

**DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
APPLICATION TO MODIFY AN APPROVED CHARTER
2013-2014**

Delaware Design-Lab High School

- Minor Modification -

2013-2014

Date of Report: 17 April 2014

DE Department of Education
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I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

*****Please note:** In addition to meeting the approval criteria established in 14 Del. Code Chapter 5 §512, an authorizer considering a charter school’s application for **expansion by more than 15% occurring less than 18 months from the date of the modification application** shall also consider the potential positive and negative impact of the proposed new school or expansion on the schools and the community from which the charter school's new students will likely be drawn. In reviewing the impact, the authorizer shall consider all information furnished to it during the modification application process and may exercise its reasonable discretion in determining whether the proposed expansion is contrary to the best interests of the community to be served, including both those students likely to attend the charter school and those students likely to attend traditional public schools in the community.

II. MODIFICATION PROCESS

Application Submission: A completed application must be received as a hard copy by the Department of Education’s Charter School Office between November 1 and December 31 if requesting an *increase or reduction of enrollment of between 5% and 15% OR more than 15% of the currently approved total enrollment*. Please note that all other modification requests do not have statutory deadlines, but the Charter School Office has provided *recommended* deadlines in order to facilitate a more efficient application process. An electronic copy shall also be submitted at the same time either as an attachment to an e-mail message or by electronic portable storage. The electronic copy shall be identical in all respects to the original application. Incomplete applications, or applications received after the deadline, will not be considered.

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

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

Application Review: All applications must be fully complete in order to be evaluated. The application for modification will be reviewed and evaluated by the approving authority as outlined in 14Del. C. Chapter 5 and applicable provisions of Regulation 275.

III. APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

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

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

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

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

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

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

IV. CHARTER SCHOOL MODIFICATION APPLICATION QUESTIONS

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

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

Table 2

Minor Modification (Section A Only)		Major Modification (Section A <u>AND</u> additional questions identified below)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrollment change(increase or decrease) between 5% and 15%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrollment change(increase or decrease) of greater than 15% (<18 mos includes impact study) Section B

<input type="checkbox"/>	Change agreement with EMO/CMO	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grade configuration (adding grade levels or reducing grade levels) Section B
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Start date/one-time delay	<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational Program (i.e., curriculum) Section C
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of charter school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mission (includes At-Risk designation) Section D
<input type="checkbox"/>	Existing or planned school facilities or structures (including any plan to use temporary or modular structures)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace, remove, or add EMO/CMO, or transfer of authorizer Section E
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in terms to current site facility arrangement (i.e., lease to purchase)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrollment preferences Section F
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Location change Section G
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Goals for student performance Section H
		<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Agreement Section A only

Section A: Core Questions

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

The Board of Directors of Delaware Design-Lab High School requests a deferral of its start date from August 2014 to August 2015. The location of the change being requested is page 4 under "Opening Year".

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

The effective date of the proposed modification is 17 April 2014.

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

N/A

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

Student enrollment figures were lower than projected by the April 1st count and this would impact the financial viability of the program.

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

Taking an additional planning year allows Design-Lab High the opportunity to increase enrollment of students for the 2015-16 school year and provides additional time to strengthen our financial base.

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

The major financial consideration for Design-Lab High is that we are in possession of a lease beginning July 1st 2014. We are working with the landlord (Christiana Cultural Arts Center) Kuumba Academy (current occupant), and our real estate broker (Blackmore Realty) to ameliorate the facilities costs during this additional planning year. All of the parties are confident that a satisfactory arrangement, including subleasing parts of the building, can be arranged.

Design-Lab High intends to maintain space in the building as a demonstration site to hold Open Houses, teaching demonstrations, professional development, community events, and other activities that will highlight the Design-thinking methods of our program. Not having such a space this past year hampered our enrollment capabilities.

We are confident that an additional planning year will allow the Board of Directors and the Management Team to take the necessary steps to have sufficient student enrollment figures and a healthy financial picture for the start of the school-year in 2015.