

1. **What modification does the school's Board of Directors want to make to the term(s) of the charter? Identify the 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.**

Academia Antonia Alonso's Board of Directors proposes changing the Spanish Language Proficiency assessment, a portion of the Educator Evaluation Process, from LAS Links to the State of Delaware's World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish. This would constitute a markedly different approach to Spanish Language evaluation than currently present. Instead of administering a static test once during the course of the school year, students will be assessed regularly on their Spanish Language proficiency in an ongoing, organic matter within the classroom setting.

It should be noted that both LAS Links and the Delaware World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish are both based on and aligned with [ACTFL proficiency standards](#), but the process and cost of the Delaware World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria better meet the needs of the Academia Antonia Alonso administration, faculty and students at a markedly reduced cost.

The use of LAS Links as our Spanish Language assessment tool was not placed on the school by the Secretary of Education or members of Delaware State Board of Education; rather, they are conditions proposed and adopted by members of the Academic Support Team at the school, the Academic Committee members of the Board and the full Board of Directors at Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School.

References to the use of LAS Links are made in ten (10) separate places in the most recently accepted charter renewal document approved in 2017. The references are listed below.

1. **Page 18-** Also, the school will implement **LAS Links** as its language proficiency assessment tool, which will allow faculty to establish baselines and gauge student proficiency growth in both English and Spanish.
2. **Page 19-**As a result of this consultation, La Academia's Head of School participated in a three-day training for Delaware immersion school principals that led to the adoption of **LAS Links** to assess English and Spanish language acquisition across all grades as of SY2017-18.
3. **Page 23-** For both English and Spanish language acquisition, Academia will implement **LAS Links** as its assessment tool. Assessments via case studies and student portfolios will measure other aspects of student development, including high quality student work and student character and engagement.
4. **Page 27-** For Spanish, we will use the **LAS Links** assessment to provide standardized results that will serve as benchmarks regarding language acquisition.

5. **Page 56-** Goal 3: La Academia students will demonstrate growth towards becoming bilingual and biliterate students by 5th grade
Outcome: At the end of each school year, 75% of La Academia students will show growth in Spanish reading and language proficiency

Assessment: **LAS Links**

6. **Page 56-**Rationale: Currently, La Academia has no baseline assessment for **LAS Links** in Spanish language proficiency. SY2017-18 will be the first time our students will participate in this assessment.

7. **Page 56-**Internally, continue using MAP and **LAS Links** for ELA, Math, and Spanish assessments

8. **Page 57-** **LAS Links** assessment will be administered twice per year to show growth in Spanish proficiency levels.

9. **Page 57-** **LAS Links** meets all United States Title III requirements and is broadly used to assess student progress in bilingual educational environments, allowing faculty to assess growth in both English and Spanish language proficiency. This supports the school's mission-critical objective of having bilingual and biliterate students when they complete 5th grade.

10. **Page 57-** After manually grading **LAS Links** results, teachers will work closely with the school leader and instructional coaches to analyze the results and develop intervention plans.

The Board of Directors at Academia Antonia Alonso, proposes that in the charter document all references to the LAS Links assessment be changed to “**Delaware’s World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish**”. The exception to this would be mention number 2 found on page 19 that begins, “As a result of this consultation...”. This paragraph would be omitted in its entirety as it is the previous justification for the use of LAS Links.

Additionally, we would like to call the reviewer’s attention to a mistake in the charter renewal document that was uncovered during this minor charter modification process

*“For both English and Spanish language acquisition, Academia will implement **LAS Links** as its assessment tool” (p. 23).*

LAS Links was never intended to be the assessment for English language acquisition at Academia Antonia Alonso. LAS Links was intended to be the Spanish language acquisition assessment. In order to assess English Language Learners’ acquisition of their second language, English, we already had committed to using the WIDA and MAP tests.

“WIDA is used to identify and assess English Language Learners (ELLS) in compliance with State regulations, but WIDA is not an appropriate tool to assess proficiency of non-ELL students, nor does it assess Spanish proficiency” (p. 19).

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

This proposed modification will go into effect for the upcoming, 2019-2020 school year and will continue thereafter.

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.

According to the Delaware Report Card for Academia Antonia Alonso provided at Delaware.gov, Academia Antonia Alonso has an overall total score of 236 which is classified as "Approaching Expectations". This score is a compilation of four scores, one for Academic Progress, Progress Towards English Language Proficiency, School Quality/Student Success and Academic Achievement. In the area of Academic Progress, Academia has scored 124 points which is classified as "Meets Expectations", In the area of Progress Toward English Language Proficiency, Academia scored 35 which is classified as "Meets Expectations". For School Quality/Student Success Academia had a score of 43 which is classified as "Exceeds Expectations". Finally, in the area of Academic Achievement, Academia scored 34 which is classified as "Well Below Expectations".

In all individual measures other than Academic Achievement, Academia Antonia Alonso has met or exceeded the state's expectations as laid out in the Performance Framework. However, the low Academic Achievement scores do not accurately tell the whole story. Academia Antonia Alonso serves a traditionally minoritized community, having approximately 70% ELLs. The majority of students come from low SES households (100% of AAA's students are on free and reduced lunch). Research shows that these factors are correlated with low academic achievement. It is critical to note that based on the state's assessment of Academic Progress, Academia Antonia Alonso has not only made a commitment to raising students' academic proficiency but is showing progress in this area.

Moreover, Academia Antonia Alonso has consistently met its obligations to its constituents as laid out in the charter, and it has done so in a fiscally responsible manner as can be demonstrated by the financial documents available for public viewing on the Academia Antonia Alonso website.

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)

Over the course of the last two years it has become apparent that the use of LAS Links as our assessment of Spanish language proficiency has proven to be both logistically untenable and financially burdensome for the school. During the course of the 2017-2018 school year \$10,610.80 was spent on LAS Links testing. These funds were used to purchase the test, to pay for additional part-time staff to administer the test and were intended to pay part-time staff to

correct the tests, as well. Copies of the test were procured in 2017-2018 to be administered to students, and the administration of the test during the 2017-2018 school year was scheduled to take three weeks. Part-time staff were hired for the administration, but at the end of three weeks, it was apparent that more time would be required to complete testing. Consequently, additional part-time staff were hired for an additional three weeks in order to finish the testing as designated in the charter. Unfortunately, the additional hiring of staff to complete the administration of the test exhausted the funds budgeted for the test, and as the purchase price of a LAS Links tests does not include test corrections, Academia Antonia Alonso relied on volunteers to correct and record each student's score.

In the 2018-2019 school year, Academia Antonia Alonso also purchased the LAS Links tests, this time at a cost of \$10,748.55. This year, more time was allotted for the administration of the test and therefore, the test was able to be conducted without the need to hire additional staff. Unfortunately, the test still took an inordinate amount of time to administer, and while administering the test, employees involved in the process could not be engaged in other regular and primary duties. The problem of time and resources has again been further exacerbated by the additional need to correct the test. This year, because finding volunteers to correct the test is not a long-term viable option and because faculty and staff have responsibilities which do not include correcting LAS Links tests, we needed to send the tests out for scoring, which cost an additional \$4,402.

Academia Antonia Alonso is committed to upholding its commitment to students by continuing to assess their Spanish language proficiency; however, the last two years have demonstrated that the LAS Links test is not the right tool for this assessment. Therefore, members of the Academia community have worked with members of the Delaware Board of Education to explore other options for meeting these commitments. Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, Academia Antonia Alonso will assess students' Spanish language proficiency using the **Delaware's World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish**. As the name suggests, this assessment tool has been created by the state of Delaware to assess students' Spanish language proficiency within dual language immersion programs. These assessment criteria were created as part of the Governor's World Language Expansion Initiative. As a dual language, world language immersion school in Delaware, Academia Antonia Alonso now realizes that we should have been using these Delaware State designed, vetted and supported assessment criteria from the beginning as opposed to using an outside service.

The **Delaware's World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish** use an ongoing, rubric based assessment of student language proficiency that allows for students to be assessed on in-class work over time on a scale of Novice Low to Advanced High, as designated by the State of Delaware. As teachers are already assessing students' work, this will add only a small amount of additional work for each classroom teacher and will allow for multiple data points to demonstrate students' levels as opposed to one day of testing. Moreover, switching the assessment criteria from **LAS Links** to **Delaware's World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish** will allow Academia Antonia Alonso to continue to fulfill its obligations to assess students' Spanish language proficiency, significantly decreasing

the time needed to perform the assessments, and saving Academia Antonia Alonso thousands of dollars in the process. For all of these reasons, we feel that making this change to the educator evaluation process by replacing **LAS Links** with **The Delaware World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish** is in the best interest for Academia Antonia Alonso and all of its constituents.

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.

The proposed modification will impact the school by making Spanish Language Assessment an ongoing process performed by the Spanish Language teachers on a regular basis.

The implementation of this assessment process will require training for the teachers who will be implementing the assessment. However, this training is provided by the State of Delaware to teachers in dual language schools who are using the assessments at no additional costs to the schools.

Currently administration of the LAS Links tests falls on our instructional coaches. By switching away from LAS links to the Delaware World Language Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish, the countless hours these coaches needed to oversee the process can be devoted to evaluating teachers' classrooms and providing teachers with additional help in improving their classroom practice.

Finally, Academia paid \$15,150.55 this year to purchase and correct the **LAS Links** test. By switching to **The Delaware World Language Immersion Program Assessment Criteria for Spanish** in the 2019-2020 school year, those funds could be diverted to other, more beneficial and more necessary programs and initiatives.

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 proposed charter modification offers no financial obligations or challenges. Rather, based on this year's costs the proposed charter modification offers a potential yearly savings of more than \$15,000.