEP students
- English Language Arts for All Non-LEP students
- Math for All in English
- Science/Social Studies for All in Spanish
- English as a Second Language for All
- Spanish as a Second Language for All

D Provide evidence to demonstrate that the school's educational program will improve student performance by identifying:

- (1) Any academically independent peer reviewed studies of the proposed educational program conducted by persons or entities without a financial interest in the educational program or in the proposed charter school, or;**
- (2) Evidence of prior successful implementation of the proposed educational program, or;**
- (3) Adherence to professionally accepted models of student development.**

The LAAA/ASPIRA dual-language project-based learning curriculum is research-based and has a proven record for successfully preparing students to meet and exceed learning standards and preparing students for their next level of academic achievement.¹² ASPIRA Charter Schools in Miami Florida, Philadelphia Pennsylvania and Chicago Illinois, working with a similar target population of students have achieved notable successes, including high schools (in Chicago) ranking in the top 25% of non-selective schools and elementary and middle schools (in Philadelphia and Miami) meeting AYP every year for the last four years.¹³

The constructivist-based project-based learning approach is a proven approach for developing active learners that develop enduring understandings and critical thinking skills.

¹² Dual Language Learners in the Early Years: Getting Ready to Succeed in School November, 2008

Keira Gebbie Ballantyne Alicia R. Sanderman Timothy D'Emilio Nicole McLaughlin

Dual language schools have an equally, if not even more impressive record in enhancing academic performance of its participants. A 2006 report¹⁴ on a ten year longitudinal study of dual language schools across the country, states that the findings are incontrovertible: dual language schools "demonstrate the substantial power of this program for enhancing student outcomes and fully closing the achievement gap in second language (L2). Effect sizes for dual language are very large compared to other programs for English learners (ELLs). Dual language schooling also can transform the experience of teachers, administrators, and parents into an inclusive and supportive school community for all. Our research findings of the past 18 years are summarized here, with focus on ELLs' outcomes in one-way and two-way, 50:50 and 90:10, dual language models, including heritage language programs for students of bilingual and bicultural ancestry who are more proficient in English than in their heritage language."

The researchers found that "Enrichment dual language schooling closes the academic achievement gap in L2 and in first language (L1) students initially below grade level, and for all categories of students participating in this program. This is the only program for English learners that fully close the gap; in contrast, remedial models only partially close the gap. Once students leave a special remedial program and join the curricular mainstream, we find that, at best, they make one year's progress each school year (just as typical native English speakers do), thus maintaining but not further closing the gap. Often, the gap widens again as students move into the cognitive challenge of the secondary years where former ELLs begin to make less than one year's progress per year. In contrast to remedial programs that offer "watered down" instruction in a "special" curriculum focused on one small step at a time, dual language enrichment models are the curricular mainstream taught through two languages. Teachers in these bilingual classes create the cognitive challenge through thematic units of the core academic curriculum, focused on real-world problem solving that stimulate students to make more than one year's progress every year, in both languages. With no translation and no repeated lessons in the other language, separation of the two languages is a key component of this model. Peer teaching and teachers using cooperative learning strategies to capitalize on this effect serve as an important stimulus for the cognitive challenge. Both one-way and two-way enrichment bilingual programs have this power."

In Houston dual language schools, the researchers found that the students in two-way Bilingual Immersion far outscored students in either developmental Bilingual Education and Transitional Bilingual Education programs. Moreover progress not only was sustained, but students in later grades held onto their academic performance gains and were high achievers in all content areas. Authors also note that English native speakers also show high performance in

¹⁴ Virginia P. Collier and Wayne P. Thomas *the Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All* (George Mason University, 2006).

all content areas when they have five or more years in a dual language two way immersion school.¹⁵

Finally, the ASPIRA model of education and youth leadership is a proven model of youth development. Independent audits performed by the Department of Education on the ASPIRA Illinois Talent Search program have found that 92% of students who participate in ASPIRA Talent Search finish high school and apply and are admitted to college. These are first generation college goers from families where many of the parents may not even have a high school diploma.

e. Describe the school calendar and hours of operation. Provide the calendar for the first year of school operation.

The LAAA 2010 school calendar will have 183 school days. The school year is divided into 4 quarters and students receive report cards at the end of each quarter.

The regular school day for students is from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Teachers must punch in by 7:30 a.m. and be ready for pre-instructional day responsibilities. From 7:30 – 8:15 Teachers meet with lead teachers and participate in professional development and whole school meetings in the one hour before school begins. Teachers are in their rooms and students begin instruction at 8:30 a.m. After-school extended learning and student activities take place from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

There are 9 early dismissal days for teacher PD, where students are dismissed at 2:00 p.m.; There are 8 full day PD days through the school year where students do not attend, releasing the teachers for PD. And there is a 3 day educational summit at the end of the school year and five days professional development before the school year begins.

CALENDAR FOR FIRST YEAR OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS: FY2011

Independence Day Holiday	July 4
New Teacher Professional Development	August 2-6
New Teacher Unit Planning & Preparation	August 16-20
First Day of School	August 16
Labor Day Holiday	September 7
Professional Development (No Students)	September 24
Columbus Day Holiday	October 12
End of 1 st Quarter Professional Development (No Students)	October 22
Quarter 2 begins	October 25
Report Card Pick Up & Professional Development (No Students)	October 29
Thanksgiving Break	Nov 25-27
Winter Break	Dec 20-Jan 3
Professional Development/ End of Q2 (No Students)	Jan 13-14

¹⁵ See Appendix 6 B, Figures 1&2 Houston ISD ELL Achievement by Program.

Martin Luther King Holiday	Jan 17
Report Card Distribution	Jan 21
Professional Development (No Students)	Feb 11
President's Day	Feb 14
End of 3 rd Quarter/ Professional Development (no students)	March 25
Q4 Begins	March 28
Spring Vacation	April 4-8
Report Card Pick Up	April 15
Professional Development (No Students)	April 29
Memorial Day Holiday	May 31
Professional Development (No Students)	June 9
Q4 ends (Last Day of School for Students)	June 10
Educational Summit	June 13-15
Summer School Begins	June 20

School day schedule:

Teachers begin work day one hour before the start time for classroom instruction.

The Instructional day is 7 hours plus 30 minutes for lunch. Students have "recess" time for one half hour before or after lunch, depending on the classroom schedule. When the weather is fair students will take their supervised recess time outside the building. Otherwise "recess" will take place in the classroom, or gymnasium, supervised by the teacher(s).

- c. Describe any other features of the school's educational plan (including special materials or focus on technology) that will aid the reviewers in understanding the unique nature of the school.
- f. Describe any other features of the school's educational plan (including special materials or focus on technology) that will aid the reviewers in understanding the unique nature of the school.

To understand the unique nature of the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy, it is essential to understand that underlying the entire LAAA educational plan – underlying the dual language immersion, underlying the project-based learning, underlying the structure of the entire learning environment – is the ASPIRA Process. The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA) is the direct outgrowth of the mission of ASPIRA of Delaware, Inc., an associate office of the national ASPIRA Association. ASPIRA, since its start with ASPIRA New York, has had over forty-seven years of experience creating and implementing formal and informal education programs with youth from a wide diversity of race, ethnicity, and national origin that build up youth self-esteem, cultural awareness, and leadership abilities.

16 See Appendix 6 C: Expectations for Las Americas ASPIRA Academy and Staff.

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy's constructivist educational philosophy and organization is grounded in the almost 50 year-old ASPIRA theory of change – the ASPIRA theory of change being that concerned and caring adults can sow the seeds of a positive change for their communities by 1) by educating youth through a holistic family approach as they transition from children to adults 2) by setting high expectations for the children and underserved youth of our communities; and 3) by creating formal and informal learning spaces for children and youth where they can “learn by doing” and build their leadership capacities. That by setting high expectations and empowering our children and youth to access and demand resources and opportunities, youth will not only meet, but will exceed our expectations, academically, socially and professionally.

The LAAA curriculum will incorporate the ASPIRA Youth Leadership Development (YLD) curriculum at all school grade levels, in developmentally appropriate contexts. The YLD curriculum focuses on building critical thinking and leadership skills, in the early grades as early as Kindergarten through understanding their role as a responsible member of their classroom community, and as middle school and high school youth through participation in public policy, entrepreneurship, and community-based initiatives. The YLD curriculum is based on the following principles:

- Youth leadership development takes a long time—it is a *process*. Caring adults need to invest in children/young people over a period of years in order to provide consistency.
- Young people need to be actively engaged in the process of community change at all levels, from the street corner to the board room.
- Society must acknowledge and embrace the idea that youth are talented and capable of leading community change.
- Young people must lead positive change themselves in order for it to succeed.
- Leadership programs must identify, nurture and support more than talented elite.
- The process of developing young leaders begins with *learning how to learn*.

Through this “assets-based” model, ASPIRA Associations across the country have changed the cycle of hopeless and poverty and has created 3 generations of “*Aspirantes*” that know that the key to change is “leadership through education,” and that each generation of youth that grow into community leaders through the ASPIRA Schools and Clubs will exponentially increase the number of youth who come after them to complete high school, go to college, and go on to being productive community leaders who give back to their communities and participate as productive members of our society.

g. Describe the teacher/student ratio of the school.

TEACHERS	FY2011 360 STUDENTS	FY2012 560 STUDENTS	FY2013 760 STUDENTS	FY 2014 960 STUDENTS
CLASSROOM TEACHERS	18	28	38	48
ART TEACHER	1	2	3	4
P.E./HEALTH TEACHER	1	2	3	4
READING SPECIALIST	1	2	4	5
LIBRARIAN TEACHER – MEDIA SPECIALIST	1	1	1	1
SPED TEACHERS	2	3	4	5
SPED TEACHER- CASEMANAGER	1	1	2	2
TOTAL TEACHERS	25	39	55	69
TEACHER/STUDENT RATIO	14.4	14.4	13.8	13.9

h. Describe the professional development activities/opportunities that will be made available to teachers and other staff.

i. Describe the professional development activities/opportunities that will be made available to teachers and other staff.

The teaching staff of the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy will routinely participate in professional development activities. Professional development time is an integral part of the school calendar, including 9 early dismissal days for teacher PD, 8 full day PD days through the school year, a 3 day educational summit at the end of the school year and five

days professional development before the school year begins. In addition, from 7:30 – 8:15 a.m. Monday – Friday, teachers are expected to use that valuable before school teacher common preparation time to meet with lead teachers, meet with parents and special education teams, and participate in professional development and whole school meetings. Professional development time at ASPIRA schools includes curriculum teams developing and revising curriculum maps, and planning interdisciplinary projects. Some of the most valuable professional development will occur within the context and structure of the school where teachers confer in team meetings and department meetings relative to curriculum, instruction, school climate, and student progress. Additionally, teachers will visit colleagues' classrooms at least once per year to observe teaching, following the "making rounds" protocol currently implemented in many project-based learning schools.

Both new and on-going teachers will participate in summer institutes relative to dual language immersion, SIOP/ TWIOP protocols, project-based learning, its practices and principles. The dual language project-based learning approach to dual language curriculum delivery demands a high level of professional development, and in addition, systems such as the *eSchoolPlus*, the Rubicon Atlas curriculum planning software, require additional training prior to implementation. LAAA will plan to have all faculty participate in the professional development opportunities that these resource communities provide. In particular, all faculty will attend dual language immersion seminars and conferences such as the annual SIOP conference at the Center for Applied Linguistics¹⁶

Teachers will also be trained to differentiate instruction for each learner, how to specifically address the learning needs of ELL and SPED learners, and how to analyze learning outcomes and standardized test data.

Throughout the school year, members of the teaching staff will participate in offsite professional development activities to support the instructional goals of the school. LAAA is very excited that as a member of the Delaware science, math and social studies coalitions, additional professional development opportunities will be provided to the LAAA faculty and LAAA faculty will be part of the implementation and further development of the coalition curriculum development. If necessary, LAAA will provide a substitute teacher to replace the teacher attending these professional development workshops. In addition, teachers in all content areas will be expected to participate in

¹⁶ The Center for Applied Linguistics is dedicated to providing a comprehensive range of research-based information, tools, and resources related to language and culture. CAL is a private, nonprofit organization working to improve communication through better understanding of language and culture. Established in 1959, CAL is headquartered in Washington, DC. CAL has earned a national and international reputation for its contributions to the fields of bilingual, English as a second language, literacy, and foreign language education; dialect studies; language policy; refugee orientation; and the education of linguistically and culturally diverse adults and children. CAL's experienced staff of researchers and educators conduct research, design and develop instructional materials and language tests, provide technical assistance and professional development, conduct needs assessments and program evaluations, and disseminate information and resources related to language and culture.

benchmarking and standards setting sessions offered through the Department of Education.

Every attempt will be made to compose a faculty that is evenly distributed between more experienced and lesser experienced teachers. With that distribution of faculty teaching experience, it will be possible to partner new teachers with the more experienced, through a peer mentoring program. In addition, LAAA will seek foundation support to implement the TAP (Teacher Advancement Program), a well regarded whole school teacher development program that is currently being implemented as ASPIRA schools in Philadelphia.¹⁷

¹⁷ The TAP applied professional growth program calls on teachers to become active agents of their own improvement. Each teacher works in cooperation with his or her mentor and master teachers to develop an Individual Growth Plan (IGP). As well, each belongs to a professional learning group called a cluster group. Master and mentor teachers within the school lead these cluster sessions, which focus on teacher collaboration for instructional improvement. Through IGP and cluster group work teachers meet student learning needs by connecting research-based, data-driven best practices to daily classroom instruction. Both types of sessions are embedded in the school's daily schedule.

Q#7. Students with Special Needs

The application must include the plan for each of the following:

- a. Ensuring that the school will be in full compliance with current federal and state statutes relating to the education of students with disabilities, including but not limited to: evaluation, re-evaluation, accommodations, and employment of certified special education teachers prior to the admission of students. The plan must provide for a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities and include a continuum of educational placements for students with disabilities.**
- b. Complying with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.**
- c. Complying with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.**
- d. Complying with Title IX of the Education amendments of 1972.**
- e. Having certified special education teacher(s) providing services for students with disabilities.**

RESPONSE 7A-7E

The Las Americas ASPIRA Academy (LAAA) will be in full compliance with the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004, the State Special Education Regulations (June 4, 2007) and Section #504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In compliance with Title VI, VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education amendments of 1972, LAAA will have in place a policy statement that no person shall be subjected to discrimination in LAAA educational programs, services or activities based on race, national origin, gender, age or disability in accordance with state and federal laws.

LAAA will provide free, appropriate, public education to all students and no student will be denied admission on the basis of his/her disability. Further, the school will provide a *continuum* of educational placements and support systems for those students who learn differently and is committed to the differentiation of instruction to the learning styles and needs of every student. LAAA will be in full compliance with current federal and state statutes relating to the education of students with disabilities, including but not limited to: evaluation, re-evaluation, accommodations, and employment of certified special education teachers prior to the admission of students.

LAAA will have in place the necessary programs to optimize the success of students with disabilities in the general curriculum following IDEA 1997 and 2004 regulations regarding the

placement of students in the *least restrictive environment* (LRE) that is appropriate for them and as prescribed by the student's IEP plan. The spirit of this requirement is to ensure that children are not unnecessarily removed from the regular classroom or isolated from other non-disabled children of their age. LRE decisions will be made based on children's learning needs and vary from child to child. LAAA will provide a full continuum of services ranging from regular classrooms with support to special classes, and, if necessary, will assist parents in finding special school placements as needed.

Prior to the admission of students, LAAA will employ and maintain on staff at least one full time special education Delaware certified teacher. This teacher will provide co-teaching and coordination services for special education students. LAAA will also have secured the services of paraprofessionals to staff the multidisciplinary IEP teams, and to assess and provide appropriate services to LAAA special education and at-risk students.

LAAA will adhere to the IEP process up to and including providing related services required for identified students. This includes contracting with outside agencies or persons for services.

LAAA will adhere to serving students eligible for #504 status under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act by developing and implementing accommodation plans for those eligible students.

All areas of the school building will be handicapped accessible, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Extended School Year services (ESY) will be provided to students, in accordance with the student's I.E.P. Student will attend the LAAA summer program and/or be provided with appropriate ESY services through a contract with the school district or a private provider.

LAAA will identify and address the needs of Special Education through various mechanisms. Parents of students with special needs will be involved in the assessment and individual program design. No student with a disability is discriminated against and all rights are afforded to those students identified as special education or at-risk populations. LAAA will have in place that no person shall be subjected to discrimination in educational programs, services or activities based on race, national origin, gender, age or disability in accordance with state and federal laws.

Identification and Assessment of Kindergarten and First Grade Students new to DEDOE:

LAAA will actively work with *Childfind* rapid assessment screeners, to assist in the early identification of special needs K-1 students (up through age 6) who are new to the DEDOE system and have enrolled into our school. *Childfind* is a federally funded program in the State of

Delaware which locates, identifies and provides educational services to eligible persons from three years of age through the age of twenty-one. These screenings will help identify children who may have delays in the areas of motor, concepts and/or communication development as well as those who may have behavioral problems. Following the screening, a recommendation may be made to the *Childfind* Office of Special Services requesting that further testing be done. *Childfind* evaluation services include assessments of learning strengths and needs. If in fact a child enrolled in LAAA is deemed eligible for services, the services will be provided in accordance with the IEP that is developed by the Special Education School team.

As part of school marketing and student recruitment, LAAA will be contacting pre-school and early childhood centers to speak with parents, and will also alert parents at that time to the availability of *Childfind* rapid assessment screenings. *Childfind* also is available to community agencies, institutions, private, parochial, and charter schools located within Christina School District boundaries to evaluate children (3-21 years) who are experiencing educational difficulties, and may be eligible for special education services.

8. Economic Viability

- a. List the staff positions and indicate the full-time equivalence for each position for the first four years of school operation. Include position descriptions for each job title. (See position descriptions for each job title in appendix)

POSITION ¹	FTE			
	FY 2011 360 Students	FY2012 560 Students	FY2013 760 students	FY2014 960 Students
Teacher	18	28	38	48
Art Teacher	1	2	3	4
P.E. Teacher	1	2	3	4
Reading Specialist	1	2	4	5
Librarian/ Teacher/Media Specialist	1	1	1	1
SPED Teacher	2	3	4	5
SPED Teacher/ Case Manager ²	1	1	2	2
Social Worker	0	1	1	1
Principal/HOS	1	1	1	1
Business Manager (& Transportation & School Lunch Coordinator – FY2010)	1	1	1	1
Asst Principal/ Parent Coordinator	1	1	1	1
Transportation & School Lunch Coordinator	0	1	1	1
Parent Coordinator & Student Recruiter	0	1	1	1
School Nurse & Attendance Monitor	1	1	1	1
Attendance Monitor/ Truancy Specialist	0	1	1	1
Registrar & Attendance Clerk & Reception/ Clerical	2	2	2	2
Tech IT	1	2	3	3
Custodial Staff	1.5	2	2.5	3

¹ See Appendix 8A: Job Descriptions for all listed positions

² The Multi-Disciplinary Special Education Team will under a consulting contract to provide services on an as-needed basis.

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- b. List all positions NOT employed by the board of directors. Where there is intent to hold a contract, provide a contract or template of intended contractual relationships.

Non Salaried/ Contractual Positions:

- 1) Members of the Multi-Disciplinary Special Education IEP team – e.g. Social Worker (year 1 and as needed); Psychologist; Learning Specialist; Speech Therapist;
- 2) The Start up Year – Independent Contractor Relationship for Principal / HOS and Registrar/ Administrative Assistant.³

FACILITIES

- c. Describe the plan for facilities to accommodate all the students for the total enrollment for the initial four years of the charter

Permanent Building Program (full capacity K-8 = 960 students)

- a. 48 Classrooms– 900 square feet per classroom (up to 25 students per classroom)
- b. 2 Sections for Elementary School (640 K-5 – 32 classrooms); Middle School (320 6-8 – 16 classrooms)
- c. 3 Science/Specialty Labs (Middle School)
- d. 1 Art Room – Middle School (1200 SQ FT) (natural light and ventilation).
- e. 1 Music Room– Middle School (1200 SQ FT) (natural light and ventilation).
- f. Library/ Resource Room to serve entire school (E-Library & Stacks & Adult and Children Reading space)
- g. Full Gymnasium & Showers/Locker/Changing Rooms
- h. Cafeteria/ Commons & Full Kitchen
- i. Nurse Station (with separate examination/"sick child" room)
- j. SPED Classrooms, Conference room and Resource Room (large enough to accommodate speech therapist, occupational therapist, and testing)
- k. Administration area
- l. Reception area – at front entrance foyer area – with area for people to sit and wait
- m. 2 Teacher's Resource Rooms (one for each area)
- n. Parking as required by local building code
- o. Bus loops for each area of school (K-5, 6-8)
- p. K-1 play grounds; grades 2-5 Play grounds; Multi-use Playing fields and half basketball court

³ See Appendix 8B for template of intended contractual relationships.

2) TEMPORARY Building Program(Temporary up to 2 years – capacity 360 (1st year) -560 (2nd year) students:

- a. 18-28 Elementary/Middle School Classrooms – 800-900 square feet ea. (up to 25 students per classroom)
- b. Sections for Elementary School (360 K-2); Middle School (220 5-6);
- c. Cafeteria/ Commons & Warming Kitchen
- d. Nurse Station
- e. 2 SPED Classrooms
- f. 1 SPED Resource Room
- g. Administration area
- h. Reception area
- i. Teacher's Resource Room
- j. Parking as required by school building code

3) TECHNOLOGY (Both Temporary and Permanent)

- a. PC Desktops – 3-5 desktops in each K-5 classroom
- b. Lap Top Computer Carts - 1:2 Computer Ratio in grades 6-8,
- c. Computer Labs: 1 Specialty Computer Lab for grades 5-8
- d. Wireless Access throughout the school buildings, including cafeteria, hallways, and exterior areas of school

4) SHARED/ COMMON SPACES: Cafeteria/Multi-purpose room, Gym, Resource Library, sections of outdoor areas

5) SIZE SITE NEEDED:

- a. Permanent Building: 72,000 Square Feet; 6-7 Acres of Land.
- b. Temporary Building: 30,600 - 48,600 Square Feet & adequate parking
- d. Identify where the school will be located (include county location and any other location specifics). Describe the site and how it will be suitable for the proposed school. Indicate whether the site will be purchased or leased. Identify the date by which the school's board of directors will have direct control of the site either through a signed lease agreement or a signed purchase agreement.

The prospective permanent site, publicly known as the "Reybold Site" or the "Lincoln Center Development," is located in Bear, Delaware, New Castle County, along Rt#7 (Bear Christiana Road) just north of Rt#40. Site is part of a larger parcel being developed by the Reybold Group as a community resource area, and will require site development and new construction.⁴ The ownership of the site is being transferred/ sold to DELDOT, in exchange for the site on which Reybold is constructing a mixed use planned development. The land leased to

⁴ See Appendix 8C for Reybold Development Site Map.
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LAAA will remain within the public domain, but is expected to be made available to community non-profits serving the public good, such as Westside Family Health, Christina School District (Early Childhood Center) and for the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy, a public charter school. The site is expected to be under the control of LAAA and its governing board through the facility of a 99 year lease at a nominal amount per year. The developer is waiting for LAAA to receive a commitment for the Charter from DEDOE before putting the school on the development plan. It is expected that if the school receives its charter this spring, then the school could be placed on the plan and a commitment could be signed by June 1, 2009. LAAA will notify the Department of the Education by September 1, 2009 regarding having acquired control of the property, and will then provide a construction/renovation plan for preparation of the site for school opening.

Because the site identified for the permanent school facility will not be completed in time for the start of the school in fall 2010, LAAA, upon approval of the charter application, will also immediately look to acquire control of a temporary school facility. LAAA, through its ASPIRA partners, has already undertaken a survey of available properties, for lease or for nominal rent, in the Bear area. No school buildings in the Bear area have as yet been identified as available. Properties identified as potential temporary school locations include a 30,000 square foot warehouse, which will require approximately \$250,000 in renovation and would be sufficient to accommodate the school for the first year. Per DEDOE requirements, LAAA will obtain a Certificate of Occupancy by June 15th, 2010 in order to open the school in fall 2010.

ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois, which is providing Charter School Start Up Technical Assistance to ASPIRA Delaware and the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy Board, has entered into an exclusive representation agreement with CBRE Realty⁵, to develop a survey of available properties for alternatives to the Bear development site, and to assess what temporary sites will be available to house the school in its first year of operation.⁶ Upon approval of the charter LAAA will bid out and enter into a contract with a project planner developer which will serve as project manager, construction architect, and general contractor for the construction project. The project planner/developer will be responsible for submitting permits for processing and approval, for making sure that the project proceeds in accordance with the laws and regulations regarding school construction, including but not limited to asbestos in schools, the project timeline and that there is sufficient time for the Facility to receive its certificate of occupancy in time for the school to open in August 2010.

If a temporary site is necessary, depending on the work plan for the selected site that is put under contract, LAAA may seek to lease available school property or, in the case of the Bear

⁵ See Appendix 8D for CBRE Exclusive Representation Agreement

⁶ See Appendix 8E CBRE survey of available suitable temporary and permanent sites for renovation into a school.

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site, may move portable classrooms onto the site so that the students can begin their first day of school in the same location as the permanent facility.

Once the LAAA has received its certificate of occupancy, for both the temporary and the permanent facility, and the school is occupied, a copy of the final floor plan shall be sent to the Department of Education for custodial allocation review. The Department shall determine the total number of custodial positions allocated to the school based on the current State formula for school custodians.

- e. Describe how the facility is in full compliance with all applicable building codes for public schools and is accessible for individuals with disabilities. Describe any renovations of the facility and provide a schedule for that renovation.**

LAAA will seek bids and contract with project planners and developers that are certified and registered in the state of Delaware and as part of the contract with the project planner, architect and general contractor will stipulate that the facility will be in full compliance with all applicable building codes for public schools and that it is accessible for individuals with disabilities.

FACILITIES FINANCING

- f. Identify the amount and source of funds that will be needed to acquire (purchase or lease) the facilities and ready them for school opening. Describe the plan for obtaining these funds.**

LAAA will seek construction and acquisition financing through either a leveraged bond issuance or through a new tax markets credit financing. This financing is expected to be leveraged through the ASPIRA Association and ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois, which has a 40+ year history of providing educational services and six years of Charter School management experience. The K-8 building will be built in two phases: Elementary School K-5 section (completed by June 2011) and Middle School 6-8 section (completed by June 2012); the building will be financed with deferred interest payment for the first 18-24 months from the date of the bond issuance.

If a temporary facility is required for the first school year, LAAA, through the leveraged resources of ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois and ASPIRA National, will secure a construction loan to renovate an existing school or other suitable building for classroom use for the first 1-2 years of the school launch. The construction loan will be wrapped into the permanent facility mortgage as part of the leveraged bond or the new markets tax credits financing facility. The lease will be drawn up to begin with the first quarter payment based on student enrollment.

- g. Identify who will own the school facilities. In the event that the school closes or (if applicable) the management agreement with any contractor terminates, describe what will become of the facilities and any debt owed on those facilities.**

LAAA will have beneficial interest in the property, but it will not gain full ownership of the property until after a period of seven years, at the time when the seven year balloon payment will come due and the building will need to be refinanced into a 25 year fixed rate finance structure. At that point in time, LAAA will be in a position to be able to show its successful school performance, in terms of enrollments, budgetary constraint, and student performance, and the school will have passed through its fourth year charter renewal. In the event that the school closes, the facility will be either leased to another charter school operator or sold to pay the debt owed on the facility.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION #H-K

- h. Describe how students will be transported to the school. Provide intended contract language for the transportation methods chosen (whether the school will provide its own transportation, contract out for transportation, request that a district provide transportation, or a combination thereof).**
- i. Describe how students who reside outside the district in which the school will be located will be transported to the school.**
- j. Describe how special needs students will be transported if specialized transportation is required by the IEP.**
- k. Provide the plan for oversight of school transportation operations, e.g., route planning, bus stop selection, drivers/aides, coordination with contractors if used, school bus discipline.**

LAAA plans to bid and contract out the student transportation service with one or more school transportation providers that are experienced in the delivery of school bus services in accordance with Delaware state requirements with charter buses meeting federal Department of Transportation standards and Delaware School Bus Standards. LAAA will use a public bid process for the transportation contract(s).

In accordance with state regulations, students grades K-6 who live one mile or more from the school and grades 7-12 who live two miles or more from the school will be transported to and from school under the LAAA transportation plan. Based on the budget estimate boiler plate, in the first year, the school will be reimbursed \$ 257,428, for an estimated 255 students that will

qualify for bus services. Based on discussion with Scott Kessel of DEDOE, we can expect that the costs of bus services will be equal to the bus allocation.

In addition, Special Education students with IEPs will be provided with transportation, by the independent transportation contractor, in accordance with the student's IEP. The LAAA transportation supervisor will attend IEP meetings for students with IEPs that require specialized transportation.

Transportation to and from school activities/field trips will be provided at the expense of LAAA and will not be reimbursable by state and district funds. The school's board of directors will carefully preview the school's location to ensure that there is sufficient space for safe school bus maneuvering and parking.

LAAA will contract with a transportation company by June 1, 2010, in preparation for the school opening in August 2010. As one exhibit in the transportation contract, LAAA will provide names and addresses of all students to be transported, as well as the designated pick up/drop off points.

Charter School Transportation Plans

LAAA will ensure the following:

- 1) Drivers shall attend the twelve-hour school bus driver's class and pass a criminal background check and pre-employment drug/alcohol screening.
- 2) The charter school shall maintain driver and training records. Driver's records may be checked by setting up an account with the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Contact at the DMV may be made by calling 739-4343 or 739-5630.
- 3) The school will designate a person as school transportation supervisor. For the first year of the school operations, this person will be the School Business Manager. This person will approve school bus drivers' license fee waivers, will sign the drivers' physical cards (green cards) and will sign the school bus drivers' certificates (yellow cards).
- 4) LAAA will ensure that the private provider has set up a drug/alcohol testing program, and will maintain the records of the random testing on site.
- 5) The school will provide an appropriate amount of collision and liability insurance.
- 6) Safe routes will be designated and approved by the charter school.
- 7) School bus evacuation drills will be accomplished in the fall and spring.

8) Transportation will be offered to all those eligible and for whom the charter school receives funding. School buses will be inspected twice a year (January or February and June, July, or August).

9) The contractor shall obtain the same level of collision and liability insurance as required by contractors on regular public school routes.

The school transportation contracts will identify the buses to be used (bus #, model, year, license and VIN #) and will be submitted to the DOE Transportation Supervisor by August 1 each year. If parents transport their child, LAAA will require a parent's statement waiving the school's transportation. Parents may request the school provide transportation at a later date.

For additional information LAAA will reference the following reference documents:

- Del. C., Title 14, Chapter 5 (Charter Schools), Section 508, Responsibility for Student Transportation
- Minimum Standards for School Buses, State of Delaware, 1988.
- DOE Regulation, Section 1101, Standards for School Bus Chassis and Bodies Placed in Production After March 1, 1998.
- DOE Regulation, Section 1102, Standards for School Bus Chassis and Bodies Placed in Production After March 1, 2002.
- DOE Regulation, Section 1105 - Transportation
- School Bus Drivers Handbook
- Del. C., Title 14 and Title 21 also contain several chapters pertaining to pupil transportation
- Federal law for students with special needs
- 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 40 and 382 regarding drug/alcohol testing.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM #L-M

- l. Describe the plan for providing meals to students, including students eligible for free and reduced lunch. If the school participates in the National School Lunch/Breakfast programs and it intends to contract for meals, identify the contractor and describe the services to be provided. List the estimated annual costs per student for food services.**
- m. Describe how the school will comply with the requirements of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program for eligible students, if the school participates in the program.**

LAAA intends to participate in the National School Lunch/ Breakfast program and will provide a hot lunch to its students through either the local school district or an approved private food service provider. The provider has not yet been identified. The LAAA school business manager will ensure that the provider complies with all standards for the serving of nutritious meals.

LAAA will comply with all the federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program for eligible students. The school nurse will be the person who handles all applications and completes the requirements set forth by the Delaware Dept of Education – School Support Services – School and Community Nutrition Program.

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

- n. List in detail the administrative tasks that will be undertaken between approval of the charter and school opening. Describe the tasks, how they will be accomplished, who will accomplish them, and the timetable by which they will be accomplished.

TIMETABLE FOR SCHOOL START UP

ADMIN TASK	HOW ACCOMPLISHED	WHO RESPONSIBLE	TIMETABLE
Prioritize Tasks	Tend to items in charter application that the authorizer emphasized during the application review process (e.g. facility, student recruitment, hiring HOS)	School Board Chairperson	May 1, 2009
Set up systems with DEDOE starting with financial accounts for Fed Grants	Founding Group will take steps to set up accounts, submit federal grant applications and prepare to draw down start up grant	School Board Chairperson	May 1, 2009
Secure legal counsel on retainer	Interview and select legal counsel	School Board Chairperson	May 1, 2009
Board Training, Policy Development	Seek and set up board training for interim and permanent board on roles and responsibilities	School Board Chairperson	May 1, 2009
Hire HOS/Principal	Publish Announcement	School Board	June 1, 2009
Contract with CMO	Publish Announcement; Accept Proposals; Interview CMO candidates; Select CMO.	School Board	June 1, 2009
Finalize School Budget	Finalize FY2010-2014 Budget	School Board	June 1, 2009
Develop Internal controls for fiscal management	Adapt internal controls protocol from a similar school operation	School Board with CMO	July 1, 2009
Set up financial accounting systems		School Board/ CMO	July 1, 2009
Apply for private foundation support for charter school start up	Submit proposals; make contacts with program officers	School Board/ CMO	July 1, 2009

LAS AMERICAS ASPIRA ACADEMY

ADMIN TASK	HOW ACCOMPLISHED	WHO RESPONSIBLE	TIMETABLE
Develop contract with Project Manager/ Project Development Consultant for site;	Set up bid process, accept proposals, select Project Development Consultant Group	School Board/ CMO/ ASPIRA Illinois	July 1, 2009
Acquire control on property for permanent site of school	Meet with Reybold Group and stakeholders to confirm participation in community use project;	School Board/ Project Development Consultant Group	July 1, 2009
Determine final construction project time line.		School Board/ Project Development Consultant Group/ ASPIRA Illinois	August 1, 2009
Acquire control on property for temporary site	Make decision on appropriate temporary site and gain lease for site.	School Board/ Project Developer	July 1, 2009
Gain financing commitment for construction and renovation of sites	Meet with financing entities regarding whether will seek bond financing or new markets tax credits financing	School Board/ CMO	August 1, 2009
Develop Student Recruitment Plan & Public Relations Campaign		Principal/ HOS with School Board	August 1, 2009
Establish community partners	Create MOU's with community partners	School Board/ CMO	September 1, 2009
Develop staffing and hiring plan	hire only when funding permits	School Board/ CMO	September 1, 2009
Recruit/ Hire Teachers & Staff	Advertise, put together interview process, job descriptions, pay salary chart, employment application, personnel policies and procedures, background check protocol	Principal/HOS	October 1, 2009
Hire Registrar/ Admin Assistant	Advertise, interview, hire	Principal/HOS	October 1, 2009
Set Up Presentations at schools and centers	Meet with school and pre-school directors; Create presentation format	Principal/HOS	October 1, 2009
Develop and Implement Marketing Plan		Principal/ HOS	October 1, 2009

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ADMIN TASK	HOW ACCOMPLISHED	WHO RESPONSIBLE	TIMETABLE
Set up Web Site		Principal/ CMO	October 1, 2009
Set up for Lottery and set Lottery Date		Principal/ CMO	January 1, 2010
Set up trainings for use of DEDOE data & financial management systems DELSIS/eSchoolPlus; DEEDS, PHURST;		Principal/HOS (for Registrar/ Admin Asst)	February 1, 2010
Hire Business Manager		School Board/ CMO	July 1, 2010
Set up contracts with Service Providers, Insurance, etc.		School Board/CMO/ Business Manager	See response to question "o" below
Set up benefits packages with DEDOE		School Board/ CMO	July 1, 2010
Set up leases for equipment and technology		School Board/ CMO/ School Business Manager	July 1, 2010
Set up technology systems		School Board/ CMO/ IT Staff	July 1, 2010
Set up open houses		Principal/HOS	October 1, 2009
Set up student orientations & develop process and plan for collecting required student documentation		Principal/HOS	April 1, 2010
Confirm memberships with Curriculum Coalitions		Principal/HOS/ School Business Manager	April 1, 2010
Order text books and curriculum materials		Principal/HOS/ School Business Manager	July 1, 2010
Set up Professional Development for teachers and staff		Principal/HOS/ School Business Manager	June 1, 2010
Set up school calendar for school year		Principal/HOS/ Board	June 1, 2010
Set up arrangements with uniform providers		Principal/School Business Manager	June 1, 2010

ADMIN TASK	HOW ACCOMPLISHED	WHO RESPONSIBLE	TIMETABLE
Prepare staff for meeting student needs and ensure compliance with school/ charter school law		Principal/ HOS	
Parent – Community Involvement Plan	Develop clear & specific opportunities for parents and the community to be involved in school	Principal/ Assistant Principal	July 1, 2010

- a. List each contract necessary for the school to open and the specific dates on which those contracts will be finalized and signed. Contracts include: equipment, bus and food services; related services such as speech therapy or occupational therapy for special education, leases of real and personal property, the purchase of real property, the construction and/or renovation to real property, and insurance. **THESE CONTRACT AMOUNTS MUST ALSO BE ITEMIZED IN THE BUDGET SHEETS.**

CONTRACTS NECESSARY TO OPEN SCHOOL

CONTRACT	EXECUTION DATE
EQUIPMENT, e.g. Copy Machines	July 1, 2010
BUS TRANSPORTATION	Aug 1, 2010
FOOD SERVICE – Private Food Service Provider	Aug 1, 2010
SPED SERVICES – IEP TEAM – Speech Therapy, Social Worker, Psychologist, Learning Specialist, Occupational Therapist	Aug 1, 2010
CMO MANAGEMENT SERVICES	June 1, 2009
Developer/ G.C. CONSTRUCTION/ RENOVATION	Sept 1, 2009
REAL ESTATE – LEASE OF TEMP BUILDING	Sept 1, 2009
INSURANCE	July 1, 2009

COMPLETE AND BALANCED BUDGET FY2010 – FY 2014⁷

- p. List all *start-up costs* projected for the twelve-month period prior to school opening. List the source(s) of funds to cover these costs and include details on amounts provided by each source.**

See first year (start up year) of 5 year Budget – State and Local Sources and Federal Sources Work Sheets -- Expenses and Revenues and Budget Narratives, Appendix 8F.

- q. List other intended sources of revenue in addition to the state and local funds. Should loans be included, list the source and terms of the intended loan(s). Should fundraising be included, explain activities in detail to also include collection and deposit methods. Describe the process by which funds will be deposited into the school's state account. If a state account is not used, describe where the funds will be deposited to ensure that all school funds are available for audit by the State Auditor's Office upon request.**

See 5 year Budget – Federal sources of Revenue, Appendix 8F. No fundraising other than grant writing is intended at this point in time. Construction Loan funds are expected to be entered into with a financial institution working with ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois. Fifth Third Bank, the ASPIRA Inc. of Illinois current mortgagor has indicated an interest in assisting in the financing of the Delaware school project using the New Markets Tax Credits financing facility, where Fifth Third Bank would be the lead investor of a group of financial institution investors. The loan funds would be held by Fifth Third Bank.

- r. Describe the school's intended contingency finance plan if enrollment falls below the projections as presented in this application. Include details of cost determination. List the minimum number of students the school can enroll each year to remain economically viable.**

The school plans to have in place a very tight strategic marketing and recruitment plan such that the student recruitment level will not drop below a base of 350 students for the first year of operations, not below 540 students in the second year off operations, and not below 700 students in the third year of operations. This is particularly critical since the building acquisition/ construction/ renovation is based on projected revenues, which are based on projected student enrollments.

The following chart provides an estimate of minimum number of students that are needed to support the school as designed. This analysis is based on an estimate of \$8000 revenues per student, thus a shortfall of ten students would be a shortfall of \$80,000 in the first year of operations. Based on the first year budget and the planned personnel, materials, maintenance and contract costs, the school could still operate with the reduction of 10 students only, with the elimination of one full time position, such as the Teacher/Librarian. The school would only hire

⁷ See Appendix 8 F: LAAA FY2010 – FY2014 budget and the original Budget revenue estimates.
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teachers in accordance with confirmed enrollments. If there is any indication that the school may under-enroll students at any point, this will trigger additional recruitment/enrollment outreach and a freeze on all student enrollment dependent hires.

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Minimum Number of Students	350	540	730	920
Potential Revenue Loss	80,000	160,000	240,000	360,000
Total Revenues based on Full Enrollment	3,469,058	5,363,027	7,208,772	9,035,979
% loss	2.3%	2.9%	3.3%	3.9%

If at any time during any fiscal year of its existence, in accordance with Delaware Charter Law, LAAA knows or reasonably should know that it has or will become unable to pay in full its projected expenses as they fall due, the school shall immediately so advise the Department of Education, and shall provide the Department with all financial information relating to revenues and expenses of the school necessary for the Department to determine the extent and cause of any potential operating deficit.

CHARTER SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMPANY AGREEMENT

- s. Describe the school's intent concerning contracting with a management company or becoming a party to a "partnership agreement". If the school intends to enter such a contract or partnership agreement, provide details of the terms of the contract and/or partnership agreement to include management and or partnership fees and other ancillary services.

LAAA intends to enter into a Charter Management agreement with a CMO for the purpose of gaining start up technical assistance, professional development, curriculum development technical assistance, and back office support. The details of the terms of the contract, in terms of the management/partnership fees and other ancillary services, will be determined after the selection of the CMO partner and the negotiations of the contract. See attached sample CMO contract for the type of contract that LAAA intends to enter into with a CMO.⁸

- t. Describe the source and disposition of remaining funds at each year's end.

Any remaining local funds (8000) will be rolled over into the next fiscal year.

⁸ See Appendix 8G Sample CMO Agreement.

Q#9. Administrative and Financial Operations

- a. **Provide the plan for managing the financial operations of the school in accordance with the State Budget and Accounting Manual and Title 29, Chapter 69 (in the areas of accounting, payroll, purchasing, compensation, retirement, and benefits management). Specify which individuals will have direct responsibility in each of these operations to also include internal controls for budgeting and financial management. Additional website references: www.state.de.us/budget/accounting-manual/account-manual.shtml**

LAAA will have a number of internal control mechanisms in place for budgets and financial records. First the budgeting process begins with the Principal/Head of School (HOS) and School Business Manager meeting with the Charter Management Organization (CMO) director, to discuss anticipated revenues and expenditures and how the budget can best support student performance and the meeting of school goals and benchmarks. After consultations the budget is taken to the Chair of the Board Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will meet monthly and review monthly financial statements, which will be produced by the CMO Director. The Finance Committee presents the annual budget and subsequent revisions to the Board who approves the budget. Additionally, the Board will receive monthly financial reports and will discuss those reports at the regularly scheduled Board meetings. The LAAA Board will post the monthly financials on the LAAA website in the form required by the DEDOE.

LAAA will process its financial transactions through the DFMS system, and its payroll, compensation, retirement and benefits management through the Delaware Payroll Human Resource, Statewide Technology (PHRST) system. The School Business Manager will keep records of all purchase orders, payment vouchers, invoices and other forms on file on the school site. The school will comply with state regulations and guidelines relative to financial transactions.

Further, LAAA will contract with an independent auditor firm to conduct the annual financial audit. LAAA will select the auditor through an open bidding process, in accordance with Title 29, Chapter 69 and the State Budget and Accounting Manual.

- b. **Describe the roles and responsibilities of the board of directors including how the board of directors will ensure oversight of the school.**

The Board shall have, and exercise, the corporate powers prescribed by the laws of the State of Delaware. The essential function of the Board shall be policy making, the assurance of sound management and active participation in the provisions of necessary funds. The Board has ultimate responsibility to determine general, academic, financial personnel and related policies deemed necessary for the administration and development of the Charter School in accordance with its stated purposes and goals.

The sole business of the Board is that of the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy. The Board will hold 10 monthly meetings that comply with the FOIA and the Open Meetings Act. The business and minutes of the board will be a matter of public record.

The Board will meet monthly ten times during the school year. Dates and location for the meetings will be posted on the website and included in the comprehensive school calendar. In addition, agendas will be posted on the main access door of the school and on the LAAA website at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, as well as available at the meetings in hard copy form. All general sessions will be open to the public. After each meeting, all minutes and documents of the meeting, after approval, will be made available to the community via our website. Requests for hard copies can be submitted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Process for making policy decisions:

The Board will meet on a regular basis to make policy decisions. The Head of School will be empowered to make executive decisions in line with the school's policies and procedures.

An affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Board of Directors of the Charter School shall be used in order to take action on the following subjects:

- School Calendar
 - Appointing or dismissing Charter School Head of School
 - Adopting the Annual Budget
 - Purchasing or selling of land
 - Locating new buildings or changing the locations of old ones
 - Creating or increasing any indebtedness
 - Designating depositories for school funds
 - Entering into contracts of any kind where the amount involved exceeds \$500
 - Fixing salaries or compensation of administrators, teachers or other employees of the Charter School
 - Entering into a contract with Charter Management Organization
- c. Describe how new board members will be recruited and prepared to fulfill their responsibilities.**

The new school board members, including the 5 members that will be recruited to fill out the board, will be recruited from community members and corporate/business leaders from the Wilmington/New Castle county area. Two of the 11 members on the board will be 1) a Delaware certified teacher that teaches at the LAAA School and 2) a parent of a student that attends the LAAA School. The process for nominating and electing the directors are described in the LAAA By-laws.

The candidates for the Board will be evaluated and considered from the standpoint of strengthening the collective experience of the Board. The consensus of the founding Board is to create a Board that is comprised of business and corporate leaders, educators, community partners, parents and community leaders. The founding board currently includes a Delaware Certified teacher and a parent of a K-12 child attending Delaware public schools. The board will receive background information and training on research-based instruction, dual language project-based learning curriculum, serving special-needs populations, financial operations, facilities management, and human resources.

To fill appointed and elected positions, the founding board will create a membership committee which will create a profile of the present board and determine the types of expertise needed at the stage of school development. The committee will then recruit individuals who can commit sufficient time to serve and who are internally motivated, reliable, and dedicated to the school and its mission and vision. Recruits will be given enough information about the expectations of the board to determine whether they should make the commitment. Once on the Board, new members receive a current copy of the board manual. Board manuals contain the vision and mission statements; the school's strategic plan; a list of the year's scheduled board meetings; agenda items routinely addressed, listed under each month; a roster of all board members and their contact information; the current year's operating budget; tabs for monthly board packets (agenda, previous meeting's minutes, financial statements, reports, background information or other materials); and other important documents (e.g. Educational Improvement Plan, state testing data, staff list). New Board members will also receive training in strategic planning, finance management, and program evaluation as needed. New board members will be prepared to fulfill their responsibilities as school board members through a set of trainings provided by a board consultant group such as ISDC (Innovative Schools Development Corporation) or a similar group. The preparation will include training in the following areas:

- Financial responsibility training (provided by the DEDOE) to instruct the charter school board members in properly discharging their responsibility to insure that public funds, including both state and local funds, are appropriately managed and expended, and shall also include training on state and local funding of public education. (75 Del. Laws, c. 264, § 1; 75 Del. Laws, c. 439, § 13.)
- Board Structure and Responsibilities
- Requirements of FOIA and Open Meetings/ Open Records Laws
- Legal Requirements for going into Executive or Closed Session
- How to know if the school is on course academically and how to make necessary improvements

- Engaging in Strategic Planning
 - How to Lead through the use of a Strategic Plan
 - Holding Productive Board Meetings
 - Promoting the Mission and Vision of the School
 - Developing Sound Policy
 - How to avoid conflict, or handle conflict if it becomes apparent
 - Guiding Renewal and Accreditation
 - Providing Financial Security and Oversight
 - Selecting, Reviewing and Supporting the HOS/ Key Administrator
 - Building Relationships with Parents and Community
 - Pitfalls to Avoid
- d. Describe the internal form of management to be implemented at the school, including any plans to contract with an outside group to manage any portion of the educational, administrative, and/or financial operations of the school.

The LAAA School Board plans to contract with a non-profit Charter Management Organization (CMO) to oversee the management of the facilities, and provide business and back office support to the school. The CMO contract¹ may also include services from a menu of supports, including the design and implementation of technology systems, the sharing of curriculum and various assessments and curriculum planning software, and the provision of professional development. The School back office support, including curriculum and professional development support, will be coordinated through the School Business Manager, while the academic instructional activities will be coordinated through the Principal/HOS.

The CMO Services will be provided in accordance with the educational goals, curriculum, methods of pupil assessment, admissions policy, student recruitment policy, school calendar, school day schedule and age and grade range of pupils to be enrolled at the LAAA charter school, as adopted by the LAAA Charter School Board and as provided for in the Charter.

Internally at the school, the educational and instructional aspects of the school will fall under the leadership of the Principal/HOS and the administrative and financial day-to-day

¹ A Sample Charter Management Agreement is attached in Appendix 8.

operations will fall under the School Business Manager. The Principal and School Business Manager will meet weekly to coordinate the administrative, maintenance and back office support activities of the school. The Principal and Assistant Principal will meet bi-weekly with teachers as part of the curriculum development and professional development activities of the school and to develop and implement school-wide initiatives for addressing student performance, plan presentations and exhibitions of learning, and to build school culture.

e. Describe how teachers and parents will be involved in decision-making at the school.

Teachers and parents will be highly involved in decision-making at LAAA. That involvement will be accomplished through various methods, including parent, teacher and principal involvement in the school through the Parent-Teacher-Principal Organization (PTPO). The PTPO will operate as an advisory group to the Principal/HOS, and will have the autonomy to develop its own activities relative to playing a positive role to support teachers, principals, parents and students at the school. In addition, one full time Delaware certified teacher at the school and one parent of a child attending the school will sit on the LAAA school board as voting members.

In addition to participating on these decision-making bodies, teachers will be involved in decision-making at a number of levels at the school level: In addition to having the Delaware Certified teacher teaching at the school on the board, teachers will be included as members on school board standing committees, and ad-hoc committees and taskforces. Also, teachers will be involved in the day-to-day decision making at the school. Teachers will attend weekly school meetings at which school issues will be discussed and resolved; and teachers will be involved in the creation of interdisciplinary projects, educational units and lesson planning.

Finally, at the end of each school year the school will administer satisfaction surveys, surveying staff, teachers and parents. This will be another vehicle through which parents and teachers will have input into the decision-making of the school.

Q# 10 Insurance¹

Describe the types and limits of insurance coverage that the school plans to obtain and when it plans to have them in effect. *The proposed costs for the coverage are reflected in the budget worksheets.*

LAAA will take out a package of miscellaneous policy coverages², including:

DESCRIPTION	LIMITS	TIMELINE
Director's and Officers Insurance; Gen'l Liability - Errors and Omissions.	\$1 million	Start April 1, 2009
Misc Liability Commercial Package (Gen'l Liability, Auto liability, School Property)	\$1 million	Start July 1, 2010
Worker's Comp & Employer's Liability	Employer's liability – up to level of payroll - DEDOE provides statutory benefits	Start July 1, 2009
Umbrella Policy – extending Misc Liability Package coverage by \$5 million	\$5 million	Start July 1, 2010
Property/ Building Coverage	\$10 m coverage	Start July 1, 2011

DEDOE Suggested Charter School Coverages³**Workers' Compensation and Employers Liability Insurance:**

Workers compensation laws, which apply in the State of Delaware obligate employers to pay, specified medical, disability, rehabilitation, and death benefits for their employees' job-related injuries and diseases. The obligation to pay these benefits exists regardless of whether the employer was in any way at fault. In theory, employees are precluded from

¹ If a charter is granted, a copy of the Certificate of Insurance will be submitted to DEDOE prior to the opening of the school.

² Estimated coverage limits and costs provided by Pratt Insurance for Utica National, an A- Rated Insurer of Charter and Public Schools.

³ Per instructions on application, LAAA contacted the Insurance Coverage Office at (302) 739-3651 for further information on liability protection for public schools in Delaware. Debra Lawhead, AIC, CPIW, the Insurance Coverage Administrator at the DEDOE Insurance Coverage Office provided the suggested Charter School insurance coverage information in a separate email. Debra Lawhead also explained that The State of Delaware's self insured program covers the employees who receive a state payroll check and vehicles that carry a state owned plate are also covered under the State's self insured auto program.

suing their employers for injuries or diseases covered by the applicable workers compensation law. However, in some cases employees are permitted to sue their employers for work-related accidents. Workers compensation and employers liability insurance provides two coverages: 1) Coverage for benefits the insured employer is obligated to pay under the workers compensation laws. 2) coverage for employee claims against the insured employer that are not covered by workers compensation laws.

Commercial General Liability: (\$1m bodily injury and property damage liability)

Every business, even on that has little or not property exposed to loss, faces the threat of claims and lawsuits for damages arising from its acts or omissions. The basic protection for this exposure is commercial general liability insurance. Commercial general liability insurance covers the loss exposures arising from an organization's premises and operations, its products, or its work. It also covers various other offenses that may give rise to claims or suits, such as libel slander, false arrest, and invasion of privacy.

Directors and officers liability policies:

Covers the directors and officers of a corporation against claims alleging damages resulting from wrongful act of the directors or officers.

Commercial Automobile Insurance:

Commercial property insurance does not cover physical damage to automobiles. Moreover, commercial general liability insurance excludes liability arising out the ownership, maintenance, or use of automobiles in most circumstances. Both automobile physical damage insurance and automobile liability insurance are available under a commercial automobile insurance policy or in the commercial auto coverage part of a package policy. For vehicle that are not owned or hired you should endorse this on to your policy. If you have volunteers and or teachers who are doing business for the school then you should also endorse them as additional insured's which would be excess over their own policies.

Umbrella and excess liability policies:

Provides amounts of insurance in addition to the limits provided by the insured's commercial general liability, auto liability, employers liability and perhaps other primary liability coverages. For example, an organization might have limits of \$2 million on its primary policies and an additional \$5 million limits on its umbrella liability policy.

Property Insurance:

Property insurance is any type of insurance that indemnifies an insured who suffers a financial loss because property has been lost, stolen, damaged, or destroyed. There are two type of policies names peril or all risk.

Q#11 Student Discipline and Attendance

The application must include a draft "Student Rights and Responsibilities Manual" that includes the school rules and guidelines governing student behavior. The manual must describe student rights and responsibilities and the plan the school will follow to discipline students.¹

- a. Describe how the manual will be distributed to parents and students prior to students applying for enrollment at the school.**

The LAAA Student Rights and Responsibilities Manual (which will be translated into English and Spanish) will be distributed to parents and students in three ways: (1) the manual (in English and Spanish) will be posted on the school's website; (2) The manual will be made available to parent when the parent and student visit the school open house and the orientation will include an overview of the LAAA school rules and guidelines regarding student behavior; and (3) the manual will be distributed when the parent and student come to orientation. Parents will sign an expectations contract (which will be printed in English and Spanish) with the school as part of the new student-parent orientation session.

- b. Describe how discipline will be handled with students with disabilities. Describe how the school will report inappropriate behavior to affected parents, the Department, and when necessary, to law enforcement agencies.**

Discipline will be handled with special education students in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – 2004 and the State of Delaware Special Education regulations (June 11, 2007). Routinely, misbehaviors at LAAA will be first handled by the teacher. As part of addressing classroom misbehaviors, the teacher will contact the parent and discuss the behavior issues. Should the infraction be serious enough to involve the Principal or Head of School, he/she will investigate the situation, conference with the student, contact the parents, and make a determination regarding consequences for the infraction relative to the prevailing code of conduct, state law and federal law.

- c. Describe the plan the school will follow to ensure compliance with 14 Delaware Code, Section 4112, regarding the reporting of school crimes.**

Should the inappropriate behavior be a "Reportable Incident" the Head of School so advises the parent and the student and takes the appropriate action inclusive of reporting the incident to the Department of Education, and if a crime, a report will be made to the police. LAAA will use DELSIS/ *eSchoolPlus* as its student data management & reporting system and complete any reports in the form required by the DEDOE to ensure compliance with 14 Delaware Code, Section 4112.

¹ See Appendix 11A: Draft "Student Rights and Responsibilities Manual"

- d. **Describe the attendance policies of the school. Describe the level of attendance that will be required of the students each year. Describe the actions that will be taken to ensure that students meet those levels of attendance. Describe how the attendance policies will be distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year.**

The LAAA attendance policy will be posted on the school website and outlined in the LAAA Student Rights and Responsibilities Manual. Students may be retained in the same grade, should they miss the equivalent of 24 days or more during the school year.

Teachers will enter absences and tardies into the DELSIS/ *eSchoolPlus* student data system. Parents will be called by the school attendance personnel anytime that a student is absent. The school attendance clerk will monitor the absences and notify the Principal/ Head of School whenever absences exceed more than 5 days each quarter. The Principal/ Head of School will notify the parent in writing.

For those children ages 6-16, the ages covered under the compulsory school attendance law, should there be insufficient documentation by the parent that the child is absent for one of the seven legal reasons for an excused absence, the Principal/Head of School will follow the procedures for notification of the truancy court system once the student has shown a pattern of three days unexcused absence.

Q#12 Health and Safety

- a. Describe the procedures that will be implemented to ensure the health and safety of the school's students, staff, and guests. List the staff (i.e. nurse) who will be hired or contracted to ensure that the following responsibilities will be handled in a satisfactory manner:**
- Ensuring that students have physical examinations prior to enrollment.
 - Ensuring that required immunizations and screenings (lead, TB) are in compliance.
 - Administering medications and medical treatments, including first aid.
 - Screening for health problems (vision, hearing, postural/gait, etc.)
 - Monitoring student health and maintaining health records.
 - Ensuring emergency care for known and unknown life-threatening health conditions.
 - Ensuring health representation on IEP teams when student's needs require such.
 - Screen students returning to school after illness or unexcused absence.

LAAA will have on staff a full time Registered School Nurse who will follow the Nursing Technical Assistance Manual as promulgated by the Department of Education under the direction of the Education Specialist for Health Services. The school nurse will be responsible for disseminating & collecting health forms, and maintaining & archiving all student health records, in accordance with all state and federal laws. This will include physical examinations prior to student enrollment. S/he will administer medicines and provide medical treatment and first aid, ensure that immunizations and TB screenings are conducted, and screen for health problems, including vision, hearing, posture, gait, etc., all in accordance with federal and state procedures. Further, s/he will serve on IEP teams when deemed appropriate to the assessment, determination, or continued support of the specialized needs of the student. Students who have been absent due to illness or due to an unexcused absence will report to the School nurse for admittance. The school nurse will also be the school attendance monitor for the first school year.

- b. Describe the plan the school will use to ensure that criminal background checks will be made on the school's employees prior to hire.**

The CMO/Business Manager will be responsible for ensuring that criminal background checks and documentation are secured prior to any one being employed by the Las Americas ASPIRA Academy. Documentation of such background checks will be held in the person's employment file and open to authorized audit compliance.

Q#13 Student and School Data

- a. **Describe the process and procedures the school will follow to comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and implementing federal and Department of Education regulations regarding disclosure of student records.**

LAAA will have policies and procedures in place that the school will follow to comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and implementing federal and DEDOE regulations regarding disclosure of student records. Parents and students have the right to access educational records kept by the school, the right to determine disclosure, the right to request amendment and the right to file complaints if the school discloses records in violation of FERPA. The policy of the school will be that parents must sign the "Release of Records" form, which must be kept on file, in order for the school to receive or transfer records.

LAAA will have a "Request for Records" document that must be signed by parent/guardians to release or receive student records. Whenever such a request is received, the registrar will forward the records to the requesting party.

- b. **Describe the plan for the timely transfers of student and school data to the Department of Education.**

LAAA will participate in the Delaware Department of Education (DEDOE) statewide student information system *DELSIS/eSchoolPlus*. In addition to providing "real time" data to school administrators, teachers, parents and students, this web-based student data system provides "real time" student and school data to the Department of Education as well.

LAAA administrative staff will participate in state trainings on utilization of the *DELSIS/eSchoolPlus* system, and to ensure the timely transfers of student and school data to DEDOE.

Q#14 Facilities Safety Issues

The LAAA will be located in a facility that meets all state and local school codes.

Permanent Building Program (full capacity K-8 = 960 students)

- a. 48 Classrooms— 900 square feet per classroom (up to 25 students per classroom)
- b. 2 Sections for Elementary School (640 K-5 – 32 classrooms); Middle School (320 6-8 – 16 classrooms)
- c. 3 Science/Specialty Labs (Middle School)
- d. 1 Art Room – Middle School (1200 SQ FT) (natural light and ventilation).
- e. 1 Music Room— Middle School (1200 SQ FT) (natural light and ventilation).
- f. Library/ Resource Room to serve entire school (E-Library & Stacks & Adult and Children Reading space)
- g. Full Gymnasium & Showers/Locker/Changing Rooms
- h. Cafeteria/ Commons & Full Kitchen
- i. Nurse Station (with separate examination/"sick child" room)
- j. SPED Classrooms, Conference room and Resource Room (large enough to accommodate speech therapist, occupational therapist, and testing)
- k. Administration area
- l. Reception area – at front entrance foyer area – with area for people to sit and wait
- m. 2 Teacher's Resource Rooms (one for each area)
- n. Parking as required by local building code
- o. Bus loops for each area of school (K-5, 6-8)
- p. K-1 play grounds; grades 2-5 Play grounds; Multi-use Playing fields and half basketball court

Temporary Building Program (Temporary up to 2 years – capacity 360 (1st year) -560 (2nd year) students:

- q. 18-28 Elementary/Middle School Classrooms – 800-900 square feet ea. (up to 25 students per classroom)
- r. Sections for Elementary School (360 K-2); Middle School (220 5-6);
- s. Cafeteria/ Commons & Warming Kitchen
- t. Nurse Station
- u. 2 SPED Classrooms
- v. 1 SPED Resource Room
- w. Administration area
- x. Reception area
- y. Teacher's Resource Room
- z. Parking as required by school building code

- 2) **SHARED/ COMMON SPACES:** Cafeteria/Multi-purpose room, Gym, Resource Library, sections of outdoor areas

a. Describe building maintenance practices which will provide a reasonable assurance of a safe school environment for students, staff, and visitors.

Routine maintenance will be handled by the maintenance staff under the supervision of the School Custodian. The school custodian and a split team of maintenance staff will be present during the school day and will clean the school rooms in the evening in accordance with a pre-defined cleaning and maintenance schedule. All maintenance staff will be trained in OSHA practices, and will be trained in the proper handling and storage of all cleaning chemicals. All cleaning supplies will be "green" environmentally safe replacements for toxic cleaning chemicals. Anything hazardous or flammable will be stored in a locked, fireproof storage in compliance with MSDS, with the maintenance of applicable MSDS documentation.

The custodian reports any day to day maintenance/repair issues and hazards to the principal, who will inform the business manager and board. Any major maintenance is the responsibility of the LAAA Board of Directors. For example, periodic maintenance such as the replacement of a portion of the roof will require the Board of Director's oversight and action.

A monthly fire drill will be conducted and records maintained. The monthly fire drill, which will be coordinated with all school personnel and maintenance staff, is part of the Principal's responsibilities. Those records will be examined by the State Fire Marshall's office and will be available for viewing by the insurance underwriter. Further the State Fire Marshall and insurance underwriter will check quarterly and annual inspection records for the sprinkler system and security alarm system. In addition, all fire extinguishers in the building will be checked annually by a fire and safety equipment company.

b. Describe safety concerns which must be addressed relative to the selected location, and tell how each will be addressed. How will access to the building be controlled?

School Drop-off and Pick Up: The school will have separate designated bus and car drop-off areas developed in accordance with state safety standards related to the loading and unloading of school buses.

Handicap Accessible and ADA Compliant: Building will meet all IDEA and ADA standards.

Interoffice Communication: The school will have the following interior communication systems: a PA system that is piped from the office to all rooms in the school and the outside grounds; each room will have a telephone/speaker system for communicating with the office; all employees will have individual and direct access to a computer with internet and email capabilities.

Wireless Internet Connections: School will maintain wireless internet protocols such that student data will be fully protected and the WiFi internet connections and intranet can not be accessed external to the school intranet approved users.

Practices limiting access to the building during school, after-school and at night:

The school will have an exterior and interior camera surveillance system which is tied into the school computer network and monitored by ADT or a similar surveillance company. The school day monitoring of the system will be handled by the school administrative staff. Whenever this system is breached, the local police or fire company (whichever is applicable) respond and the surveillance company phones designated school employees.

Visitors will be required to report to and sign in at the school office prior to being authorized to go to other parts of the building. During the regular school day, access (ingress) will be limited to the locked front door.

c. What location and facilities will be used for Physical Education? What further safety issues will this add, and how will they be addressed?

The school building will have a gymnasium which will be shared by the middle and elementary school campuses for their physical education classes. In addition the school will have exterior recreation facilities including a half-court basketball court.

In addition, the elementary school will have access an exterior playground and play area. Playgrounds will be built in accordance with local safety codes.

Students will be supervised by a teacher or school staff at all times when in the gymnasium and when on the school playgrounds. A teacher or staff member will be assigned to supervise students using the playground and exterior recreational areas for 30 minutes before school and 30 minutes after the end of the school day. Elementary school students will be met at designated doors by their teachers and escorted to their homerooms in the beginning of the school day and the teachers will escort their students out of the school at the end of the day.

ASSURANCES

The Board of Directors of this charter school assures that the school will:

- 1) **Be in full compliance with the requirements of 14 Delaware Code, Chapter 5 and 14 Admin Code, Section 275 in the Regulations of the Department of Education at all times.**
- 2) **Not discriminate against any student in the admissions process because of race, creed, color, sex, disability, or national origin or because a student's school district of residence has a per student local expenditure lower than another student seeking admission.**
- 3) **Not operate in a sectarian manner or include religious practices in its educational program.**
- 4) **Participate in the Delaware Student Testing Program and meet the requirements for school accountability as described in state law.**
- 5) **Manage the school within all state administrative and financial systems including accounting, payroll, purchasing, retirement, and benefits. All school funds will be managed through the school's accounts set up in the Delaware Financial Management System (DFMS).**
- 6) **Initiate and maintain direct communication with other public and nonpublic schools to assure efficient notification and transfer and exchange of records.**
- 7) **Update the application to incorporate any modifications and/or conditions identified as pre-conditions to final approval by the Secretary of Education and State Board of Education as set forth in its written decisions; and operate the program in accordance with the content of the updated and approved charter granted by the Department of Education and State Board of Education. The school's board of directors will not implement any additional modifications to the charter school program or operation without the express written consent of the Department of Education.**
- 8) **Notify the Department of Education in writing when the school administrative head or any member of the board of directors changes.**
- 9) **Provide the Department of Education with copies of all policies and by-laws of the school and inform the Department in a timely manner when by-laws change.**
- 10) **Ensure that accurate information on all staff employed at the school is provided to the PHRST and DEEDS systems prior to September 1 each year the school is in operation.**
- 11) **Employ only staff who has complied with the requirement of having a successful criminal background check.**
- 12) **Cooperate fully with Department of Education requests for reporting information and activities related to monitoring the school's compliance with the charter and applicable state and federal laws and regulations.**
- 13) **Submit a proposed Performance Agreement for review and approval as required by the Secretary of Education.**
- 14) **Distribute copies of the Department's Frequently Asked Questions to all parents seeking to enroll their child(ren) as well as to parents of enrolled children.**
- 15) **Conduct all meetings of the board of directors in a manner consistent with the Freedom of Information Act, especially the legal requirements of 29 Delaware Code, Sections 10002, 10003 and 10004.**
- 16) **Include a representative of the teachers employed by the school and parents of students enrolled at the school on the board of directors, consistent with 14 Delaware Code, Section 511(a) prior to opening the school. Each year of operation, ensure that representatives of the teachers employed at the school and parents of children enrolled at the school are on the board of directors.**
- 17) **Comply with the requirements for reporting school crimes as described in 14 Delaware Code, Section 4112.**
- 18) **Advise any person or entity offering a loan to the school that debts of the school are not debts of the State of Delaware and that neither the State nor any other agency nor instrumentality of the State is responsible for the repayment of any indebtedness.**
- 19) **Annually certify to the Department, on a form to be provided by the Department, that prior to the payment of any fees or other sums to a management company employed by the board, the board will ensure that sufficient revenues of the school are devoted to adequately support the school's proposed educational program.**
- 20) **Participate in all training offered by the Department of Education to charter schools prior to the opening of the school.**

As members of the Board of Directors of this Charter School, we agree to these assurances as conditions of approval of the charter.

We have reviewed both the Delaware Charter Law (14 Delaware Code, Chapter 5) and 14 Admin Code, Section 275 in the Regulations of the Department of Education (DOE Regulation 275), and have based the responses in this application on the review of these documents.

We understand the requirements of the Delaware Financial Management System (DFMS) and the state payroll system.

We understand that when submitted to the Department of Education, this application will be deemed to be a "public document" subject to disclosure pursuant to the provisions of the Delaware Freedom of Information Act.

We understand that if a charter is granted for this school, all future members of the school's board of directors will be bound by the terms of the charter unless the approved charter is formally modified with the written approval of the Secretary of Education.

LAS AMERICAS ASPIRA ACADEMY

Name of Charter School

12/29/18

Date of Signatures

Signature of Chair of the Charter School Board of Directors JAIME H RIVERA, MD

Signature of a Member of the Board of Directors MARGARET LOPEZ WAITE

Signature of a Member of the Board of Directors ANDRES CENTELLAS

Signature of a Member of the Board of Directors MILTON DELGADO

Signature of a Member of the Board of Directors MONICA GONZALEZ GILLESPIE

Signature of a Member of the Board of Directors CARIDAD ALONSO