



RATIONALE FOR PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT

Lycée Français de la Nouvelle-Orléans (LFNO) is thankful for the opportunity to submit the following charter amendments for the Louisiana Department of Education's consideration.

1. The ability to exceed self-imposed seat targets for kindergarten and ascending grade levels to guarantee enrollment for the children of staff
2. The ability to grant first priority in the OneApp enrollment system to the children of staff and French nationals
3. The ability to waive the French language proficiency exam for applicants transferring from other schools accredited by the French Ministry of Education

At the time this request was written, LFNO boasted a full-time staff size of 79 dedicated educators, administrators and support staff. As LFNO adds a grade level each year, the need for specialized staff will continue to grow, as will demand for our curriculum. In the 2016-2017 school year, we will serve Pre-K4 through sixth grade. In the spring of 2023, we will graduate our first high school class.

More than a quarter of LFNO's staff have travelled from France or francophone countries to teach at our school. French teachers work in the United States on a J-1 visa and typically return to their country of origin after three years. Seven of our foreign associate teachers have children currently enrolled at LFNO. Their children come from French schools and are on track to graduate with the French baccalaureate.

REQUEST #1: EXCEED SEAT TARGETS FOR CHILDREN OF STAFF

Due to external factors, first-year foreign associate teachers are unable to participate in the primary application periods that OneApp offers. LFNO receives the majority of our French educators through the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL). CODOFIL typically releases placements to its educators and partnering schools in mid-May. *CODOLFIL placements occur after both rounds of OneApp have completed*, in December/February and May, respectively. These timelines negatively affect teachers with school-age children in the following ways:

1. **Lack of school choice.** It is not uncommon for high-demand schools to fill all available seats during OneApp's first round. Remaining seats are often filled during OneApp's second round. By the time our teachers are assigned to LFNO, they will have missed two opportunities to enroll their children. To

graduate with the French baccalaureate, students are required to attend schools accredited by the French Ministry of Education. Currently, LFNO is the only elementary school participating in the OneApp that has this accreditation.

2. **No guaranteed placement.** Based on our teachers' current enrollment options, they are permitted to participate in OneApp's Late Enrollment period only. By this period, it is feasible that LFNO would no longer have seat availability.
3. **Loss of employment.** A teacher may refuse his/her position at LFNO based on the inability to secure school placement for his/her children. In turn, LFNO loses a qualified educator and may struggle to find a replacement, as the talent pool is more specialized and consequently smaller. Additionally, the deadline to obtain a new teacher through CODOFIL would have passed, rendering it nearly impossible to find a replacement.

An amendment to our current charter granting staff guaranteed placement for their children would mitigate the burdens listed above. A guaranteed seat at LFNO would allow children of staff to continue their studies in a school accredited by the French Ministry of Education. The amendment would also prevent French teachers from needing to decline CODOFIL's offer to safeguard their own children's education.

REQUEST #2: GRANT FIRST PRIORITY IN THE ONEAPP TO FRENCH NATIONALS AND CHILDREN OF STAFF

Mark Sherringham, the Head of French Schools in North America at the French Embassy in Washington D.C., has informed LFNO that we may lose our accreditation with the French Ministry of Education if we cannot guarantee admission for French nationals. By giving first priority to French nationals in the OneApp lottery, we would greatly improve the likelihood of admission for that group. Because French nationals make up the minority of applicants to LFNO, we could grant priority to that group without negatively affecting enrollment for all other applicants in a significant way.

We also request first priority to children of staff so that, in instances where foreign associate teachers are able to participate in the primary application periods, lottery success will be likely for them.

To date, we have been fortunate in being able to enroll the majority of our staff's children. However, this has been due to chance and seat availability. As LFNO's positive reputation continues to spread, enrollment becomes more competitive. While this charter amendment request is intended to alleviate the burden placed upon foreign associate teachers, should the request be honored, we intend to extend seat priority to all staff. As a whole, because children of staff make up a small

percentage of students in comparison to the student body, we do not feel that this priority will negatively affect enrollment for all other applicants.

REQUEST #3: WAIVE FRENCH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EXAM FOR APPLICANTS FROM FRENCH-ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

It is the LFNO administration's assessment that it is unnecessary for certain applicants to take the school's French language proficiency exam. For entry to first grade and ascending grade levels, all applicants are required to pass a French language proficiency exam. Historically, all applicants transferring from schools accredited by the French Ministry of Education have passed the exam, as the students had been enrolled in French-speaking schools that meet the same linguistic expectations as those of LFNO. By waiving the exam for French speakers from accredited schools, the potential to preserve staff time and resources for more pressing obligations is significant.