

# **DELAWARE DESIGN-LAB HIGH SCHOOL**

## **DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION APPLICATION TO MODIFY AN APPROVED CHARTER 2017-18**

DE Department of Education  
Charter School Office  
401 Federal Street, Suite 2  
Dover, DE 19901  
Phone: (302) 735-4020  
Fax: (302) 739-4483

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Modification Chart .....p. 3  
Section A Core Questions .....p. 4  
Section B Questions .....p. 6

Exhibit A – Annual Repot  
Exhibit B – DDLHS 2017-2018 Budget  
Exhibit C – Anticipated Budget at Full Enrollment

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

**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.

With this submission, the Board of Directors (the “Board”) of Delaware Design-Lab High School, Inc. (“DDLHS” or the “School”) seeks to modify the following provisions of the original charter, as amended by Major Modification on March 17, 2017 and other minor modifications (collectively, the “Amended Charter”):

Replace the Enrollment Projections identified in the Amended Charter to reflect the following -

Academic Year	Total Students	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>
2017-2018	298	69	59	122	48
2018-2019	350	100	75	65	110
2019-2020	350	100	95	85	60
All future years	350	100	90	85	75

This enrollment project incorporates assumptions relating to retention and enrollment at various level based on historical data.

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

The Board requests that the Modification be made retroactively to July 1, 2017.

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 the School’s 2107 Annual Report, attached hereto as Exhibit 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*)

The enrollment waterfall contained in the Amended Charter is overly aggressive, does not align to the facilities available to the school under its current lease, and is not required for financial success. Accordingly, the Board believes it should be modified to reflect a more appropriate, and accessible, student enrollment number.

The existing enrollment schedule anticipates the School will enroll 450 students in the 2017, 550 students in 2018, and 600 students each year thereafter. In the history of its operation, DDLHS’s actual enrollment has never exceeded 298 students. Based on DDLHS’s enrollment trends, the Board does not anticipate an increase in enrollment sufficient to meet the targets in the Amended Charter. For example, to meet its

enrollment target for 2018, DDLHS would need to enroll approximately 300 NEW students, assuming 100% retention in grades 10, 11, and 12. This is not a feasible goal, and failure to modify the Amended Charter will almost certainly result in DDLHS's inability to meet its targets for next year. In addition, the facilities that DDLHS occupies cannot comfortably accommodate enrollment above 350 students. As part of this modification process, DDLHS has investigated the facilities improvements that would be required to service the 550 students identified in the Amended Charter. To accommodate this number of children, DDLHS would need to add at least 6 modular classrooms to its existing footprint, with attendant sewer, electricity, parking, landscaping, and other infrastructures. The estimated cost to effectuate these changes is approximately \$1.5 million, which is well outside of DDLHS's financial capabilities.

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.

Because the school is successfully operating at enrollment of approximately 300 students, the Board does not believe that operations, student achievement, staffing, or facilities will be materially impacted by this modification. Additionally, enrollment above 350 students is not required for the financial viability of the School. The School currently operates successfully with enrollment at 298 students and shows a surplus of funds available for use at the end of the year. Rather than attempt to plan for excessive numbers of students (including staffing, facilities, administrators, etc.) the Board would prefer to set a maximum enrollment number at a reachable target and budget appropriately. The School is scheduled for renewal in the fall of 2018 and will revisit its enrollment targets during that process, if necessary.

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.

Because the Board anticipated this year's enrollment challenges, it budgeted carefully to ensure the School could operate successfully at 300 students. Accordingly, the proposed modification will not affect the School's present financial position and will merely bring the Amended Charter into alignment with the School's actual enrollment numbers. (See Amended Budget annexed hereto as Exhibit B). Because the School can operate successfully at 300 students or less, setting the enrollment target at 350 will not create financial challenges for the School going forward.

## Section B Questions:

1. Describe the nature and extent of the proposed changes to the school's current grade configuration, if applicable. Indicate whether you seek to add or cease offering a grade or grades, substantially increase or decrease current enrollment practices and/or projections for future enrollment, etc. *(Please make sure to indicate whether you seek an increase or reduction of enrollment of between 5 and 15% or more than 15% of the currently approved total enrollment and note that modification requests that fall into those ranges must be received by the Department of Education's Charter School Office between November 1 and December 31.)*

The Board seeks to decrease student enrollment by more than 15%. Current grade configuration is not impacted by this modification.

2. If your proposed modification involves an expansion of greater than 15% of your currently approved enrollment and the change will be effective within 18 months of the date of this application, identify the impacts of this expansion on the surrounding school districts and community for consideration.

Not applicable.

3. Describe the projected impact of the enrollment modification on the school's program, mission, culture and offerings (both academic and non-academic).

The Board submits that the school's program, mission, culture and offerings will be positively impacted by the proposed modification.

The primary programming and course offerings at DDLHS remain the same regardless of the number of students enrolled. In fact, decreased enrollment numbers provide an increased ability to utilize the studio model of learning referenced in the Amended Charter by creating extra space to be used as maker and studio spaces. Moreover, research in public and charter high schools indicates that small schools are "associated with a wide array of student benefits...more positive attitudes toward schooling; lower levels of antisocial behavior; greater degrees of extracurricular participation; higher attendance rates; fewer dropouts; greater feelings of belonging; better interpersonal relationships in school; healthier self-concepts; and higher standardized test scores." (Conchas & Rodriguez, 2008).