

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
APPLICATION TO MODIFY AN APPROVED CHARTER
2018-19



DE Department of Education
Charter School Office
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I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

Table 1

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

II. MODIFICATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

III. APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

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

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

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

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

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

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

IV. CHARTER SCHOOL MODIFICATION APPLICATION QUESTIONS

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

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

Table 2

Minor Modification (Section A Only)		Major Modification (Section A <u>AND</u> additional questions identified below)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enrollment change (increase or decrease) between 5 and 15%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Agreement Section A only
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change agreement with EMO/CMO	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrollment change (increase or decrease) of greater than 15% Section B
<input type="checkbox"/>	Start date (one-time) delay	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grade configuration (adding grade levels or reducing grade levels) Section C
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of charter school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational Program (i.e. curriculum) Section D
<input type="checkbox"/>	Existing or planned school facilities or structures (including any plan to use temporary or modular structures)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mission (includes At-Risk designation) Section E
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in terms to current site facility arrangement (i.e. lease to purchase)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace, remove, or add EMO/CMO, or transfer of authorizer Section F
<input type="checkbox"/>	Educator Evaluation Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrollment preferences Section G
<input type="checkbox"/>	A change to the current authorized number of hours, either daily or annually, devoted to actual school sessions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Location change Section H
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goals for student performance Section I

Section A Core Questions:

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

Our charter school's Board of Directors wishes to decrease our 2019-20 enrollment by 12%. Specifically, as outlined on page 80 of our Charter Renewal Application submitted on October 1, 2018 we wish to decrease by 55 seats, for a targeted enrollment of 520 students.

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

The effective date is July 1, 2019.

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

Please see pages 18-81 of the Charter Renewal Application Submitted October 1, 2018 for a detailed explanation of the Great Oaks Wilmington Organizational and Financial Performance.

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*)

As we launched our High School during the 2018-19 school year, we saw an attrition rate of approximately 50% from our 8th to 9th grades. During the choice application period, 70% of our 8th grade students and families committed to returning to Great Oaks, but as they were taken off of the wait lists at long-established schools (Howard, Delcastle, Hodgson, St. Georges, etc.), they made late decisions. In surveying the families of those that did not choose to remain at GOWIL for High School, 82% of families cited that their student desired to have an experience different from Middle School, and/or desired to go to a Vo-Tech School.

Researching schools in the area that serve a population similar to Great Oaks, and also seek to retain students from 8th to 9th grades, we learned that 50% attrition is common. In order to plan for this, we have implemented the following:

- 8th graders will also apply to our 9th grade, in order to provide us with a more accurate number of those who will stay.
- Realizing that students and families need to be able to visit and experience potential high school options, we will provide shadow opportunities for our 8th grade students in families

beginning in November.

- We are partnering with area middle schools with the intention of aggressively recruiting new 9th graders to fill seats.
- We have partnered with Wilmington University to offer High School students the opportunity to Dually Enroll.

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

Our mission is to prepare all students for college success, while also cultivating highly effective teachers and creating a positive impact on our surrounding communities. By decreasing our student enrollment, we have the opportunity to greater leverage the supports provided to students, thus resulting in a greater capacity to present students with an individualized and rigorous academic program.

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.

Please see the Charter Renewal Application for a detailed explanation of the proposed modification to the school's financial position.