

2/20/20

Sussex Academy Application Response

### Negative Impact on Cape Henlopen School District

#### **2020-2021 Opening**

The proposed opening of the new elementary school in 2020, is problematic for the District due to the timing and potential impact.

In Section B, the application states that the impact for Cape would be the loss of 85 students. Based on current percentage of students that currently attend SAAS from Cape, we believe this number would be closer to 110 students. The potential of having 85-110 students from our local schools in just a few months would affect staffing and preparation. Losing 85-110 students could result in the loss of four or more teachers currently employed by the District. The rushed nature of this charter, would not allow us to staff properly and may result in over-staffing costing us money. Furthermore, historically the majority of students accepted into SAAS come from our three southernmost schools. In the current year 30 out of 35 are slated to attend Love Creek, Rehoboth, and Shields, which is not evenly distributed amongst our five elementary schools.

Also in Section B, the table shows that 320 or 6% of Cape students attend SAAS, while only 303 or 2% of Indian River's students attend SAAS. While 70% of the students will coming from both districts, that 70% will not be divided equally. The impact on Cape will be 3 times higher than Indian River.

#### **Overcrowding Claims**

In Section A, the application claims that this new elementary will help to alleviate the strain on resources that neighboring schools are currently experiencing. This statement is does not reflect reality. While Cape is growing at approximately 200 students per year, our community has approved numerous referendums allowing us to add a fifth elementary school, a four hundred student addition onto our high school and a third middle school. We have space for all of our Cape students. In fact, we did not apply for the class size waiver in any of our schools as our student to teacher ratio is at or below state expectations.

#### **Offering same programs as Cape Henlopen**

The application claims that the new elementary school offers a program that is different than neighboring districts. Cape Henlopen prides itself on a great academic experience and has established Spanish Immersion in all of our elementary schools and world language in our middle schools. Cape also provides and enriched science experience for our students using Amplify and embeds additional science phenomena in our reading curriculum (American Reading Company). The proposed offerings will be identical to Cape Henlopen. This is evidenced in the Smarter Balanced scores of our 5<sup>th</sup> graders who were accepted into SAAS last year. Of the students accepted, 93% met or exceed the standard in English Language Arts and 89% of the students met or exceeded the standard in Mathematics. These are students that received a rigorous academic experience from our Cape Schools.

**Underserved Communities**

In Section A, the application claims that SAAS will continue to reach out to underserved communities. There is no evidence of this occurring. In fact, low income percentages at SAAS have decreased from 11% to 8.8% in the last three years. Please see the attached table that displays the percentage of our minority, low income, and special education students in each of the districts in Sussex County. Moreover, EL students only make up 1.9% of the current population of SAAS.

In summary, the impact on Cape Henlopen will be both educational and financial as referenced above. Furthermore, there is community impact as well, as a majority of SAAS students come from three of our elementary schools and are not representative of all of our total population.

# Student Demographics

## Sussex County School Districts/Charters

*2018-2019*

	School District	% Low Income	% EL	% African American	% Hispanic	% Special Education
1	Cape Henlopen	25.9%	7.9%	11.8%	15.6%	17.0%
2	Indian River	32.0%	20.3%	12.1%	33.8%	16.9%
3	Laurel	42.6%	12.7%	27.5%	15.0%	16.0%
4	Milford	41.1%	16.6%	24.2%	20.1%	14.7%
5	Seaford	45.7%	18.4%	37.4%	21.1%	17.4%
6	Sussex Academy	8.8%	1.9%	4.8%	15.0%	3.7%
7	Woodbridge	42.1%	13.0%	23.8%	23.5%	16.7%