

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



**Major Modification
March 20, 2014**

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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.

Table 1

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

*****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 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 checked="" 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.

Section 1, subsection 5, Item C of the approved charter of Gateway Lab School will be amended to read, "Gateway Lab School is requiring a waiver for an enrollment preference for students placed at risk of academic failure. (24)

The original language of the charter stated we would not be requiring a waiver, the board proposes that we now be granted one.

The mission of Gateway Lab School is "To provide an extraordinary educational opportunity for children who are struggling to achieve academic success in a traditional school environment, utilizing research-based intervention strategies and a highly tailored, arts-based learning environment that seeks to identify and capitalize on a student's strengths and interests. The school plans to eventually serve the community as a center for the professional development and education of teachers, parents and students by providing access to the latest research-based curriculum, technology, and training."

The school's mission will not be changed as a result of the at-risk designation, nor will Gateway Lab School alter its approach, which is to provide an education of the highest possible quality to our unique population. Rather, this designation will allow Gateway Lab School to continue implementing its vision for years to come.

Granting Gateway Lab School the at-risk designation will align our academic performance assessment with the philosophy outlined in our charter. Page 17 of the charter application explicitly states our founders' belief that "students who have struggled to achieve academic success in the traditional school environment and learn differently, have the capacity to achieve academic success and to realize individual learning potential." (pg. 17) The board of Gateway Lab School sees adoption of the alternative academic performance framework as a logical and necessary step in affording our students the opportunity to find value in the pursuit of reaching their full potential. The alternative assessment framework will put success within reach for our students, and give our staff the time to address the significant deficits many of our students carry.

The faculty of Gateway Lab School employs several research-based

methodologies that directly and indirectly address our students' varied learning needs. As stated in our charter on page 45, "The school plans to use Responsive Classrooms® to create an atmosphere that recognizes and rewards good behavior and includes students in the establishment of class rules." (45). Gateway Lab School is proud to call itself a Responsive Classroom school. As of the drafting of this application, all lead classroom teachers have been trained in Responsive Classroom or Developmental Designs, the middle school component of Responsive Classroom. In addition to providing the basis for our school discipline policy, Responsive Classroom/Developmental Designs provides a useful blueprint for what our charter refers to as "Social Skills Training", but what can alternatively be called character or non-cognitive skills development. See the excerpt below from page 27 of Gateway's charter application:

Social Skill Training - Learning the approach to a task is as important as any task for a student with learning differences. Gateway Lab School instructors will teach students the skills that other students may learn "naturally": how to organize their work, their assignments, their belongings, themselves. (Fiske, 1999; Jensen, 2001; Keifer-Boyd & Maitland-Gholson, 2007; Smith, 2001; Stewart & Walker, 2005). Gateway Lab School will educate students about how to function effectively in society through tailored social pragmatics and skills training.

In addition to the researchers noted in the excerpt, the administrative team of Gateway draws on Angela Duckworth's research on "grit" defined as "self discipline wedded to a dedicated pursuit of a goal," to further bolster our approach to social skills training. Our head of school conducts weekly assemblies that explore elements of character and the non-cognitive skills our students need to succeed. This modification will allow us to continue building these skills in our students in tandem with their academic development. It is the belief of the school's board of directors and administration that Gateway's emphasis on social skills development alongside academic rigor will result in measureable growth in our student's performance over time.

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 waiver will apply beginning with the spring 2014 DCAS testing window.

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.

The Performance Report indicates Gateway Lab School is financially viable. Gateway Lab School's student Academic Performance as indicated on the 2013 Performance Report does not meet expectations. The board believes that this waiver will contribute to reaching compliance with the terms of our charter.

Gateway Lab School's annual report from school year 2012-13 describes in detail our approach to reaching our stated academic performance outcomes:

"The nature of each student's progress at Gateway Lab School is very individualistic. Through our wrap around model, we seek to provide our teachers with the tools and training they require to meet the needs of our neuro-diverse student population. We are confident that our dedicated, talented and highly-qualified teachers are making an impact that will positively impact student performance. Academic performance targets are being addressed school-wide in small-group instruction and teacher professional development in Common Core Standards. Student placement in RTI groups has been re-evaluated to ensure that student receive the maximum benefit from these smaller groups with targeted instruction. Our Student performance in math is another area that is receiving specific focus. Math time for Gateway students has been doubled from 45 minutes to 90 minutes daily and the math curriculum is under review to determine if it is in line with the standards." (pg. 4)

At the time of the drafting of this modification application, Gateway teachers and administrators continue to collaborate to review lesson plans and implement rigorous curricula in math and language arts that align with the Common Core standards. The administration of GLS has also contracted with the Delaware Academy of School Leadership (DASL) to conduct a Comprehensive School Review (CSR). In March, the DASL team interviewed a cross-section of school stakeholders and spent several days at Gateway. The Head of School and board of directors expects to receive DASL's report in early April 2014. This comprehensive review will further provide school leadership with critical information and recommendations to strengthen the school's academic and organizational performance.

Gateway Lab School's overall rating on the 2012-2013 Organizational Performance Framework is "does not meet standard." Areas of "financial reporting and compliance" and "school attendance goals" were noted as concerns. The administration and governing board have taken several steps to address these areas of non-compliance:

- **Based on 2012-2013 audit findings, the Buildings & Grounds Supervisor is in the process of finalizing a list of Gateway Lab School's capital assets with value depreciation.**

- The staff of Gateway Lab School, under the supervision of the Buildings & Grounds Supervisor, is compiling a full inventory list of school materials and their locations within the building.
- The school counselor at Gateway Lab School is monitoring student attendance on an ongoing basis and communicating with families on issues of attendance and truancy.
- The administration of Gateway Lab School has provided increased clarity of procedure and communication to staff regarding attendance record keeping.

See the following excerpts from the Gateway Lab School 2012-2013 annual Report:

“Based on the 2012-13 Delaware Organizational Performance Framework, GLS has been rated as Does Not Meet Standard.”

“Audit findings in the school's 2012-2013 audit, contributed to the DNM rating the school received in 2 out of 12 measures reviewed for the organizational performance rating. A review of the audit findings, and responses, revealed misstatements and erroneous information included in the findings. After a meeting with the school's financial committee, the Auditor is making adjustments Gateway Lab School Annual Report for Year: 2012-2013 Page 7 of 12 to the final audit. We anticipate that these changes will effect our Organizational Performance Framework scores positively.

-Annual Report Pg 7

“The area of attendance goals was rated Does Not Meet due to the fact that attendance was 92.4%, falling below the 95% required to meet the standard. There were several incorrect entries in attendance that were corrected too late to be counted toward this goal being met. Students who moved were kept on the records until proof of their enrollment in another school could be verified. This practice cost the school in this category and will not be repeated in the future.”

-Annual Report Pg. 8

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.)*

Our rationale is based on the following premises:

The findings of Public Impact, which informed the state’s adoption of the alternative performance framework, indicates this to be a fair and equitable manner of assessing the academic growth of special education students.

Currently, 65% of our students have IEP's and 20% have 504 accommodation plans.

The success of adopting the waiver is evidenced by Positive Outcomes Charter School (POCS). POCS is a school with a similar percentage of students receiving special education services, and is currently the only charter school in Delaware operating under the conditions of the waiver. The board believes that the academic growth of our unique population, like the population of Positive Outcomes, will be more equitably assessed under the alternative framework.

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.

We do not anticipate any impact on the financial viability or the operations of the school including staffing and facilities within the current year or in the future. Further detail on Gateway's financial viability can be found in question #6 below.

Additionally, the board plans to enact, and has already begun to enact, strategies to support the continued viability of the school under the terms of the waiver. These strategies include:

- Seeking additional venues for student recruitment and dissemination of information about Gateway's unique approach and programs
 - Holding meetings with parent stakeholders to inform and build support for this modification to our charter.
 - Implementation of quarterly seminars for parents by specialists in the field of special education to build a more informed community.
6. Indicate the projected impact, if any, of the proposed modification on the schools present financial position, and its financial position going forward. If the modification promises to create financial challenges, indicate how those will be remedied.

Gateway's Board of Directors does not anticipate that there will be any impact on the school's present or future financial viability. The basis for this rationale is supported by the following:

- **Both the Near Term Indicators and Sustainability Indicators are strong for the Gateway Lab School. Based on the 2012-2013 Delaware Financial Performance Framework, GLS has been rated as Meets Standard. This is the same rating that the school received during the 2011-2012 school year.**

- External auditors have audited our school finances annually and have found them to be sound and healthy. It is anticipated that this performance will continue into the future.
- The School's budget is reviewed and approved by the board of directors on an annual basis. A monthly financial report is reviewed by the Citizens Budget Oversight Committee (CBOC) and the board of directors. The financial reports are posted on our website as required. The school operates with the required contingency and a financial surplus to ensure fiscal viability and security.
- Gateway Lab School is using the services of Neely & Spence Financial Consulting Services LLC to assist with budgeting and planning. They prepare reports for weekly review by the school's Finance Committee, which include monthly expenditure detail reports, staffing models based on enrollment, preliminary budget reports, and cash flow reports. This careful review of the school's finances is helpful in preparing for the CBOC and board meetings. Those involved in the school's leadership make financial decisions that are well informed as they cast vision and plan for the school's future. Both the board of directors and the CBOC are involved in financial decision making.

Additional supporting evidence of the financial viability of Gateway Lab School:

- The mission of GLS is not changing. Gateway Lab School was founded with the mission to educate children whose placement in traditional classroom settings puts them statistically "at-risk" for academic failure. As mentioned in question #1 above, this modification will align our academic performance assessment with the philosophy outlined in our charter.
- Prior to the submission of this modification, the Head of School, Catherine Dolan provided information about the school's intention to apply for a waiver to parents. Ms. Dolan and board President (and parent) Mr. Ronald Miller, also met with parent stakeholders to share the school's intention and to answer any questions and/or concerns about the modification. The information was well-received and parent reaction to the modification was affirmative.
- Student enrollment since the school's 2011 inaugural year has remained between 96%-105%. Gateway is largely a "destination" school. The parents that choose to send their students to GLS are seeking a place where their child's individual learning style will be embraced, and where the student will see his/her perceived differences as strengths, not weaknesses. Our program, with its emphasis on social/emotional learning alongside academics is unique among private and public schools in New Castle County.

- **Our enrollment for SY 2014-2015 is currently at 96% with a waiting list for middle school. We will continue to recruit and enroll students throughout the spring and summer and expect to be fully enrolled by September, 2014.**

Please see Appendix A for a copy of the school's current financial statement and budget.

Section B Questions: Not Applicable

Section C Questions: Not Applicable

Section D Questions:

1. Describe the school's current educational philosophy and how the proposed mission will be integrated into the current educational program.

The board believes that the alternative performance framework is, in effect, more aligned with our educational goals and objectives as outlined in our charter.

"The Gateway Lab School philosophy is based on the belief that children, who have struggled to achieve academic success in the traditional school environment and learn differently, have the capacity to achieve academic success and to realize individual learning potential."

The teachers and administrators of Gateway Lab School have made significant progress in achieving the following objectives as outlined in our charter (pgs. 18-19):

- **Provide intensive intervention using research-based strategies;**
 - **Through extensive teacher professional development and outside partnerships, Gateway is providing several research based interventions to our students:**
 - **Wilson Reading® System-Provides a complete curriculum for students in grades 2-12 who require an intensive program due to a language-based learning disability.**
http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/FS_PROGRAM_MainPage.htm., 2004-2010
 - **Responsive Classroom® -RC is social skill curriculum. It is a research and evidence based approach to elementary education that leads to greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate.**
<http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>. Copyright 2014.

- **Response to Intervention-Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tiered approach to help struggling learners. Students’ progress is closely monitored at each stage of intervention to determine the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention in general education, special education, or both. (<http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what.>) Copyright 2014. National Center for Learning Disabilities.**
 - **Botvin Life Skills® Training-is currently being offered to our 8th grade students through our partnership with Project Crossroad. LST is a research-validated substance abuse prevention program proven to reduce the risks of alcohol, tobacco, drug abuse, and violence by targeting the major social and psychological factors that promote the initiation of substance use and other risky behaviors. The program is recognized as a Model or Exemplary program by an array of government agencies including the U.S. Department of Education and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. (<http://www.lifeskillstraining.com/overview.hph>)**
- **Provide a curriculum that is aligned with the state recommended curriculum and in compliance with 502 regulations;**
 - **GLS teachers are in their second year of professional development to assist them with aligning their lessons to Common Core Standards (CCS)**
- **Use integrated arts and multi-sensory experiences as way to teach rigorous academic material and foster a love and enjoyment of learning in our students;**
 - **In addition to integrating the arts into core subject areas, Gateway students are immersed in the study of history and humanities through the Academic Club™ Curriculum developed at the Lab School of Washington. Through the academic clubs, students experience historical time periods through “tactile, hands-on exploration of history, literature, geography, science, archaeology, sociology and visual and performing arts.” (http://www.labschool.org/academic_clubs).**
- **Provide students with access to technology as a tool for learning;**
 - **Gateway Lab School has a technology plan developed through collaboration between our educators, administrators and board. The primary goals of this plan are to acquire new technological**

resources for our staff and students, and to train our staff to more effectively integrate technology into our curriculum. Using funds from our SIIP grant, Gateway has purchased a set of iPad minis that are being integrated into our ELA curriculum to improve literacy. Last year our middle school students participated in a 40 book challenge that resulted in an increase in DCAS reading scores. With the addition of the iPads and access to Big Universe—a site that provides leveled lexile reading materials and assessments to measure comprehension—all Gateway Lab School students are participating in a 40 book reading challenge. Students utilize the iPads in other areas of study as well, including math and the arts.

- **Provide a responsive school and classroom environment that will educate students on how to function effectively in society through tailored social pragmatics and skills training;**
 - **Both the Responsive Classroom® and Botvin Life Skills® training as outlined above are being used successfully to provide social skills training and character development for our students.**
 - **Our Head of School Ms. Dolan conducts weekly assemblies that bring together our entire student population for interactive discussions and explorations of topics related to non-cognitive skills and character development. Emphasis is placed on our “Gladiator Values” of honor, loyalty and truth.**
- **Prepare students to articulate their strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles, which will lead to self-advocacy;**
- **Train and support a quality staff to put the school’s philosophy into action. Commit to teacher training and advanced professional development in research-based curricula. This job-embedded, intensive professional development program will be evaluated based on the application and implementation of the methodologies as evidenced in an increase of student achievement;**
- **Provide financial rewards for staff members who contribute to student success and meeting school goals;**
 - **In 2013, the Gateway board of directors established a School Incentive Plan for teacher and staff. Through the incentive plan, staff members can nominate their co-workers or themselves to receive merit pay based on the contributions that the nominee made to enhance the school community over and above their**

assigned duties. More than \$6,000 was awarded in 2013 and we expect the program to grow in future years.

- Support and educate parents with regard to school and home issues;
- Make parental involvement a central part of the school community;
 - Gateway parents are highly involved in our school community. Formally, our parents participate in fundraising and planning school activities through Gateway Friends & Family. Parents assist the HOS and the board in decision making through their participation on the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and as members of the school board of directors.

The mission, goals and objectives of Gateway Lab School are consistent with the restrictions on charter schools set forth in 14 Delaware Code, §506 and the legislative intent of 14 Delaware Code, §501 which is “intended to improve student learning; encourage the use of different and innovative or proven school environments and teaching and learning methods; provide parents and students with measures of improved school and student performance and greater opportunities in choosing public schools within and outside their school districts; and to provide for a well-educated community.”

2. Describe your objective in seeking the proposed modification?

We are seeking a more just, equitable and accurate measure of academic success for our unique population of special education students.

This alternative academic assessment framework will provide an improved measurement of student performance for our unique population as referenced in 14 Delaware code 506. It will also permit Gateway Lab School more time to reach full implementation of all our stated objectives.

As stated earlier, the “at-risk” designation will not substantively change Gateway Lab School’s mission or approach. Rather it will allow us to capitalize on the many strengths of our unique population:

“The Gateway population is largely made up of bright students who learn differently. Many of our students have diagnosed conditions—Attention Deficits, Learning Disabilities or Autism Spectrum Disorders. Several others have undiagnosed learning differences. For most of our students, the challenges that come with their differences have led to frustration, feelings of inadequacy, and little to no improvement in their academic and social growth in traditional school settings. Feedback from GLS parents, teachers, and the students themselves indicate that students that have enrolled at Gateway are feeling competent and

confident about their ability to learn for the first time in their academic lives...The infusion of the arts into the core curriculum and the training that teachers receive to identify how their students' best learn, is making a difference in how our students see themselves as capable learners."

-GLS Annual Report 2012-13 (pg. 4)

Clearly the unique "wraparound" approach to education is having a positive impact on our unique population. However, the board acknowledges that while we have created a positive school environment where students feel safe and successful, we are faced with the prospect of seeing our students continually labeled as not meeting standards by the Department of Education. This has a profoundly negative psychological effect on our staff and students. In order to build on the success our population has already had as a result of our research based approach, our school requires a more balanced and equitable approach academic assessment. It is the opinion of our administration and our board that the alternative assessment framework will provide a more accurate picture of our students' academic growth.

3. Describe how the proposed mission will result in higher academic achievement for the school's student population.

It is acknowledged that students arrive at Gateway often with significant deficits in academic as well as non-academic areas. Parents elect to send their children to our school because they have not found success in their local district or private school. This waiver will allow Gateway the time to address our individual students' needs, giving them the opportunity to reach the self-actualized success that has eluded them due to their unique learning differences. As we address the many academic needs of our students, we aim to continue fulfilling the conditions of our charter by building students' non-cognitive skills, identified as "character" within our charter. The research of James Heckman, Martin Seligman, Angela Duckworth and others points to these non-cognitive skills as the most reliable indicator of future success. Our goal in applying for this modification is to empower the faculty of Gateway Lab School to succeed in meeting the needs of our population within the mission framework outlined in our charter through implementation of the Lab School model. We believe that this waiver will assist in putting within reach for our students, the continued academic growth that is hallmark of any successful educational institution.

As stated in our 2012-2013 annual report, "Most of our students have experienced some type of trauma or feelings of failure in prior academic settings. The vast majority has not been successful in making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in previous school settings. The hurdles that are a result of our students' experiences do not simply go away when they come to GLS. Our teachers and support staff are tasked with identifying each

student's strengths and weaknesses to help them make the progress we know they are capable of making.” (pg. 5)

This clearly illustrates the difficulty Gateway has had in meeting expectations in the academic performance framework for charter schools. Rather than attempting to “skim the top” students from district schools, we actively recruit students who need a different type of education. The Lab School approach is proving to be successful for our targeted population, but success cannot always be so easily identified.

Section E Questions: Not Applicable

Section F Questions: Not Applicable

Section G Questions: Not Applicable

Section H Questions:

1. Discuss your objective in seeking the proposed modification. *(Please note: a change in student performance goals also imposes a change in your Performance Agreement.)*

The stated objectives of the Gateway Lab School board of directors in obtaining this waiver is to be afforded the opportunity to utilize measures of student achievement beyond DCAS, and to have our students assessed more equitably within the state testing system.

2. Explain how the school's current goals for student performance are problematic. Discuss how the modification you seek will likely remedy those problems, including any established evidence or research base. Provide evidence that the proposed student performance goals are academically sound and will benefit all students.

See the following excerpt from the GLS 2012-2013 Annual report that details the issues with our current student performance goals:

“Gateway Lab School's first and foremost goal is to demonstrate student growth and proficiency in math and reading. The majority of our student population requires specific academic support and accommodations. As a result, our teachers and student support teams have received training to identify a student's needs early and create a plan for growth. Data on student progress (DIBELS, DCAS, teacher created assessments) is captured in the I-Tracker Pro database and provides information to assist teachers in helping students to meet pre-determined growth targets. Gateway teachers are in their second year of Common Core Standards training and implementing the standards in their classrooms. In addition to analyzing student data, we are creating a plan to help our neuro-diverse student population become more at ease with standardized testing through the use of DCAS practice tests and role-playing. The anxiety,

intimidation, and inability to focus for prolonged periods of time for many of our students can result in a poor outcome.”

-GLS 2012-2013 Annual Report Pg. 6

After reviewing the alternative framework, the board is convinced that this waiver will go a long way towards remedying our current issues regarding student academic performance. The alternative framework itself is grounded in sound research. The success of Positive Outcomes Charter School, a Delaware charter school with a similar percentage of students with IEPs, is further evidence that adoption of this framework will result in greater success for our students.

3. Discuss your students' current performance as measured by the Performance Framework and how the proposed change will improve academic performance.

Gateway Lab School's overall academic rating is “Does Not Meet Standard” on the Academic performance framework.

By comparing Gateway Lab School’s Academic Performance Framework with the Alternative Framework, one will notice some striking changes:

- **Percentage of students making enough annual growth to maintain or achieve proficiency status within 3 years changes from “does not meet standard” to “meets standard”**
- **The “School Proficiency compared to Home District Proficiency” (Measure 2c) moves from “far below standard” to “meets standard”**

The governing board of Gateway Lab School believes that these improved ratings indicate a larger trend toward higher achievement for our students. When we take into account the effect of the many other strategies that are now being fully implemented at Gateway with consistency and fidelity— Responsive Classroom®, Response to Intervention, increased math and ELA time, etc. - we are confident that this positive trend will continue. Obtaining this waiver will allow our students and our community to begin to quantify the success we have already begun to show.

4. If the modification is approved, discuss any new challenges this would present and how you will address them.

As stated earlier in the application, the board was concerned with the possibility that this waiver would negatively impact Gateway Lab School’s ability to market to the school population it is designed to serve best. The board has held meetings to discuss the alternative framework with parent groups and the response has been overwhelmingly supportive. In addition the

board has formulated a marketing strategy that is focused on branding our school as a place for students who learn differently. The board no longer anticipates a negative effect on the reputation of Gateway as a result of being granted this waiver. In fact, the board believes this step will result in many benefits for our students.

References:

Duckworth et al. "Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no.6 2007.

Seligman, Martin E. *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* Oxford University Press. Oxford: 2004.

Tough, Paul. *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character*. Mariner Books. New York. 2012.

Resources:

Botvin Life Skills Program: (<http://www.lifeskillstraining.com/overview.hph>)

Response to Intervention: . (<http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what.>) Copyright 2014. National Center for Learning Disabilities.

Responsive Classroom: (<http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>. Copyright 2014.

Wilson Reading Program:

(http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/FS_PROGRAM_MainPage.htm., 2004-2010

APPENDIX A

CURRENT FINANCIAL REPORTS

*Neely & Spence
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Gateway Lab Budget Highlights:
For the Month Ending January 31, 2014

- 58.3% of the year is complete, while the Expenditure Detail Report reflects 53.0% of the budget for all funding sources has been expended.
 - 15 of 26 payrolls have been expended for a ratio of 57.7%
 - State and Local Payrolls—based upon the time period completed 53.4% and 48.4% of salary and OEC have been expended.
 - The follow areas are over expended:
 - Travel—\$195.63
 - Construction/Building Services—\$2,265.00 will be corrected to Buildings-Maintenance where appropriate funds were budgeted
 - Student Body Activity—\$228.00 will be corrected to Fundraising and Miscellaneous
 - Custodial Supplies—\$905.67; due to the increased salt purchases as a result of the recent inclement weather. It is expected that the overage can be covered through excess dollars found in Building/Grounds Repair (\$4,404.54)
 - Computer Tech Plan—\$9,890.39 where the majority will be offset by the excess dollars found in Office Equipment-Furniture (\$7,559.68)
- Per the Cash Flow report, an estimated balance of \$2,091,666.04 remains in state and local discretionary accounts.
- Per the Web Report 98.0% of the funds have been received. Encumbrances and Expenditures for the period reflect activity of 53.0%.

- Available Resources:
 - Unallocated funding—\$142,831
 - Required 2% Contingency—\$87,991

FY2014 APPROVED BUDGET--ENROLLMENT OF 208												
January 31 2014												
CHARTER SCHOOL:												
GATEWAY LAB SCHOOL												
	BUDGET	EXPENSES									BALANCE	SUMMER PAY
		Contractual										
		Sal & OEC	Fac Lease	Fac Maint	Utilities	Instructional	Other Exp	Transportation	Food Serv	Contingency		
	Preliminary	2,544,827	358,155	70,771	41,500	508,574	90,996	209,985	3,300	78,162		
State Funds												
Operations	2,399,498											
Local Funds												
School Districts	2,000,077											
Total State & Loc	4,399,575	2,423,401	388,001	286,001	43,959	684,300	137,384	203,608	2,100	87,991	142,831	0
	Preliminary	90,650				8,700						
Federal Funds	271,347	104,318	0	0	0	162,790	1,500	0	0		2,740	
	Preliminary			12,378		2,000			1,500			
Donations & Other	85,990	0	0	41,578	0	12,000	0	0	1,500	0	30,912	
GRAND TOTAL	4,756,912	2,527,718	388,001	327,579	43,959	859,089	138,884	203,608	3,600	87,991		
GRAND TOTAL RATIOS		53.1%	8.2%	6.9%	0.9%	18.1%	2.9%	4.3%	0.1%	0.0%	1.8%	
STATE & LOCAL RATIOS		55.1%	8.8%	6.5%	1.0%	15.6%	3.1%	4.6%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	
Contingencies		FY2012	FY2013	FY2014							Total	
Summer Pay		238,944	104,000	55,501							398,445	
Bonus Pay											0	
2%		55,392	82,783	-138,175							0	
Total Contingency		294,336	186,783	-82,674							398,445	

GATEWAY LAB SCHOOL															
Enrollment of 208	EXPENDITURE DETAIL FOR THE MONTH ENDING JANUARY 31, 2014														
	STATE & LOCAL APPR 05213, 50022 & 98000														
Object Code	Description	FY2013 Actual State & Local	FY2014 Preliminary Budget State & Local	FY2014 Approved Budget State & Local	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-12	Nov-12	Dec-12	Jan-13	Year To Date	Balance		
51004	Salaries/Wages Employees	7,528.38			2,609.46	2,509.46	2509.46	2509.46	-1261.36			8,876.48	-8,876.48		
51005	Overtime Salaries								-47.05			-47.05	47.05		
51008	Termination Sals - Vac Leave			8,236.62	7,597.11			639.51				8,236.62	0.00		
51009	Termination Sals - Sick Leave			669.48				669.48				669.48	0.00		
51165	Principal/Administrative		161,440.00	191,355.00	0.00			47,082.22	26,398.50	17,599.00	17,599.00	108,678.72	82,676.28		
51192	Directors	1,301,092.45			109,057.76	109,753.01	114,226.52	-147,413.37	-3,692.67	818.20	818.20	183,567.65	-183,567.65		
51100	Teachers (regular)		1,018,199.89	920,134.15	0.00			148,346.61	123,746.58	79,669.83	72,078.34	423,841.36	496,292.79		
51194	Secretaries		73,287.00	87,986.00	0.00			21,174.42				21,174.42	66,811.58		
51176	Custodian		32,623.00	37,247.00	0.00				13,949.08	2,509.46	2,509.46	18,968.00	18,279.00		
51151	Specialists & Coordinators		174,858.00	224,142.00	0.00			21,258.20	18,267.08	10,698.64	10,698.64	60,922.56	163,219.44		
51005	Overtime Salaries	141.34										0.00	0.00		
51111	E.P.E.R. - Miscellaneous	7,741.93	79,832.00	49,782.00	0.00		47.05					47.05	49,734.95		
51104	Paraprofessionals		150,267.00	138,410.00	0.00			24,304.95	10,420.74	6,947.16	8,822.40	50,495.25	87,914.75		
	Total Salaries (10)	1,316,504.10	1,690,506.89	1,657,962.25	119,264.33	112,262.47	118,092.02	117,262.49	187,780.90	118,242.29	112,526.04	885,430.54	772,531.71	53.4%	
52001	Pensions/Employer Share (21.02%)	254,432.13	355,344.55	348,503.66	22,145.82	22,455.92	23,110.12	24,769.54	38,904.02	23,700.54	23,142.19	178,228.15	170,275.51		
52002	Health Insurance/Employer Share	166,250.36	339,729.43	260,754.62	13,560.30	12,383.70	11,408.05	16,171.57	19,750.65	18,008.15	19,226.64	110,509.06	150,245.56		
52005	Workermen's Compensation (1.6%)	23,035.55	27,048.11	26,527.40	1,908.25	1,796.24	1,889.51	1,876.24	3,040.08	1,891.90	1,800.42	14,202.64	12,324.76		
52006	Social Security/Employer Share (6.2%)	79,524.61	104,811.43	102,793.66	7,232.11	6,803.49	7,118.61	7,125.82	11,384.98	7,131.91	6,772.01	53,568.93	49,224.73		
52009	Unemployment Insurance (.17%)	2,237.68	2,873.86	2,818.54	202.78	190.88	200.76	199.32	319.21	201.03	191.30	1,505.28	1,313.26		
52015	Disability Insurance	14.78	0.00	0.00	0.00							0.00	0.00		
52016	Medicare/Employer Share (1.45%)	18,598.45	24,512.35	24,040.45	1,691.38	1,591.16	1,664.81	1,666.53	2,662.60	1,667.99	1,583.81	12,528.28	11,512.17		
	Total Other Employment Costs (20)	544,093.56	854,319.73	765,438.33	46,740.64	45,221.39	45,391.86	51,809.02	76,061.54	52,601.52	52,716.37	370,542.34	394,895.99	48.4%	
Other Expenses	54001	Mileage/Prv Car-W/In State	792.53	1,600.00	1,600.00	0.00	713.78	294.83	90.55	493.15	110.48	1,702.79	-102.79		
Other Expenses	54003	Meals-W/In State	0.00	0.00	0.00	92.84	0.00					92.84	-92.84		
Other Expenses	54104	Lodg-Hotl, Motl/Out-State	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00				618.99	-618.99	0.00	0.00		
	Total Travel (40)	792.53	1,600.00	1,600.00	92.84	713.78	294.83	90.55	0.00	1,112.14	-508.51	1,795.63	-195.63	112.2%	
Instructional	55000	Other Professional Services	299,836.56	262,776.60	312,046.80	8,662.08	18,493.09	8,704.83	13,497.71	34,396.75	15,176.14	20,112.55	119,043.15	193,003.65	38.1%
Facility Maintenance	55007	Construction/Building Services	3,055.55	3,600.00	211,579.83	-7,319.00	94,211.10	103,514.23	23,438.50	482.69	-482.69	213,844.83	-2,265.00	101.1%	
Instructional	55010	Med Related Services (Psychologists, Therapists)	194,068.24	112,340.00	224,419.00	10,711.00	5,887.00			43,203.82		46,863.64	106,665.46	117,753.54	47.5%
Other Expenses	55020	Legal Services	36,934.59	33,500.00	49,892.18	14,167.18	2,225.00	1,250.00	564.00		2,044.00	20,250.18	29,642.00	40.6%	
Other Expenses	55000	Auditors	11,685.50	18,200.00	18,200.00	4,650.00	0.00	475.00	525.00			11,200.00	16,850.00	1,350.00	92.6%
Other Expenses	55101	Postage	993.05	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	0.00	71.11	307.64	335.84	3.20	717.79	782.21	47.9%	
Utilities	55125	Telephone Services	968.35	2,500.00	2,594.58	187.79	261.13			521.48		970.40	1,624.18	37.4%	
Utilities	55200	Public Utilities	38,608.34	39,000.00	41,364.30	0.00	6,267.33	2,908.98		6,643.57	3,571.73	19,391.61	21,972.69	46.9%	
Instructional	55073	Computer Services	21,515.99	20,000.00	15,775.49	50.00	405.99	11,250.00	3,669.50	50.00	50.00	15,475.49	300.00	98.1%	
Facility Maintenance	55507	Buildings-Maintenance	7,855.84	7,300.00	8,575.28	46.79	422.00		129.61	1,966.00		482.69	3,047.09	5,528.19	35.5%
Other Expenses	55300	Insurance	8,243.33	0.00	0.00	1,645.25	547.42	-547.42				-1,645.25	0.00	#DIV/0!	
Instructional	55373	Tuition Reimbursement	11,500.00	0.00	10,100.00	195.00	3,210.00	399.00				3,804.00	6,296.00	37.7%	
Other Expenses	55314	Clothing & Incidentals	288.00	0.00	253.00	0.00	253.00					253.00	0.00	100.0%	
Facility Lease	55402	Building-Rent	341,100.00	358,155.00	388,001.25	29,846.25	59,692.50	29,846.25	29,846.25	20,000.00	39,692.50	29,846.25	238,770.00	149,231.25	61.5%
Other Expenses	55400	Photocopiers	3,895.15	6,696.29	9,900.00	1,270.76	605.03	659.72	1,069.01	821.55	52.29	1,413.03	5,891.39	4,008.61	59.5%
Transportation	55434	Buses-pupil transportation in state	-2,288.14	9,984.60	3,607.50	0.00	2,127.50	1,480.00	440.00	1,120.00	-1,120.00	-440.00	3,607.50	0.00	100.0%
Facility Maintenance	55500	Building/Grounds Repair	8,646.25	5,400.00	5,400.00	0.00	158.00	297.00	63.49	476.97		995.46	4,404.54	18.4%	
Instructional	55400	Equipment Rental	368.16	200.00	200.00	0.00	0.00			196.00		-196.00	0.00	200.00	0.0%
Other Expenses	55440	Other Rental	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	0.00	136.91				136.91	163.09	45.6%	
Other Expenses	55452	Insurance	3,044.51	11,300.00	12,925.45	0.00	4,190.00	1,097.84	550.42	1,097.84	1,645.25	550.42	9,131.77	3,793.68	70.6%
Facility Maintenance	55506	Custodial Services--Mid Atlantic Services	33,220.05	44,870.60	47,607.94	2,539.34	7,404.00	4,872.67	-1,104.31	5,269.66	2,333.33	2,333.33	23,648.02	23,959.92	49.7%
Facility Maintenance	55510	Equipment Repair	1,232.13	3,800.00	3,800.00	0.00	0.00		461.75	150.00			611.75	3,188.25	16.1%
Facility Maintenance	55692	Sanitary Services	2,779.21	2,300.00	5,538.00	0.00	851.26	965.00		434.15	437.20	2,687.61	2,850.39	48.5%	
Other Expenses	55600	Printing & Binding	540.11	3,000.00	8,000.00	0.00	0.00	135.00				135.00	7,865.00	1.7%	
Other Expenses	55610	Advertising	3,219.42	3,500.00	11,324.51	200.00	2,998.00	988.28		289.00	1,600.00	750.00	6,825.28	4,499.23	60.3%
Instructional	55633	Permit/Certs/Trans/MisFee/Lics	33,500.25	53,857.00	34,000.00	0.00	0.00	4,232.68	3,438.00			7,670.68	26,329.32	22.6%	
Instructional	55647	Student Body Activity	-1,114.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		228.00			228.00	-228.00	#DIV/0!	
Instructional	55667	Training	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	0.00	0.00					0.00	1,200.00	0.0%	

CAFETERIA APPR 91110															
	Object Code	Description	FY2013 Actual Cafeteria	FY2014 Preliminary Budget Cafeteria	FY2014 Approved Budget Cafeteria	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-12	Nov-12	Dec-12	Jan-13	Year To Date	Balance	
Food Services	56111	Food	2,230.14	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	0.00	90.95					90.95	1,409.05	
		Grand Total - All Categories	2,230.14	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	0.00	90.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	90.95	1,409.05	6.1%
FUNDRAISING AND MISCELLANEOUS APPR 98040, 98146, 99061, 99063, 98159															
	Object Code	Description	FY2013 Actual Fundraising	FY2014 Preliminary Budget Fundraising	FY2014 Approved Budget Fundraising	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-12	Nov-12	Dec-12	Jan-13	Year To Date	Balance	
Facility Maintenance	55007	Construction/Building Services	0.00	0.00	29,200.17	0.00	0.00	29,200.17					29,200.17	0.00	100.0%
Instructional	55647	Student Body Activity	4,049.50	2,000.00	12,000.00	0.00	0.00		-114.73	3,548.60	2,453.99	2,174.75	8,062.61	3,937.39	67.2%
Other Expenses	55721	Miscellaneous Expense	3,958.00	12,378.00	12,378.00	0.00	0.00	50.00					50.00	12,328.00	0.4%
		Grand Total - All Categories	39,273.89	14,378.00	53,578.17	0.00	0.00	29,250.17	-114.73	3,548.60	2,453.99	2,174.75	37,312.78	16,265.39	69.6%
		ALL FUNDS TOTAL	3,393,477.82	4,042,796.70	4,580,429.36	269,177.94	398,044.49	433,337.55	294,834.97	428,216.57	297,102.55	306,195.64	2,426,909.71	2,153,519.65	53.0%