

*Delaware*



*Department of Education*

# Opportunity Funding

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**Funding Period: Fiscal Year 2022**

**Delaware Department of Education  
Opportunity Funding Form  
2021-2022 School Year**

**Opportunity Funding**  
*Directed Funds for English Learners and Low-Income Students*

**Application deadline: June 30, 2021**

**Purpose:** The three-year Opportunity Funding initiative led to legislation that now guarantees weighted funding through FY25.

**Allocation Method:** Local education agencies (LEAs) will receive \$600 per English learner (EL) and \$524.25 per low-income (LI) student. Funding shall be made available to LEAs upon the passage of the FY22 budget so that in early July LEAs may begin to hire staff, procure instructional materials, execute contracts for services, and plan for the upcoming school year. LEAs may use this funding for 100 percent of staff costs, including, but not limited to, reading specialists, math specialists, school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and other personnel dedicated to initiatives such as trauma-informed practices.

**Accountability:** LEAs will be held accountable to ensure funds are used to improve outcomes for low income and EL students. Districts and charters will work with Secretary Bunting to set goals at the beginning of the school year, participate in a mid-year progress review, and then evaluate summative performance data during their end of school year conference. Community accountability will be provided in a summit to highlight best practices, in an annual report, and in spotlights showing program successes and challenges across the state.

**Metrics:** Districts and charters will set goals to reduce the gap between EL students', low-income students', and the overall student population's baseline performance rates and 100 percent by half, thus reducing students' non-proficiency by 50 percent.

In addition to the accountability measure data, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) will provide support by offering:

- Toolkits on evidence-based best practices for improving outcomes for EL and low-income students.
- Guidance for selecting high quality instructional materials.
- Technical support enabling LEAs to take a comprehensive look at their funding streams in order to maximize and coordinate them.
- Professional learning provided by content experts.
- Sharing best practices in a variety of ways including regular meetings with curriculum directors, chiefs/principals, social media and presentations.

DDOE will use a third party to also evaluate.

- The effectiveness of funds in improving outcomes for EL and low-income students.
- The successes and challenges/shortcomings of the program, including recommendations for future enhancements.

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**School Information**

DISTRICT/CHARTER NAME: <b>ACADEMIA ANTONIA ALONSO CHARTER SCHOOL (AAACS)</b>		
DISTRICT/CHARTER STREET ADDRESS: 4403 Lancaster Pike, Bldg. 26	CITY: Wilmington, DE	ZIP CODE: 19805

**Contact Information**

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**Overall Summary**

Provide an overall summary of how the Opportunity Funding will be used to improve outcomes for English learners and low-income students in your district or charter school.

*Include an explanation of how the work will impact each target population as well as the rationale for selecting the plan.*

The student body at Academia Antonia Alonso Charter School (AAACS) is 57% English Learner (EL) and 48% low income (LI). The majority of our students are identified as either EL, LI, or both. While these percentages are in and of themselves challenging, it is important to note that among immigrant low-income families – there is traditionally an under-reporting of their low-income status due lack of citizenship status, fear of deportation, and/or other personal reasons. Therefore, what may appear as school-wide initiatives, grant resources are actually targeting each and every EL and LI student – even those under-reported.

Many of our EL students come to us with trauma-related issues such as separation from nuclear and extended family, trauma related to family of origin issues and immigration such as fear of deportation, homelessness, linguistic barriers, and intense and lifelong financial barriers – just to name a few. At very early ages, many of our LI students come from homes and neighborhoods

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exposed to violence, death, loss, substance abuse, and psycho-social and emotional trauma contributing to disruptive behaviors in the classroom that get in the way of learning. Additionally, irregular school attendance, due to transience and mental health/trauma issues, also get in the way of learning for this population.

Another factor layered in during the 2020-2021 school year (and since March of 2020) was the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Student learning was impacted for all students as a result of required totally remote instruction, and later with a hybrid model combining limited in-person onsite instruction for those students who chose to attend school in person. Many students remained totally remote for the entire school year resulting in a number of aggravating factors including limited supervision, parents' ability to effectively support instruction and learning for their child(ren), issues with reliable technology, and limited instructional time – just to name a few. These circumstances are particularly disadvantageous to EL and LI students.

Academically, our students have historically consistently lagged behind their higher-income peers in test scores. The onslaught of the pandemic further exacerbated the above-mentioned core issues. The achievement gap remains real and significant for students at AAACS. In 2019-2020, students' proficiency scores at La Academia confirm the research linking low proficiency levels in reading to low socio-economic status. Students from impoverished homes suffer from higher rates of absenteeism, stressors related to student behavior and low academic performance. For example, AAACS' experience is reflected in the 2018-2019 SBAC scores where 21.8 % of La Academia students showed proficiency in English Language Arts while only 11.03% showed proficiency in Math. SBAC assessments were not administered in 2019-2020 due to the pandemic. SBAC scores for SY 2020-2021 revealed that 15.0 % of La Academia students demonstrated proficiency in English Language Arts (with only 47% of students participating in this assessment) and only 5.0% demonstrated proficiency in Math (again, with only 47% of students participating). It is clear to see the impactful decline in student performance directly as a result of remote/hybrid learning due to the continued pandemic conditions and limitations – effectively rendering this year's scores an invalid representation of our students' proficiency levels.

The FY22 Opportunity Funding Plan will introduce one new investment, and also continue to build upon the initiatives implemented over the last two school years by: 1) Improving equity, inclusion, and access to the school's diverse students population by ensuring every child – in particular those who are EL and/or LI – has the resources, teachers, interventions, and supports needed to be successful; 2) strengthening focused strategies to improve daily school attendance for EL and LI students in order to advance academic achievement; 3) providing mental health and trauma support students, a majority of whom are EL and LI students; 4) providing intensive and expanded summer school instructional supports to students KN – 4<sup>th</sup> grade, most of whom are EL and LI students; and, 5) continuing Reading Assist instructional support for our EL and low income students most in-need of personalized concentrated assistance in reading/comprehension skills.

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FY22 Opportunity Funds will be used for the purposes of hiring staff and executing contracts for services that will improve educational and academic outcomes for EL and low-income students at AAACS.

To that end, AAACS intends to use FY22 Opportunity Grant funds to support:

- 0.5 FTE for a Dean of Equity, Inclusion, and Access (EIA)
- 1.0 FTE for a Visiting Teacher,
- 1.0 FTE for a Trauma Counselor,
- 1.0 FTE for a Paraprofessional,
- Partially fund a Summer School Recovery Program by providing EPER to 4 teachers and instructional supplies, and
- Contract with the Reading Assist Institute (RAI) for 3 RAI staff to provide one-to-one intensive reading support to those Tier 3 students most in need.

Dean of Equity, Inclusion, and Access: Prioritizing Integrity for all Students

The Dean of Equity, Inclusion, and Access (EIA) will serve to ensure practices, policies, and procedures to better support academic fairness and inclusion so that every EL and LI child has the resources, teachers, interventions, and supports they need to be successful in school. The Dean of EIA will systemically integrate a paradigm of academic inclusion and fairness practices among the Board, school leadership, faculty and staff, and parents and families to ensure the curriculum, student supports, school culture and climate, and family engagement outreach activities meet the needs of each and every child. EL and LI students and families routinely face issues of equity, inclusion, and access and are often under-served or inappropriately served. Given the significant percentages of EL and LI students at AAACS, a well-coordinated and systemic approach to EIA is critical to ensuring all students – especially EL and LI’s – are able to benefit from academic inclusion and fairness practices.

Visiting Teacher: Prioritizing Student Attendance

The visiting teacher will serve EL and LI parents and families to ensure their students attend school regularly. Chronic absenteeism remains a significant problem among the student population served at AAACS due to the daily challenges inherent in homes where poverty exists. Many of our students suffer cognitive lags, physical and mental health challenges, transience, and safety issues that impact their school attendance and limit their opportunities to learn. Chronic absenteeism must be addressed consistently and aggressively at AAACS if our students are expected to learn, engage, and succeed. If students are not in school, they cannot learn and improve academically. A student population of 57% EL and 48% LI indicates these students are especially

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at-risk for poor attendance and missed opportunities for learning – and the additional layer of COVID attendance limitations cannot be underestimated. It is these students our visiting teacher will primarily serve.

Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) school report cards for the 2020-2021 SY have not yet been posted to date, but when they are posted it is important to note the attendance reporting differences between the DDOE and the school. DDOE reports ‘on track’ attendance as the ‘percentage of students who missed less than 10% of days absent from school.’ Individual schools and districts in Delaware track student attendance through eSchoolPLUS calculating average daily attendance percentages. eSchool local school data reveals daily attendance percentages improved from 88.4% in 2018-2019SY to 89.72% in the 2019-2020SY during the comparison months of September through February each year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools remained closed March through June 2020 and attendance was tracked via student participation with the online Digital Learning Platform. During these months, 75.3% connected consistently to the Platform; 19.6% connected inconsistently, and 5.1% did not connect at all. Collectively, 94.9% of our students participated in instructional learning during these months and these data can fairly represent school attendance – remarkable during a pandemic of historic proportions!

Attendance data from eSchoolPLUS for the 2020-2021 SY revealed 92.74% average daily attendance for the school year – a remarkable positive trend that may be directly connected to the incredibly talented and effective Visiting Teacher who was hired this past school year – and funded via FY21 Opportunity Grant funds. We are excited she will continue in this position for the foreseeable future as her source of funding will remain dependent upon sustained Opportunity Funds.

Trauma Counselor: Prioritizing Behavioral Intervention

Mental health and trauma issues seem to have an especially intensive impact on EL and LI students – and they also heavily influence students’ abilities to learn. A Trauma Counselor provides valuable early intervention services to assist EL and LI students with managing behaviors such as impulse control, anger management, and others so these students are able to become more successful in classroom settings. The counselor works with EL and LI students individually and in groups to address serious behavior and mental health issues which are often related to family and/or community-based trauma.

Paraprofessional Support: Improving Student Engagement and Support

It is no secret that paraprofessionals are valuable members of the instructional team. They greatly assist classroom teachers with instructional support for EL and LI students and individualized assistance and coaching for EL and LI students in need. Given the school’s high percentages of EL and LI students, paraprofessional assistance becomes even more critical in the classroom.

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Summer School Recovery Program: Prioritizing Lost Learning over the Summer Months

Our EL and LI students struggle to maintain academic proficiencies over the summer as a result of ‘learning loss’, and also time during away from in-class in-person instruction and academic support. The impact of the pandemic has exacerbated not only annual summer ‘learning loss,’ but also students’ ability to effectively engage in learning away from traditional daily in-school teacher-directed full-day instruction. The Summer School recovery program will help EL and LI students to get back on track.

RAI Contracted Services: Prioritizing Reading Advancement

The Reading Assist Institute (RAI) will engage AmeriCorps members to be trained in the Reading Assist Intervention protocols using Reading Assist’s own accredited, structured language and reading intervention program. This highly effective program is grounded in the Orton-Gillingham principles of explicit, systematic, multi-sensory instruction. The RAI Corps members will provide intensive reading intervention to EL and LI students in grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 who have been identified by the school-based team as Tier 3 students reading at or below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. RAI will work closely with AAACS’s Reading Interventionist who will help outline conditions for success and define success measures that will demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of the intervention program. (Reading Assist overview and progress data attached).

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**Investment and Goals**

Provide additional detail about the plan in the chart below by listing each Opportunity Funding investment with its associated cost and proposed impact. *For each investment, include baseline data and numeric targets to measure impact. A state budget sheet will be completed by the district after the plan has been approved.*

Investment	Cost	Expected impact (Check all that apply)					Is this a continued Opp. Funding investment from 2020-21? (yes/no)
		Raise EL student achievement	Raise LI student achievement	Increase attendance for EL students	Increase attendance of LI students	Other, specify	
(Please list your priority. Examples: -“Hire FT 1 social worker”	For 2021-22 (\$)						

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- "Purchase RULER for grades 7-9")							
0.5 FTE Dean of Equity, Inclusion, and Access	Salary (0.5): \$45,000 OEC: \$14,900 Health: \$3,057 Total: <b>\$62,957</b>	X	X	X	X	Ensure equity, inclusion, and access for all EL and LI students	Yes
1.0 FTE Visiting Teacher (M. Rodriguez)	Salary: \$57,550 OEC: \$19,055 Health: \$12,737 TOTAL: <b>\$89,342</b>	X	X	X	X	Improved academic performance w/ improved school attendance for EL and LI students	Yes
1.0 FTE School Counselor/Trauma Specialist (M. Labeck)	Salary: \$57,783 OEC: \$19,132 Health: \$8,145 TOTAL: <b>\$85,060</b>	X	X	X	X	Social and emotional skill-building to enable improved instructional engagement for EL and LI students	Yes
1.0 FTE Paraprofessional (M. Delgado)	Salary: \$32,538 OEC: \$10,773 Health:	X	X	X	X	Improved academic achievement for EL and LI students	Yes



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	\$8,264 TOTAL: <b>\$51,575</b>						
Four (4) teachers for KN-4 Summer School Recovery Program (summer 2022) EPER @ \$35/hr x 8 hrs/day x 19 days x 4 teachers	Salary/EPER: \$21,280 OEC: \$7,046 TOTAL: <b>\$28,326</b>	X	X	X	X	Improved academic skill-building & learning engagement for EL and LI students	Yes
<u>Contracted Services</u> Three (3) Reading Assist (RAI) Staff @ \$12,000/each	3 RAI staff @ \$12,000 each = <b>\$36,000</b>	X	X			Improved proficiency in Reading for EL and LI students	Yes
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$353,260</b>						



## Reading Assist

### Reading Assist End-of-Year Results 2020-21 – Academia Antonia Alonso

#### **Background:**

Reading Assist assesses early literacy and grade-level reading skills for students throughout the year. We progress monitor students weekly and send an independent evaluator in three times a year.

We typically see positive results within four months of reading intervention, and more than 90% of our students reach benchmarks by the end of the school year.

Our students also regularly outpace expected grade-level progress in oral reading fluency.

#### **2020-21 Results at Academia Antonia Alonso:**

This is our second year of partnership with Academia Antonia Alonso. Despite a unique pandemic year, we were able to provide one-on-one reading instruction to 34 students in kindergarten through third grade.

Students on average improved 211% since the start of the year, and we saw a median 65% daily attendance. Nearly 65% of all students ended the year testing at grade level.

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