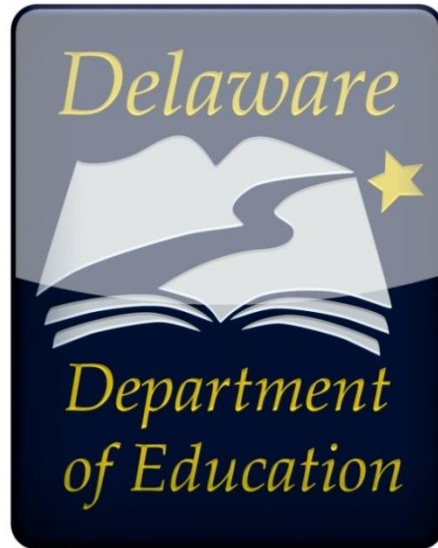


CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Academia Antonia Alonso

**MAJOR MODIFICATION APPLICATION
INITIAL REPORT**

CSAC Initial Meeting: February 23, 2016
CSAC Initial Report Published: February 25, 2016

On January 29, 2016, Academia Antonia Alonso submitted an application for a major modification of its charter.

The following were in attendance at the Initial Meeting of the CSAC on February 23, 2016:

Voting Committee Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee

- David Blowman, Chairperson of the Charter School Accountability Committee and Associate Secretary, Financial Management and Operations, DDOE
- Karen Field Rogers, Deputy Secretary, DDOE
- April McCrae, Education Associate, Science Assessment and STEM, DDOE
- Barbara Mazza, Education Associate, Exceptional Children Resources, DDOE
- Chuck Taylor, Head of School, Providence Creek Academy
- Deborah Wilson, Community Representative

Non-voting Members of the Charter School Accountability Committee

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
- Brook Hughes, Education Associate, Financial Reform and Resource Management, DDOE

Representatives of Academia Antonia Alonso

- Luz-Elena Garcilazo, Board President
- Thomas Peters, Board Vice President
- Brian Fahey, Board Treasurer
- Mark Phelps, Head of School
- Riccardo Stoeckicht, Chief Operating Officer, Innovative Schools
- Teresa Gerchman, Chief Schools Officer, Innovative Schools

Discussion

The following was discussed:

- A summary of the request – The school has applied to change to location of Academia Antonia Alonso (La Academia) Charter School from the Community Education Building (CEB), located at 1200 N. French Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19801 to Barley Mill Plaza (Building 26) located at 4326 Lancaster Pike, Wilmington, DE 19805. La Academia would occupy one of the 60,000 SF buildings that is on the campus currently owned by Odyssey Charter School, and available for lease.
- Financial impact – The school indicated that it would save \$85K per year at the new location, which includes consideration of changes to a number of budget lines, including food service and transportation.
- Alternate sites explored – The school indicated that it also considered moving Family Foundation Academy’s site but it was not ideal programmatically and its location in Colonial School District would dramatically shift La Academia’s enrollment base. The school also indicated that it explored the former Delaware Met site as a fall back option but the site would only be available for one year until a different charter school moves into the building.
- Impact on enrollment – The school indicated that parents are supportive of the modification and would plan to remain enrolled at Academia. The school stated that it surveyed parents about the potential location change, and only 2 respondees out of 89 stated that they would not want to remain at La Academia. The school stated that 46 families expressed concerns about the school’s current location at the Community Education Building (CEB), particularly the lack of space for outside play. Parents meetings were also convened and the feedback was positive. The new location would provide space for outside play which is not available at the CEB. To date, the school has received 109 applications which exceeds the target (100). Only one parent has indicated that they plan to enroll their child at a different school next year. Other parents may decide to change schools but the impact will not be significant.
- Transportation plan – All students are transportation eligible. This would not change at the new location. Resource optimization will be explored with Odyssey Charter School (e.g. shared buses, food, etc.). Currently, the school uses five full-time buses. The majority of students originate from Christina School District (45%) and Red Clay Consolidated School District (30%). The school anticipates some incremental shifts in the enrollment base but not nearly as dramatic as a move to the Family Foundations Academy site in Colonial School District. The CSAC noted that charter schools are required to provide the same level of transportation as the district in which the charter school is located in.
- Coordination of buses for two schools on the same campus – Since La Academia only has five buses the impact will not be minimal. Buildings 24 and 25 have been demolished to create a green space/field. The site also has a secondary access road closer to Building 26 which could be another option for staging buses and parent pick-up and drop-off.

- Co-location of two dual language schools – Collocating La Academia with Odyssey Charter School will create a unique multicultural zone. There will be opportunities to collaborate on professional development topics and themes that relate to both models.
- Consolidation of school calendars – The school is amenable to consolidating school calendars to make it easier for parents with children in both schools.
- Food services – The school may partner with Odyssey for food services. The CSAC cautioned the school to follow the necessary steps to become a School Food Authority (SFA) if they decide not to partner with Odyssey.
- Shared facilities – In the short-term, the green space/field will be shared by both schools for athletics. Building 23, once renovated, will house a gymnasium and auditorium which will be shared by both schools.
- Moving expenses budgeted – Moving expenses were not captured in the submitted budget. However, the school projects a significant cash balance. Fit out costs are captured in the submitted budget.
- Costs for terminating current lease at the CEB – La Academia is currently on a one-year lease at the CEB so the lease will not be an issue and no costs will be incurred.

Conclusion

Mr. Blowman asked the CSAC whether there were outstanding areas of concern or whether additional information was needed to inform its decision-making. The following information was requested:

- 80% budget
- Anticipated changes in transportation costs.

Next Steps:

- The first of two public hearings will take place on March 7, 2016, in the 2nd Floor Auditorium of the Carvel State Office Building, which is located at 820 N. French St., Wilmington, Delaware, beginning at 5:00 p.m.
- The school's response to the Initial CSAC Report, if the school chooses to submit a response, is due by the close of business on March 7, 2016.
- A Final CSAC Meeting will be held on March 21, 2016, in the 2nd Floor Cabinet Room of the Townsend Building, which is located at 401 Federal St., Dover, Delaware.
- A Final CSAC Report will be issued no later than March 24, 2016.
- A second and final public hearing will take place on April 4, 2016, in the 2nd Floor Auditorium of the Carvel State Office Building, which is located at 820 N. French St., Wilmington, Delaware, beginning at 5:00 p.m.
- The public comment period will close on April 15, 2016.
- The Secretary of Education will announce his decision at the regular meeting of the State Board of Education on April 21, 2016.