



Triad International Studies Academy (TISA) Waiver Request

Date: Sep 30, 2025

To: North Carolina Charter Schools Review Board (CSRB)

From: Triad International Studies Academy (TISA)

Re: Request for Waiver / Extension for Minimum Enrollment Requirement

Dear Members of the CSRB,

Triad International Studies Academy (TISA) respectfully submits this request for a waiver or extension regarding the statutory minimum enrollment requirement of 80 students under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-218.1(b)(13).

As a start-up K–2 public charter school located at 622 E. Lexington Ave., High Point, NC, TISA is committed to providing high-quality education to our diverse student population.

1. Reason for Under-Enrollment

TISA's current enrollment of 45 students is primarily due to delays in facility renovations. We have now received the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) for educational use covering the five classrooms on the first floor of the main teaching building, the auditorium, and four mobile classrooms, which removes the biggest barrier to our enrollment. All renovations are expected to be completed by the end of November.

2. Financial Sustainability

Despite the small enrollment, TISA remains financially sustainable. The school can operate with a minimum enrollment of 50 students due to the following factors:

- Supportive landlord offering favorable rent deferral;
- Strong financial backing from community partners and the PreK program;
- Conservative budgeting and careful cost management;
- Long-term growth plan with a balanced budget.

3. Compelling Educational Need

TISA serves a high proportion of Exceptional Children (31% of the total student population). These students often require additional supports, which naturally slows the initial enrollment ramp-up.

Under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-218.1(b)(13), TISA's unique student population constitutes a "compelling reason" for an exception to the 80-student minimum.



4. Enrollment Strategy

TISA has a proactive plan to reach 80 students by the start of the 2026–27 school year:

- Aggressive weekly community outreach and marketing campaigns. Below are some events TISA team and board members plan to attend in October:
 - High Point Farmers Market (each Saturday),
 - Church visits (most Sundays)
 - High Point Unity Festival (Oct 4th),
 - Truck or Treat (Oct 11th),
 - Mom's Night (Oct 14th)
 - Cici's Pizza (Oct 18th)
 - Community festival & celebration participation (Oct weekends)
- Daily social media promotion (FB, Instagram, Nextdoor)
- Partnerships with local organizations and cultural groups;
- Engagement with professional marketing companies;
- Pipeline development through a robust Pre-K program.

5. Request

In light of TISA's demonstrated financial sustainability, strong community support, distinctive student population, and ongoing strategic enrollment efforts, we respectfully request that the CSRB grant a waiver of the 80-student minimum until Fall 2026, thereby allowing TISA the necessary time to reach full enrollment.

We believe TISA provides a critical educational service to our community, particularly for students with specialized needs, and that allowing this waiver aligns with the intent of the charter school statute to serve students equitably while supporting innovative educational models.

Respectfully yours.

Chaowei Zhu, Ph.D.

On behalf of TISA Board of Trustees