

2015-2016 DDOE Charter School Annual Report



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The purpose of Academia Antonia Alonso is to serve as an elementary charter school for a diverse population of students by way of a two-way bilingual maintenance program that maximizes learning in a rigorous student-centered environment and that engages students in high-quality academic products through project-based learning expeditions. This unique model is designed to accelerate student performance, and prepares students to be strong, contributing members in the communities in which they live. To meet these academic goals, Academia Antonia Alonso partnered with EL Education [formerly known as *Expeditionary Learning*] and utilizes a Two-Way language immersion model.

As with other schools implementing the EL Education model, Academia Antonia Alonso provides students with an innovative and proven academic program that challenges them through non-traditional, project-based teaching and learning methods. Consistent with the intent of Delaware's charter school law, Academia Antonia Alonso has not only expanded quality public school options for elementary school students, but employs an innovative school design that has demonstrated particular effectiveness for high-needs subgroups, specifically Hispanic and ELL (English Language Learner) students.

Mission

The school's mission is to inspire children to become joyful, confident, creative, bilingual learners, helping them develop a strong biliterate academic and cultural foundation.

Vision

The vision for Academia Antonia Alonso is that children will cultivate a passion for life-long learning, becoming multicultural stewards and leaders in the communities they touch.

The goals and objectives of Academia Antonia Alonso are aligned to the core principles of EL Education. Guided by the following principles, Academia Antonia Alonso aims to realize our mission and vision and meet the needs of our students and families:

- The Primacy of Self-Discovery – Learning happens best with emotion, challenge, and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. The primary task of the teacher is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they thought they could.
- The Having of Wonderful Ideas – Fostering curiosity about the world is emphasized by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.
- The Responsibility for Learning – Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Therefore, every aspect of an EL Education school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.
- Empathy and Caring – Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Older students often mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.
- Success and Failure – All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. It is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things become difficult, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.
- Collaboration and Competition – EL Education schools integrate individual development and group development, so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete, not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

- Diversity and Inclusion – Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.
- The Natural World – Creating a direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.
- Solitude and Reflection – Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need time to exchange their reflections with other students and with adults.
- Service and Compassion – Emphasis is placed on strengthening students and teachers through acts of consequential service to others. One of an EL Education school's primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.
- Parents in Partnership – Engaged parents are a cornerstone of the daily life and culture of Academia Antonia Alonso. Academia Antonia Alonso integrates parents into all aspects of their students' educational experiences and supports them as primary educators and advocates for their children. Parents and staff will actively collaborate to successfully carry out the mission and vision of Academia Antonia Alonso.

Philosophy

Academia Antonia Alonso's core philosophy is to create a school where students investigate who they are and what role they play in a diverse society, and to become strong local and community leaders and advocates on the local, national, and global stages.

To address the needs of our Hispanic, English Language Learner population and with the goal of creating an academic program that provides all students attending the school with community and global awareness and 21st century skills, our academic program is a replication of the nationally recognized EL Education model combined with the Two-Way Immersion model. EL Education's integrated instructional emphasis of learning by doing will support students' instructional and language acquisition needs. During the first two years of operations, our school worked closely with EL to increase the depth and quality of our implementation.

To help establish an effective Two-Way language immersion model, the School partnered with the Center for Applied Linguistics [CAL]. Two-way immersion (TWI) is a distinctive form of dual language education in which balanced numbers of native English speakers and native speakers of the partner language are integrated for instruction so that both groups of students serve in the role of language model and language learner at different times. The structure of TWI programs varies, but they all provide at least 50% of instruction in the partner language at all grade levels beginning in pre-K, Kindergarten, or first grade and running at least five years.

Key Accomplishments of the Charter School Program Over the 2015-16 School Year

- Academia had a positive rating on the Organizational and Financial Frameworks for SY 2015-16.
- As part of our goal to always bring learning to life, all classes at our school participated in at least two off-site field studies in SY 2015-16.
- The school hosted two Bilingual Celebrations of Learning that were well attended by the Community; attendance was over 300 at each event.
- The school submitted and was granted a location Modification based on the realization that our students needed more green space both for instruction and recess.
- The school implemented Responsive Classroom strategies in each classroom to ensure consistency and decrease the number of discipline referrals and student suspensions.
- Student work from school year 2015-2016 was highlighted and displayed at the National EL Education Conference in Detroit, MI in October 2016.

Tier 1 Narrative

Academic Performance

What Are the Successful Academic Practices At Your Charter School that Other Schools Can Replicate?

Academia Antonia Alonso is the first EL Education school in Delaware to utilize the two-way dual-language immersion program. We carry out our instructional approach using the following major educational frameworks:

- EL Education [formerly Expeditionary Learning]
- Dual Language Instructional Strategies
- Responsive Classroom

EL Education

The EL approach to curriculum makes content and skill standards come alive for students by connecting learning to real-world issues and needs. Academically rigorous learning expeditions, case studies, projects, fieldwork, and service learning inspire students to think and work as professionals do, contributing high-quality work to authentic audiences beyond the classroom.

Instruction

EL classrooms are alive with discovery, inquiry, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Teachers talk less. Students talk and think more. Lessons have explicit purposes, guided by learning targets for which students take ownership and responsibility. In all subject areas, teachers differentiate instruction and maintain high expectations in order to bring out the best in all students and cultivate a culture of high achievement.

Culture and Character

EL schools build cultures of respect, responsibility, courage, and kindness, where students and adults are committed to quality work and citizenship. School structures and traditions such as crew, community meetings, exhibitions of student work, and service learning ensure that every

student is known and cared for, that student leadership is nurtured, and that contributions to the school and world are celebrated. Students and staff are supported to do better work and to be better people than they thought possible.

Assessment

EL leaders, teachers, and students embrace the power of student-engaged assessment practices to focus students on reaching standards-based learning targets and to drive achievement. Students continually assess and improve the quality of their work through the use of models, reflection, critique, rubrics, and work with experts. Staff members engage in ongoing data inquiry and analysis, examining everything from patterns in student work to results from high-stakes tests.

Leadership

EL school leaders build professional learning communities that focus sharply on student achievement and continuous improvement, use data wisely, and boldly shape school structures to best meet student needs. Leaders celebrate joy in learning and build a school-wide culture of trust and collaboration. Leadership in our schools goes beyond a single person or team – it is a role and expectation for all.

Dual Language Instruction

Our Two-Way Immersion [TWI] program focuses on learning grade-level standards across all content areas in two different languages, English and Spanish. Instruction takes place 50% of the time in English and 50% of the time in Spanish starting in Kindergarten. The kindergarten model of instruction we utilize is known as the roller-coaster model, where half of the day's lesson is in English and half is in Spanish. The next day, the schedule is inverted. If the day before English was taught in the morning and Spanish in the afternoon, then Spanish would be taught in the morning with English in the afternoon. For all other grade levels, students are immersed in a rotating schedule of spending an entire day immersed in the Spanish classroom, followed by the following day spent learning in the English classroom. The SIOP approach is a combination of reading,

writing, listening, and speaking strategies aimed to develop bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural students. One of the goals for utilizing TWI is for all students to foster a strong, positive multi-cultural attitudes and behaviors. Because TWI classrooms bring together students from different language, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, they allow students to learn firsthand about cultures that are different from their own. Research has shown evidence of positive cross-cultural attitudes being developed through TWI programs (Cazabon, Lambert, & Hall, 1993; Freeman, 1998). Other studies point to the dominance of the English language and the native English speakers in the TWI classroom (Amrein & Peña, 2000; Carrigo, 2000; McCollum, 1999), suggesting that particular attention may need to be paid to this goal. Exhibitions by students are completed in both languages and students integrate Hispanic culture into their exhibitions, as well.

Responsive Classroom

As a school community, we have adopted the Responsive Classroom approach to supporting students' social, emotional, and academic growth by ensuring that students feel safe and respected in their learning environments. Other core tenets of Responsive Classroom include: Rules and Logical Consequences, Guided Discovery, Academic Choice, and a unique Classroom Organization.

Student Performance Goals

For the 2015-2016 school year, the School had clear performance outcomes for our students. Progress on these outcomes is detailed in the chart below.

Student Performance Goal	Metric	Comment
Students will develop their knowledge of the natural sciences.	One activity per year outside of the school that connects them to the natural world	100% of the classes had field studies that connected them to the natural world, Grade 2 went to Tyler Arboretum, and Grade one went to the Franklin Institute and Kindergarten went to Milburn Orchards and Ashland Nature Center.
Students will grow in their understanding of the world around them and both	One activity per year that demonstrates an integration of American and Hispanic language and cultures	Students participated in the Hispanic Heritage Night, singing songs and performing dances, some from different Hispanic countries. The Puerto Rican Institute of Music performed Bomba y Plena for the students on Sept. 11 th , 2015

American and Hispanic cultures.	Each student completes a service learning project each year	The first grade students created books to be displayed and used in the school library. The kindergarten students studied healthy habits, which included how the whole family could adopt these healthy habits.
Students will grow in their personal qualities as contributing members of the school.	One activity or project that builds their leadership capacity each year	Second graders created pamphlets about trees and how to care for each of the different types of trees; this was a researched based experience.
	Adventure based activity each year	100% of students participated in an adventure based activity on June 10th, this field day occurred at the new site location, 4403 Lancaster Pike
	Attendance higher than state average or above 90% whichever is higher for K-5 cluster	Student attendance was at 93% for SY 2015-16, this is below the 95% threshold goal

All case studies and expeditions at the school this year will include at least one field study where students interact with their natural environment. The teachers worked with the Instructional coach as well as the EL Education coach to ensure that their case studies and exhibitions are an integration of multiple skills and levels of learning. This practice of integration in service learning and leadership into the case studies will continue progressing every year. This has been integrated into the school’s Work Plan and Professional Development Plan for School Year 2016-17.

Assessments

At Academia Antonia Alonso, students are assessed throughout the year using a number of standardized testing instruments aimed to monitor growth in Math, English literacy, Spanish literacy. These tests include NWEA’s Measure of Academic Progress [MAP], IDEL, and WIDA assessments.

Measure of Academic Progress

The school uses NWEA MAP assessments for benchmarks in Reading in English and Mathematics as well as for progress monitoring of students’ progress towards the literacy and mathematics grade level goals. Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP®), created by Northwest Evaluation Association™ (NWEA™), is a computer adaptive test, which means every student gets a

unique set of test questions based on responses to previous questions. As the student answers correctly, questions increase in difficulty. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions get easier. By the end of the test, most students will answer about half of the questions correctly. The RIT (Rasch Unit) scale is a stable, equal-interval scale, like feet and inches. Equal-interval means that a change of 10 RIT points indicates the same thing regardless of whether a student is at the top, bottom, or middle of the scale and a RIT score has the same meaning regardless of grade level or age of the student. Scores over time can be compared to tell how much growth a student has made. Students received tiered intervention services and supports in TIER II and III, as needed, in a pull-out model of Response to Intervention. Benchmarking in MAP occurs three times during the year.

Moving forward into the 2016-2017 school year, the school will again use the MAP assessments with our students. We will now be able to compare students' growth over multiple years. Part of the EL Education implementation measure monitors the percentage of students making their MAP growth targets. Academia will also be looking closely at student growth targets and tailoring support to meet individual students' needs.

Literacy:

For MAP-Reading, students are tested in four areas: Foundational Skills, Language and Writing, Literature, and Vocabulary. Students in all grades showed growth in all four areas as well as overall growth in mean reading scores.

Mathematics:

For MAP-Mathematics, students are tested in four areas: Algebra, Operations, Measurement and Geometry. Students in all grades showed growth in all four areas as well as overall growth in mean mathematics scores.

WIDA

Academia Antonia Alonso is committed to meeting the needs of our English Language Learners in alignment with Delaware Regulations to this end. Upon enrollment, any of our students who indicated on their Home Language Survey that they speak a language other than English at home is assessed using WIDA assessments shortly after registering at the School and again in the spring.

IDEL

The final assessment, **Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en la Lectura (IDEL)** is a research-based formative assessment series of measures designed to assess the basic early literacy skills of children learning to read in Spanish. IDEL was given to measure our student's growth in Spanish Literacy since our school's mission is to have students become fully biliterate, meaning they can read and write in both languages. Research has shown that in the case of children learning to read in Spanish, it is at least as crucial (if not more so) to develop skills in Phonemic Awareness and Phonics. Since the Spanish language (both oral and written) builds from the syllable unit, early ability to hear syllable divisions, to analyze and synthesize the syllables within words and to rapidly and fluently read syllables are essential skills for beginning readers. For that reason, the measures designed for Spanish speakers focus on the syllable rather than the individual phoneme. The IDEL measures used at Academia Antonia Alonso include:

- Fluidez en la Segmentación de Fonemas (FSF)
- Fluidez en la Lectura Oral (FLO)

The IDEL measures are not a translation of the DIBELS measures. They take into account the linguistic structure of the Spanish language including the phonology, orthography, and syntax. Similar to DIBELS, the IDEL measures are based on the same theoretical and evidence-based principles of how children learn to read in alphabetic languages such as English and Spanish.

IDEL is a screening tool that includes instructional recommendations and benchmark goals. It provides teachers with information on student skills in the core components of beginning reading

including: phonological awareness, the alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency reading connected text, vocabulary and comprehension. IDEL does not hold growth goals or share a national mean; instead it indicates where students are based on the number of correct answers they obtain on the assessment.

Organizational Performance

Throughout the What Are the Successful Organizational Practices at Your Charter School that Other Schools Can Replicate?

As a second year school, Academia Antonia Alonso worked hard to improve our Organizational Framework rating from ‘does not meet standard’ to ‘meets standard.’ The school had four areas in the 2014-2015 school year where we did not meet standard. We set out to improve these areas in 2015-2016 and were successful. This success was due, in part, to closely monitoring areas where the school had not met the standard on the framework the previous year, such as staff meeting credentialing requirements and reporting out to the Board on these items on a monthly basis. Throughout the year it was noted that we were not making the goal of >95% in attendance and the Board’s posting of required documents relating to the monthly Board and Financial meetings. To address attendance, we established an attendance team and related protocols to address this area of need. We utilized the Data Service Center Student Truancy Tracking during 2015-2016 to help us with ensuring we were working with our families to improve attendance. For the 2016-17 school year, we took action to ensure we had a staff member to exclusively support our families with attendance issues. This was accomplished by utilizing a visiting teacher who dedicates 50% of his time to addressing our families with attendance issues.

During the 2015-2016 school year Academia Antonia Alonso:

- Our governing board is compliant with all laws, rules and regulations, attends required trainings and participates in board development by having a close and on-going relationship with the Head of School and administrative team;
- The administrative team worked closely with the board to ensure that they were reviewing all monitored activities to ensure compliance with areas such as health and safety requirements, discipline and student behavior, special education concerns, etc. Prior to the school moving to our new single school location in July of 2016, we addressed areas of health and safety requirements. We have uploaded our safety plan into the Emergency Response Information Portal (ERIP) system. Monitoring of student discipline, as well as special education and ELL student compliance areas occurred monthly throughout the year, and will continue this school year;
- The administrative team submitted and was approved for the use of the Teaching Excellence Framework instead of the DPAS II System for observations. The school implemented this program with fidelity with the teachers each receiving a monthly observation and coaching session. The monitoring of this implementation was imperative for an effective roll out. The school leadership worked with Hendy Avenue Consultants on this implementation monthly.

Financial Performance

What Are the Successful Financial Management & Stewardship Practices At Your Charter School that Other Schools Can Replicate?

For the SY 2015-2016, the School has met standards in all areas of the Financial Performance Framework. Thus, demonstrating improvement over the previous year, SY 2014-2015, where one measure was rated as Did Not Meet Standard and one measure was rated as Falls Far Below Standard.

During 2016 the School has maintained strong financial management practices and enhanced its structure and financial oversight through several measures:

- Budgeted revenues are estimated conservatively to protect against shortfalls in revenues and cash flow. The final determination of revenues under the Delaware funding system is not known until after the school year is well under way.
- Monthly financial reporting, including a month by month cash flow analysis, is reviewed by school leadership, the Board and the CBOC. The reporting allows constant monitoring of the budget and cash flow position and to respond quickly should any issues arise.
- The School receives an annual audit prepared by an independent certified public accounting firm.
- In order to continue to manage its assets the school administration has taken advantage of the financial resources provided by the Department of Education and Innovative Schools.
- The School is currently in its third year of operations and is expanding its grade levels and enrollment in addition to moving to a new site. The budget for the SY 2016-2017 continues with strong financial performance outcomes that demonstrate viability and sustainability. Cash reserves are established and financial practices include strong internal controls and practices.