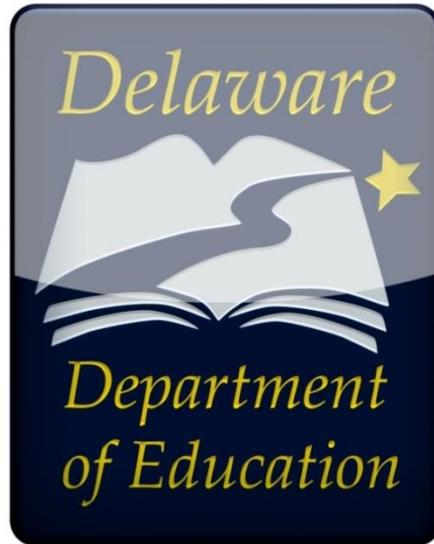


# CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



## Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School

### MAJOR MODIFICATION APPLICATION INITIAL REPORT

CSAC Initial Meeting: January 28, 2015  
CSAC Initial Report Published: February 2, 2015

The following were in attendance at the Initial Meeting of the CSAC on January 28, 2015:

**Voting Committee Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee**

- David Blowman, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee and Deputy Secretary of Education, DDOE
- Karen Field Rogers, Associate Secretary, Financial Reform and Resource Management, DDOE
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM, DDOE
- Barbara Mazza, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Resources, DDOE
- Tasha Cannon, Deputy Officer Talent Recruitment, Selection and Strategy, Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU), DDOE
- Charles Taylor, Community Member and Former Charter School Leader

**Staff to the Committee (Non-voting)**

- Catherine Hickey, Deputy Attorney General, Counsel to the Committee
- Jennifer Nagourney, Executive Director, Charter School Office, DDOE
- John Carwell, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Michelle Whalen, Education Associate, Charter School Office, DDOE
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Financial Reform and Resource Management

**Representatives of La Academia Antonia Alonso**

- Maria Matos, Board President
- Thomas Peters, Board Member and Board Liaison to School
- Teresa Gerchman, Chief Schools Officer for Innovative Schools, Interim Head of School
- Ricardo Stoeckicht, Chief Operating Officer for Innovative Schools
- Nora Gonzalez Castellanos, Board Treasurer

**Additional Attendees Noted**

- Kathleen Geiszler, Deputy Attorney General

## Discussion

The following issues were discussed:

- The basis for the request – The school explained that its intent is to remain on one floor of the Community Education Building for Year 2 of operation and to decrease the school’s teacher-to-student ratio from 1:25 to 1:22 for grades K-3.
- The effective date of the modification – The school explained that its intent is for the modification to go into effect for the 2015-16 school year. By regulation, if approved, this request for an enrollment modification resulting in a decrease of more than 15% will be effective the 2015-16 school year.
- The projected impact of the modification on the school’s financial position – The school explained that the additional 25 students per year would be 25 students over the current authorized enrollment for the 2014-15 school year, but not more than the original authorized enrollment. In other words, 75 students less than the original authorized enrollment, but 25 more than the original enrollment would have been in the first year.
- The number of applications the school has received this year – The school stated that it has received 90 applications, plus two hard copies. Of those, 77 are for Kindergarten. 82 invitation letters have been sent and the remainder were sent via hard copy.
- The school’s assumptions on attrition in Appendix A of the modification application.
- The school’s plan to add only four teachers in light of its intention to add 100 students and maintain a 1:22 student-to-teacher ratio – The school explained that it currently has a few more than 70 Kindergarteners and will likely have three sections of 1<sup>st</sup> grade. However, because the school is not recruiting 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, a current 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher will fill the additional Kindergarten teacher position.
- Why the school’s transportation costs only increase \$14,000 from \$196,000 despite adding 100 students – The school stated that its current buses are not at capacity.
- The school’s management fees for Year 2 (\$207,000), Year 3 (\$197,000) and Year 4 (\$220,000) – The school responded that, with its original application, the school received a grant to be paid back over four years. The school has paid the first two installments of \$10,000 and, at some point, it will be completely repaid. Also, the budget reflects the anticipated services to be provided, and those no longer to be provided, by Innovative Schools as the school grows.
- The school’s Year 3 budget at 80% compared to 100% - The school stated that it is expanding from having 12 classrooms and one big lab at the CEB to having 15 classrooms on one floor. In the 80% scenario, the school will be able to accommodate 340 students on one floor.
- The school’s rent for Year 2 – The school stated that there was a deferral of rent from Year 1.
- The school’s margins in Year 3 were noted as something to be aware of.
- The school’s carryover amounts – The school stated that the projection of the carryover funds decreasing in Year 4 is a reflection of the additional fixed expense of adding the second floor with only 25 additional students.

- Whether the CEB rent covers custodians and cafeteria support – The school replied that the CEB does its own cafeteria functions.
- The provision of Special Education services – The school replied that its Director of Student Support is Special Education certified and is providing services. One-third of her salary is covered by federal funds. The school currently has five students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and a sixth is being assessed. The students’ academic services total three hours and thirty minutes per week and are paid for by the school’s consolidated grant funds. The main service is speech and, although there is \$40,000 under the services line in the budget, less than \$7,000 have been spent this year.
- Whether the school is sharing nursing services – The school stated that it has its own nurse. It was clarified that the nursing requirement applies to each building, not necessarily each school.
- Where auditing and legal fees are accounted for in the budget – The school stated that these are accounted for in line 34 of the budget, under “Contracted Services.” An auditor has not yet been selected.
- What “Other” means in line 35 of the budget – The school stated that the CEB provides a librarian and the schools share the cost. The school pays \$10,000 for the first four years and will pay the full cost when the school is at full capacity, such that the cost will go up in 2018-19.
- The basis for the federal funds increase – The school explained that this was based on entitlement money based on enrollment.
- Whether the school received the federal grants – The school replied that, because of the unique cycle, the full first year’s allotment of the non-SEA grant is not fully reflected in the first year’s budget. The second year funds have already been approved.

## Conclusion

Mr. Blowman asked voting members of CSAC whether there was any additional information that it required to inform its decision-making. None was requested.

## Next Steps:

- The CSAC will provide the school with an Initial Report no later than February 2, 2015.
- An initial public hearing will be held on February 3, 2015, in the 2nd floor Cabinet Room of the Townsend Building in Dover, DE.
- The applicant’s written response to the CSAC Initial Report is due on or before February 18, 2015.
- The final meeting of the CSAC will be held on February 24, 2015, in the 2nd floor Cabinet Room of the Townsend Building in Dover, DE.
- CSAC’s Final Report will be issued no later than February 27, 2015.
- A second and final public hearing will be held on March 9, 2015, in the 2nd floor Auditorium of the Carvel State Office Building in Wilmington, DE.
- The public comment period ends on March 13, 2015.

- The Secretary will announce his decision at the March 19, 2015 State Board of Education meeting.