



## 1. Overview



### 1.1. School Profile

Review the following information for accuracy.

#### Q1. Name of School

- Sussex Montessori School
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

#### Q2. Year School Opened

- 2020
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

#### Q3. Fill in the school's "Current Enrollment" at the time of application submission.

439 students

#### Q4. Approved Enrollment

- 455
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

#### Q5. School Address

- 24960 Dairy Lane | Seaford, DE 19973
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

#### Q6. District(s) of Residence

- Seaford School District
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

#### Q7. Website Address

- <https://sussexmontessoricharter.com/>
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

#### Q8. Name of School Leader

- Lisa Coldiron
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

#### Q9. School Leader Email

- [lisa.coldiron@sussexms.k12.de.us](mailto:lisa.coldiron@sussexms.k12.de.us)
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]



Q10. School Leader Phone Number

- (302) 404-5367
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

Q11. Name of Board President

- Linda Zankowsky
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

Q12. Board President Email

- lindaz@montessoriworxsde.org
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

Applicant Comments :

[linda.zankowsky@sussexms.k12.de.us](mailto:linda.zankowsky@sussexms.k12.de.us) (mailto:linda.zankowsky@sussexms.k12.de.us)

Q13. **Mission Statement:** The mission of the Sussex Montessori School (SMS) is to nurture the development of empathetic, collaborative, persistent and innovative global and community citizens in accordance with the time-tested philosophy of Maria Montessori.

- Correct; this is our Mission Statement
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]

Q14. The table lists any approved minor and/or major modifications over the course of the school's current charter term.

Date	Modification Request	Outcome
April 24, 2020	Facility modification – install modular units for classroom space due to the impact of COVID-19 on the construction timeline.	TCO of June 15, 2020 was met as per the requirement of Delaware Code Title 14, Chapter 5, § 511 (l) that the school have a temporary certificate of occupancy (TCO) by June 15th.

- Correct
- Other [Please Add Correct Info in the Comment]



## 2. Student Demographics

Q15. Review the Student Demographics table (see Resources), complete the last column, and upload the revised document.

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 1

### Applicant Comments :

One of the primary goals of Sussex Montessori School is to achieve and retain a diverse enrollment of students that reflects the beautifully diverse communities we serve throughout Sussex County.

Our targeted demographics include the following:

- i. Families in Western Sussex (Seaford, Laurel, Bridgeville, Greenwood)
- ii. Families in Central Sussex (Georgetown and Millsboro)
- iii. Families in Eastern Sussex (Milton Lewes)
- iv. Under-served & Low-Income Neighborhoods
- v. Multicultural Populations (Hispanic and Creole)
- vi. Academically diversity

Data shows that Sussex Montessori School has been successful in achieving a diverse demographic of students from year to year. Over the past four years, we have grown in cultural diversity: from 48.84% minority in 2020-2021 to 50.34% minority population in 2023-2024. Our Hispanic population grew from 10.38% in 2020-2021 to 11.85% in 2023-2024. With that, the population of English Language Learners increased from 6.54% in 2020-2021 to 9.79% in 2023-2024.

Our percentage of special education students nearly doubled from 7.69% in 2020-2021 to 13.90% in 2023-2024. The growth in special education students creates an increased demand for innovative instruction, equitable support services, and comprehensive accommodations for students and their families.

In addition to cultural and academic inclusion, our goal is to maintain a minimum of 51% low-income families year to year. While the low-income data provided in this chart hovers around 27% -- these numbers are likely based primarily on data provided from submitted free and reduced lunch application submissions --According to DHSS data (provided in our CGA grants), Sussex Montessori School has successfully maintained more than 50% low-income students since September 2021 until September 2023.

It is our continued desire to maintain a demographic of over 51% of low-income students and to continue cultivating a welcoming, culturally- and educationally-diverse community which thrives on compassion, equity, and inclusion.

### Sussex Montessori Low-Income Data - DHSS

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<b>Students Enrolled</b>	260	341	403	439
<b>Low-income total</b>	125	174	203	--
<b>Low-income Percentage</b>	48.08%	51.03%	50.3%	--

Source: DDOE provided - % DHSS poverty data (CGA)

2022-2023 data reflects students from Sept 30<sup>th</sup> unit count (403). There was an actual total of 405 students enrolled. Two enrolled students (both low-income, Free and Reduced Lunch eligible) were not officially counted during this year because they were absent during the 10-day unit count period. These students included, the overall number of low-income students would increase to 205, resulting in 50.6% low-income.

2023-2024 low-income DHSS data is still pending.

### Resources

SMS\_Student Demographics.xlsx

### Applicant Evidence :

SMS\_Student Demographics 9-30-23.xlsx

Uploaded on 10/1/2023 by Kaneisha Savage

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Total Enrollment	260	341	403	439
% Male	47.31%	50.73%	50.87%	51.25%
% Female	52.69%	49.27%	49.13%	48.75%
% African American	26.15%	24.63%	23.82%	28.70%
% American Indian	0.77%	0.59%	0.00%	0.23%
% Asian	2.31%	2.35%	2.48%	1.14%
% Hispanic/Latino	10.38%	10.26%	10.67%	11.85%
% White	51.15%	54.84%	56.08%	49.66%
% Multiracial	9.23%	7.33%	6.95%	8.43%
% Special Education <sup>3</sup>	7.69%	8.21%	11.41%	13.90%
% English Language Learners	6.54%	5.87%	6.95%	9.79%
% Low-Income	27.69%	28.15%	26.55%	33.26%



### 3. School Enrollment Trends

SCHOOL YEAR	AUTHORIZED ENROLLMENT	ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	PERCENT ACTUAL ENROLLMENT	GRADES SERVED
2020-21	260	260	100%	K-3
2021-22	325	341	105%	K-4
2022-23	390	403	103%	K-5

Q16.Explain successes or challenges of implementing the school's recruitment plan.



Recruitment efforts were in full effect when Sussex Montessori School hired its Community Engagement Specialist, a well-respected African American female and native of Sussex County, in April 2019. The Community Engagement Specialist would play a significant part in establishing strong relationships between the school and community and bringing education and awareness of Montessori education and the vision and mission of Sussex Montessori School which had not yet been constructed. The plan was to recruit a diverse pool of applicants for the lottery which would potentially result in (and eventually led to) full, diverse enrollment, and later sibling re-enrollment, of the school. More specifically, Sussex Montessori School wanted to achieve a culturally diverse enrollment of 260 students in grades K – 3 with at least 51% low-income students in its inaugural year (2020).

For more than a year, the Community Engagement Specialist, along with the newly hired Head of School, facilitated information sessions and met with families and leaders of community-based organizations, legislators, private businesses, youth-serving programs, faith-based centers, civic groups, ethnic communities, and various non-profits across Sussex and Kent Counties. Some of these included, but are not limited to, houses of worship, subsidized housing complexes, low-income neighborhoods, local Boys and Girls clubs, Head Start programs, in-home daycares and childcare centers, public libraries, and popular, local cultural events such as the African American Festival, Hispanic Festival, and Apple Scapple Festival. Creative marketing materials were used to promote the new school and Montessori pedagogy including digital and print advertisements, broadcast PSAs through local radio and television stations, newsletters and editorials, social media and website, print materials (postcards, flyers, banners, signs) and promotional giveaways (pens, magnets, notepads, etc.).

A culturally diverse community engagement team of prospective parents, board members, Montessori advocates and volunteers was created to assist in outreach and recruitment efforts. The team would host a family-fun Fall Festival event in October 2019, drawing over 500 guests to the site where the new school would be built.

#### **2020-2021 Successes and Challenges:**

The successful outreach efforts and novelty of the new charter school, the first public Montessori school in the area— would attract hundreds of families seeking innovative, elementary education (choice) in Sussex County Delaware. More than four hundred school choice applications for grades Kindergarten through Third were received and three-hundred eighty invitations sent. Despite the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and shutdown in March 2020 which halted in-person recruitment and created a temporary regression in enrollment, Sussex Montessori School would be successful in enrolling its 260 K-3 learners—with an estimated 54% of students coming from low-income families— by September 30, 2020. Our enrollment would reflect the diversity of the surrounding communities, with over 75% percent of families residing in Western Sussex County (Seaford, Laurel, and Woodbridge School Districts). The second largest segment of students came from the Indian River School District (Millsboro and Georgetown) and spanned outward towards Milford, Delmar, Cape Henlopen, Lake Forest districts.

Sussex Montessori would open its doors in September 2020, in the heat of a global pandemic, with much optimism and support amidst tremendous, unforeseen challenge. The Covid-19 pandemic would create significant delays in construction, increased operational and capital costs, learning loss in incoming students, transportation barriers, teacher/staff shortages, and changes in the way we administered the Montessori curriculum. *These would have unanticipated, long-term impacts on family engagement, student/staff attendance, student achievement, and eventually enrollment.* Roughly 68% of students were housed in temporary modular classrooms on a hybrid 2-day schedule while the remaining 32% of students remained fully remote. Sussex Montessori School contracted with local bus and van companies to transport students who resided as far as Lewes, Milford, Harrington, Selbyville, and Delmar. With Covid restrictions and driver shortages, we had to implement double, sometimes triple runs, to safely transport children to and from school.

A silver lining appeared in November 2020, when our 10 permanent K-3 classrooms were finally complete, and we were able to invite all 260 students on campus for in-person learning, four days a week. We were the only school in the area capable of doing so due to the unique architecture and design of our classrooms (large, spacious classrooms, separate HVAC systems). This was welcomed by the majority of our families desiring in-person instruction, leaving less than 25% of students on a fully remote schedule by end of November 2020 and 13% by March 2021. However, government-mandated restrictions and increasing health concerns, would pose increased challenges on the hands-on Montessori instruction/delivery and were the ability to invite families inside the classrooms to see and understand how the Montessori method truly worked.

While pre-covid outreach proved strong in securing full enrollment in 2020, efforts to adequately educate and engage families in the school community would be greatly challenged during the pandemic. Successful in-person recruitment was halted as family meetings, enrollment information sessions, open houses and events turned fully virtual. Families relied on email/digital communications, photos, videos to share news, updates, and progress. Transportation continued to be a growing worry for families while issues around chronic absenteeism emerged, posing a greater concern in years 2 and 3.

#### **2021-2022 Successes and Challenges:**

Nonetheless, we remained determined and accomplished a great deal during a tumultuous first year, and as a result, our enrollment continued to grow beyond the authorized Charter enrollment into the 2021-2022 school year. We completed four additional classrooms, added a fourth-grade curriculum, hired more teachers and staff, and increased our in-person learning to five days a week. Over 300 applications were received in our lottery with a wait list of 155 students. More than one hundred new learners were welcomed to the school, and we were able to maintain a diverse enrollment and reach our maximum capacity of 341 learners grades K-4 by Sept 30<sup>th</sup> of that year.

Nationwide, more students were returning to schools and families to work; a change which generated increased worry around children's health and safety and greater need for more convenient and reliable transportation, childcare, and scheduling. Furthermore, ongoing COVID restrictions and spikes in illnesses during the winter months would prompt massive quarantines, and chronic absenteeism rose to greater numbers. The hands-on approach and flow of the Montessori classroom and instruction (freedom of movement) were inhibited/impeded as entire classrooms were quarantined and students missed out on quality instruction. Chronic absenteeism would pose tremendous hardship on the school and families, especially working-class families and those who resided beyond close proximity of the school.

The lifting of Covid restrictions in the Spring would bring a welcome change and resurgence of hope. Families would finally experience an active Montessori classroom and gain a better sense, though limited, of the learning materials their students were using. In-person recruitment and outreach also resurged as we introduced new community partnerships, volunteer opportunities, and family engagement initiatives such as Parent Camp to strengthen school-parent collaboration and connection.

#### **2022-2023 Successes and Challenges:**

The new school year would bring the hope of success and overall growth. We began with an impressive 405 students enrolled in grades K-5. Our waitlist was 200 applicants strong as our capacity to enroll new students, especially KN students, was limited by the bubble of lower elementary students moving through. We were over capacity (which was a good problem) and retained a great number of students in lower grades 1-3. We saw an increase in fourth grade enrollment from the previous year and our fifth grade only took a slight dip in number. Not to mention, we continued expanding our campus, now replete with sixteen beautiful classrooms to accommodate our growing community. We forged new partnerships to bring innovative programming, extracurricular activities, and special support to students and families.

All was well enrollment-wise as we continued to enroll above and beyond the expected numbers. However, the real, lingering impact of COVID-19 on student achievement, particularly literacy rates nationwide, would begin to surface. Literacy became of great focus and we quickly responded with increased literacy lessons, reading time, and reading tutors assigned to assist high-needs students. Still, learners weren't bouncing back as quickly and absenteeism among students and staff remained dangerously high. Rising demands and diminishing/limited resources required our charter school to do more with less; a burden which greatly impacted teacher and staff hiring and retention. Attrition rose, within the span of one year we experienced several changes in the Special Education Coordinator role.

Chronic absenteeism and inconsistency with teachers, especially in our 2/3 elementary level, proved to be the greatest challenges of 2022-2023 school year. For reasons beyond our control, three Montessori-certified, lead guides in the lower elementary level went out on extended leave. The shortage of qualified teachers and substitutes meant we had to rely our Delaware certified associate teachers (not Montessori certified) to fill in. There was a great deal of shifting and inconsistency which not only impacted student instruction and later standardized test scores, but also greatly impacted family confidence in instruction and overall enrollment. And while we saw 10% gains in overall student academic achievement from the previous year to this year (DIBELS data), our state standardized test scores did not quite reflect this progress.



### 2023-2024 and Beyond- OUTLOOK

As we transitioned into the 2023-2024 school year, we experienced a significant dip in enrollment in summer 2023 (July and August). By the time we received the notice of families leaving, we had lost our opportunity with many on our waitlist who had already committed to attending other schools. We've come to understand that many parents of 9-12 year olds are less likely to move during the latter summer months as they've most likely have settled into a new school plan.

This unprecedented situation of summer 2023 resulted in decreased enrollment and reenrollment between the "transition" years: third into fourth grade and fifth into sixth grade. Our applicant pool and waitlist presented the opportunity to revamp our lower elementary program and accommodate more students, resulting in an increase in overall student enrollment in Kindergarten and Grade 3 compared to the previous two years. Even with targeted outreach to upper elementary students in mid-late summer, it was not enough to compensate the loss of upper elementary students in grades fourth through sixth. By September 30, 2023, we secured enrollment of **439** students grades K-6, just under, but within 5% of the authorized charter amount. With this, we were still able to retain a diverse demographic of low-income students across Sussex and lower Kent Counties.

We attribute this decline in enrollment from third into fourth grade at the start of 2023-2024 school year primarily to the inconsistency of teachers in that grade level, as this was not an issue in previous school years. Interestingly, these are the same students, many who started with us in the pandemic, who were hit with the most inconsistency in instruction.

Moreover, the dip in fifth to sixth grade enrollment resembles the pattern of most schools when children transition from a K-5 elementary program into a middle school at sixth grade. We've been expanding our 9-12 elementary program each year, adding new teachers and classrooms. We anticipated a decline during these years and have developed a plan to increase our upper elementary (9-12) program. This will be the first year we implement a comprehensive, exciting, and truly unique 6<sup>th</sup> year program—the completion of a full K-6 Montessori cycle—and one that would rival the offerings of other programs. The success of this sixth-grade year will present an exciting opportunity, and alternative, for families across the counties.

Furthermore, the momentary dip in enrollment this year does not come as a complete surprise considering the grave challenges we've encountered and the "typical" nature of new schools and businesses in years 3 and 4. We are aware of the work that is needed to navigate and overcome the various obstacles and we are better positioned to address them appropriately. We see this as an opportunity to strengthen our team of teachers through increased training and coaching (from the Director of Teaching and Learning, University of Delaware Montessori Training Residency, and curriculum leads), and to improve academic achievement and state assessment scores through focused and strategic instruction. We will work with families in third grade to transition them into fourth grade (9-12) upper elementary years, and with fifth grade families to help them see the beauty and benefit of staying with Montessori in the sixth grade year (see more in Retention).

Moreover, we will continue our recruitment efforts with creative marketing, outreach, and on-site engagement opportunities that will build greater relationship between families, school, and communities, as well as bring deeper awareness, education, and insight into the benefits of Montessori learning. These include digital and print ads, "Montessori Moments" (videos which capture candid conversations, achievements, and moments with teachers, parents, and students), parent outreach.

Grade	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-2026		2026-2027	
	Approved Enrollment	Sep 30 Enrollment Count	Approved Enrollment	Sep 30 Enrollment Count	Approved Enrollment	Sep 30 Enrollment Count	Approved Enrollment	Projected Sep 30 Enrollment Count	Approved Enrollment	Projected Sep 30 Enrollment Count	Approved Enrollment	Projected Sep 30 Enrollment Count	Approved Enrollment	Projected Sep 30 Enrollment Count
<i>Cells highlighted in gray were grade levels not serviced by this school.</i>														
<b>Lower Elementary</b>														
Kindergarten	65	86	65	72	65	65	65	81	65	75	65	78	65	75
Grade 1	65	61	65	84	65	78	65	67	65	81	65	75	65	78
Grade 2	65	66	65	65	65	84	65	78	65	71	65	81	65	75
Grade 3	65	47	65	65	65	62	65	67	65	78	65	71	65	80
<b>Upper Elementary</b>														
Grade 4			65	55	65	66	65	50	65	55	65	60	65	62
Grade 5					65	50	65	59	65	50	65	55	65	60
Grade 6							65	37	65	45	65	40	65	45
<b>Middle School</b>														
Grade 7														
Grade 8														
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>475</b>

ling students until the 2024-2025 choice

Source:

Allowed enrollment up to 165 over.

Projected enrollment count based on snapshot enrollment data (September 30, 2023).

SY 22-23 projections were based on Five (5) Grade K/1 classrooms, One (1) Grade 1/2 classrooms Five (5) Grade 2/3 classrooms, and Five (5) Grade 4/5 classrooms for a total of 16 classrooms.

SY 23-24 projections are based on Six (6) Grade K/1 classrooms, Five (5) Grade 2/3 classrooms, One (1) 3/4/5 classroom, and Five (5) Grade 4/5/6 classrooms for a total of 17 classrooms.

SY 24-25 and beyond: Moving forward, each classroom would carry a minimum of 26 students per class, with total student enrollment at or below the allowable 5% over charter enrollment of up to 478 students. Our administration and board will work together to equalize the number of students per grade level to just beyond the approved charter enrollment per grade, and to shift the balance and number of classrooms accordingly to service all students (may possibly add 18 classrooms total).

### SMS ENROLLMENT TRENDS – A DEEPER LOOK

	2020 - 21	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2023 - 24
<b>Choice Applications Received</b>	405	324	393	293
<b>Invitations Sent</b>	383	146	176	268
<b>Invitations Accepted</b>	298	118	126	171
<b>Waitlisted Applicants as of Sept 30<sup>th</sup></b>	8	155	190	0
<b>Total Students Enrolled as of Sept 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>260</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>439</b>

(Source: Data Service Centers)

Note: not all applications received get an invite or placed on the waitlist. This may be due to the applicants age (too young) or residence (not a Delawarean), or other factors such as duplicate applications for the same student or for an already enrolled SMS student.

### SMS Remote students by town of residence as of September 2020

Blades	1			
Bridgeville	7			
Camden Wyoming	1			
Delmar	2			
Fankford	1			
Georgetown	7			
Greenwood	2			
Harrington	5			
Laurel	15			
Lincoln	3			
Milford	2			
Millsboro	1			
Milton	1			
Seaford	35			
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>			
Percentage Remote (out of 260 students)	31.92%			



#### 4. School Reenrollment Trends

SCHOOL YEAR	NUMBER OF STUDENTS REENROLLED	PERCENT OF STUDENTS REENROLLED
2020-21	239	92.00%
2021-22	227	87.31%
2022-23	177	84.46%

##### Q17. Explain successes or challenges of implementing the school's retention plan.

For the first three years, Sussex Montessori's retention (or reenrollment) rate has hovered around 88% (average). The unique Montessori instruction, nurturing learning environment, strong relationships with families and communities, diverse lottery and sibling enrollment have allowed us to be successful in retaining the majority of our student population. See why families choose Sussex Montessori. (<https://youtu.be/J5BWKSb4d30?si=1YsNuvixXQrhzH1L>)

Although year 4 retention rates are estimated to be lower than years past--a reflection of what we believe is a temporary, 20% -25%, dip in enrollment-- Sussex Montessori has seen more retention in year 2 and 3 than we did in Year 4.

After analyzing data retrieved from some of our withdrawn families, we learned that our recent retention issues stem primarily from two reasons:

1. Inconsistency with classroom teachers as a result of unanticipated extended leave/absences (covered in the previous section).
2. Lack of confidence in the strength of our upper elementary (9-12 year old) programs. (It is new and unknown to families at this point). Yearly expansion into the fourth, fifth, and now, for the first time, sixth grade (2023-2024) coupled with novice teachers in the 9-12 program, created a weakening impression for transitioning students.

We've since developed a robust Retention plan to strengthen teacher efficacy and to provide more training, coaching, and other wrap-around support to our lead guides and associate teachers. This comprehensive coaching and care will be provided by or Director of Teaching and Learning, the University of Delaware Montessori Training in Residency program, and experienced, certified curriculum leads.

Moreover, we will work closely with families in third grade to transition them into fourth grade (the beginning of the 9-12 elementary years) as well as families in fifth grade to effectively transition them into sixth grade (the ending of the 9-12 elementary program). All in all, our goal is to retain and increase upper elementary enrollment/reenrollment over the next several years. We will work to demonstrate the academic strength of our upper elementary program and highlight the remarkable, one-of-a-kind learning opportunities and experiences afforded in the Montessori sixth grade year. With improved systems and marketing initiatives, we will shine the light on the full K-6 Montessori cycle (lower elementary, upper elementary, and sixth grade learning) and further emphasize why it is best to remain in Montessori.

Furthermore, our current Retention plan includes the following:

- Implementing and Reviewing Exit Surveys - We have disseminated exit surveys to families who've withdrawn in order to better understand why families leave. We will analyze this information to determine what we can do to better support our families, improve their overall experience, and encourage them to stay.
- Implementing Frequent, Effective School-Parent Communication - We learned that misperceptions and misinformation around restorative discipline practices, the Montessori curriculum or how children demonstrate their knowledge/skills played a small, but significant role in why some families left. We have since developed stronger, more frequent and consistent communications - newsletters, increased data access, use of multiple communication tools, full access to Transparent Classroom - to inform families on class lessons, academic activities, and student progress. We will also enforce timely response to and communication of academic and non-academic concerns. We are using this as an opportunity to gift children with the language of sharing their knowledge while empowering families with the resources to support the child's learning at home and to engage children in meaningful conversations about their day.
- Providing Additional Transportation & Childcare Support - We learned that lack of convenient and reliable transportation and childcare poses tremendous hardship for many charter families who live outside the district. In addition to alternative transportation, we are looking at creative, affordable ways to support families with transportation/childcare barriers so that their children can remain at the school. When the Barn renovations (construction) are complete, our Board of Directors and administration will consider other opportunities of before/after car which may help resolve some of our transportation/childcare issues.
- Implementing Creative Marketing and Transparency - We will continue to engage social media followers with photo and video highlights of students working, playing, and learning inside and outside of the classroom. Additionally, we will give our followers an inside, never-before-seen, look inside the Montessori classroom and campus life community by capturing teachers, staff, parents, and students in candid conversations and real, transparent moments.

With refined focus, great determination, and strategic efforts, we will inspire renewed faith and confidence in more families and the general community; thus, improving reenrollment trends over the next several years.





## 5. Academic Performance

Delaware operates under the belief that all schools benefit from continuous improvement – including those that receive exceeds expectations ratings – to best support all students. The Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) ([https://doewebmaster.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/dssf\\_one\\_pager\\_final.pdf](https://doewebmaster.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/dssf_one_pager_final.pdf)) outlines the accountability standards by which all Delaware public schools are measured. This state- and school-level data helps identify each school's needs and determine how best to support students across the state.

DSSF measures the following areas to determine school success. This annual data is publicly available on the Delaware Report Card (<https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/>).

- Academic achievement – Proficiency for ELA and math (grades 3-8 and 11)
- Academic progress – Growth in ELA and math (grades 4-8); includes growth of the lowest and highest performing students in a school
- School quality/student success – On-track attendance (K-12), science proficiency (grades 5, 8 and biology), social studies proficiency (grades 4, 7 and 11), college/career preparedness (grades 9-12), and on-track in 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- Graduation rates – 4-year, 5-year and 6-year adjusted cohort graduation rates
- English language proficiency (ELP) – Progress toward English language proficiency (grades 1-12)

Due to COVID-19, all school year 2019-20 assessment and accountability requirements were waived by the U.S. Department of Education. Additionally, due to the impact of COVID-19 on learning and learning environments, accountability was waived for school years 2020-21 and 2021-22. The school's assessment data is available below (see also Charter School Report Card Link (<https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/detail.html#aboutpage?scope=school&district=9607&school=4055>)). Attached are the school's annual reports (see also Annual Report: (<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/2654>)). **Note: Assessment data is provided in lieu of DSSF results for the years impacted by COVID-19. School year 2022-23 DSSF preliminary results will be provided to renewing charter schools by September 15, 2023.**

### 5.1. Delaware School Success Framework

	2020-21			2021-22		
	Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations			Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations		
	SMS	District <sup>1</sup> %	State %	SMS	District %	State %
<b>English Language Arts</b>	*	41.00%	42.00%	28.00%	39.99%	42.26%
<b>Mathematics</b>	*	25.00%	26.00%	*	30.59%	29.48%
<b>Science</b>	*	*	22.00%	*	*	19.00%
<b>Social Studies</b>	*	26.00%	31.00%	*	22.00%	28.00%
<b>Chronic Absenteeism<sup>2</sup></b>	23.60%	20.36%	20.31%	17.07%	26.19%	24.77%

\*This data has been suppressed for student privacy.

<sup>1</sup> Seaford School District is Sussex Montessori School's district of residence.

<sup>2</sup> Chronically absent students are those students who are missing 10% or more of school days throughout the school year. Absences may be excused or unexcused, which are determined by local board policy.

#### SUSSEX MONTESSORI SCHOOL (Elementary/Middle)

Indicators	Weight	Metric Value	Points Possible	Points Earned
<b>Academic Achievement</b>	<b>30%</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>27</b> Well Below Expectations
Proficiency ELA (grades 3-8)	15%	21.40%	75	16
Proficiency Math (grades 3-8)	15%	14.06%	75	11
<b>Academic Progress</b>	<b>40%</b>		<b>175</b>	<b>106</b> Approaching Expectations
Growth in ELA (grades 4-8)	15%	56.31%	75	42
Growth in Math (grades 4-8)	15%	61.72%	75	46
Growth of lowest quartile ELA (grades 4-8)	2.50%	71.79%	12.5	9
Growth of highest quartile ELA (grades 4-8)	2.50%	45.54%	N/A	*
Growth of lowest quartile Math (grades 4-8)	2.50%	73.31%	12.5	9
Growth of highest quartile Math (grades 4-8)	2.50%	33.00%	N/A	*
<b>School Quality/Student Success</b>	<b>20%</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>36</b> Well Below Expectations
On Track Attendance (grade K-12)	10%	66.40%	50	33
Proficiency Science (Grades 5 and 8)	5%	13.29%	25	3
Proficiency Social Studies (Grades 4 and 7)	5%	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Progress toward English Language Proficiency</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>76.86</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>38</b> Well Below Expectations
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>450</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>Overall Percentage / Rating</b>				<b>46%</b> Well Below Expectations

Q18. Reflect on your school's academic performance in relation to the goals set forth in the performance agreement. Please reference the specific Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) measures listed below. Highlight successes, challenges, root causes, and describe how the school will address the challenges.

- Academic Achievement
- Academic Progress
- School Quality/Student Success
- Graduation Rate (if applicable)
- Progress toward English Language Proficiency





## Successes

The academic story of the first years of Sussex Montessori School must be framed in the context of the circumstances of schools across the state from 2020-2022. Despite all obstacles presented in the spring and summer of 2020 that could have impacted the opening of Sussex Montessori School, the school opened on schedule in September with a hybrid model using temporary classroom spaces provided by modulars. Transportation to and from school was provided. The first cohort of 10 teachers all participated in an adapted virtual Montessori Training program in the summer of 2020. Montessori classrooms were fully outfitted. Thirty-two percent of the children were fully remote. By November of this year, the newly constructed classrooms were completed. These large, fully Covid compliant classrooms allowed us to welcome all children back to campus. During this time, the school schedule continued with the M/T/H/F for children with Wednesday as a full teacher day to allow for a deep cleaning mid-week. We continued to have approximately 25% percent of children whose parents choose remote learning. Teachers supported the children who appeared in their classrooms every day and those who were working remotely. During the second year of operation, we were able to bring all learners back to campus, but sickness and excessive absences (due to CDA guidance) of both teachers and children continued to impact academic growth.

Despite the disruption to our plans for starting SMS, our learners demonstrated progress towards proficiency across the first three years in both language and math utilizing norm-referenced benchmark assessment, DIBELS. From the school year 2021 -2022 to 2022-2023, our students' overall percentage increase was 10.5% in their DIBELS assessment.

The state testing assessment was suspended during our first year of operation due to the severity of the pandemic. Our second-year scores clearly demonstrate the impact and learning loss for our young learners which parallels those across the state. Based on school assessment data, our number one priority was literacy instruction, specifically around phonemic awareness and segmentation. We immediately provided teacher PD and formed a plan for daily work in these areas in every classroom. In a preliminary view our fall STAR testing assessments are showing growth.

While this data is extremely helpful, as a school, we recognize that this does not tell the whole story of the whole child. We look closely at data and trends with each of our learners to see trends, areas of growth and wellness needs. As a result, we have developed multiple partnerships (see question 56) to put systems in place to support the well-being of each of our students to ensure they have what they need to thrive both academically and socially and emotionally.

## Challenges

Montessori pedagogy is based on the understanding that learning is best accomplished in classrooms where children have concrete experiences with materials allowing for social construction of understanding. All learners receive lesson presentations on didactic instructional materials until they have successfully mastered the abstracted concepts. Research demonstrates that the longer a child is in a high-fidelity Montessori classroom setting, the stronger their academic achievement as measured by standardized measures is. Because of the pandemic, Sussex Montessori School's first year to operate with high-fidelity to the Montessori model was the 2022-23 school year.

During the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school year there were many adaptations to the model to accommodate children learning remotely. For those times when children were learning from home, it was extremely difficult to present our 3D materials in 2D over Zoom, and learners had minimal opportunities to work with these materials. To accommodate our learners, the Lead Teachers made materials and packets of work for their learners that parents picked up. These packets were also dropped off to families without transportation. As referenced earlier, state testing clearly showed learning loss and the need to deeply research and address instructional needs.

During the third year of operation (2022-23), we were able to introduce our learners to Montessori methodology. As learners became more accustomed to the student-centered Montessori multi-age classroom getting our learners to grade level in all areas, particularly reading, became our focus. Preliminary data indicates that progress is being made and now that the school is able to function as intended there is every reason to expect that children will continue to make significant progress each year.

## School Quality

One of the unique qualities of our school that is evident every day is the joy our students have in learning! Our learners jump out of their cars and buses excited and ready to begin their work cycle immediately! They love their work because it is uniquely tied to their interest in study. The uploaded parent and student videos are evidence of the shared joy in learning.

Additionally, as a school, we have a Site Based Decision-Making Team comprised of lead teachers, associate teachers, specialists, community engagement and administration. This group's main charge is communication, advocacy, and school-based decision-making.

Our Student Success Committee includes Board members, faculty, and student and parent representatives. This committee reviews our academic performance and success goals. This committee offers feedback and proposals to bolster and strengthen our overall school improvement planning.

To address attendance issues, we hired two van services to support families unable to travel to our bus hubs. Additionally, we are putting together a school task force to develop a system of incentives for families who prioritize school attendance for their children.

## Progress towards English Language Proficiency

We enjoy a wonderfully diverse school family. In 2022-23, 45% of our families are of diverse ethnicities and 17% of our learners speak multiple languages at home. We anticipate more learners each year who will be speaking 2 or more languages. (Data can be reviewed in 6.3)

Our learners sit for the WIDA assessment and when they qualify for English language supports, we provide both sheltered instruction and small group intensive instructional opportunities. We have a teacher that coordinates the assessments and another who is certified to deliver MLL instruction. (See question 6.3)

Our data last year shows that our MLL learners need targeted instruction in reading, writing and literacy skills. They are strong in speaking and listening but need intensive instruction in the other areas identified by the WIDA assessments.

## Addressing the Challenges: Meaningful Action

To meet the various challenges, the school put forth significant scaffolding measures for AY22-23 and AY23-24 to support learners both academically, socially, and emotionally. School-wide, a deep dive into what our data has informed the following actions:

### Professional Time and Support for Teachers

- The school added additional professional development days to the school year in AY22-23 and increased those in AY23-24 to provide time for refinement of practice, reflection on data, and professional learning communities. (Summer and Year-long PD schedule attached)
- The administration has created PLC opportunities each week for all levels with a rotating schedule in the following areas:
  - Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction
  - SPED ED/Project ACCESS and IEP data collection
  - MTSS/Child Study
- For the 2023-24 school year we have created EPER position for lead teachers who have demonstrated strengths in Math, ELA, Social Studies and Science Curriculum. These leads hold monthly office hours to answer questions from teachers, support the PLC work, and attend the DDOE meetings related to their areas.
- All Sussex Montessori teachers in Montessori training receive two years of weekly coaching by a Montessori coach.

## Reading



- Reading Assist began one on-one tutoring in AY20-21 for our learners whose DIBELS showed intensive support was needed. In AY21-22 we doubled our Reading Assist staff through the use of ESSER funds in order to give our most at-risk learners intensive reading support daily for 45 minutes. We continue to have Reading Assist working with our children in AY22-23. (Data of results attached)
- Reading Assist tutors continued one on one tutoring throughout the summer months of ESY.
- We enrolled 5 Associate teachers in summer training with Reading Assist to ensure the work continues within the classroom for all students. (agreement attached) \*Originally planned for 6 but only 5 could attend all sessions.
- We designed our in-service training and school year PD calendars to bring instructors from the University of Delaware Montessori Teacher Residency (UDMTR) to support our teachers in the implementation of the Science of Reading (learned during their UDMTR training) in Montessori classrooms, using Dibels data, and daily use of instructional reading groups in response to what our data was showing. (Please note training dates on the year-long PD calendar)

**Benchmarking and Progress Monitoring**

- In 2022-23 we determined that the paper versions of both the DIBELS and DIBELS Math-Acadience assessments were not serving our goals for ongoing progress monitoring. In the spring, we transitioned to the online version of mClass DIBELS and discontinued the use of Acadience for our math assessments. We purchased the STAR Reading and Math platforms to bolster our ability to progress monitor our learners in a timely manner, thus positively impacting our instructional decision-making and planning. Additionally, we added Aperture and the Dessa mini for all learners to gauge students SEL levels and to understand who and what supports need to be in place. (Please note training dates on the year-long PD calendar)

**Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development**

- The Montessori curriculum is designed as an interdisciplinary curriculum, especially across science and social studies. Per our charter, we trained teachers in the Understanding by Design model of planning interdisciplinary units. Teachers initiated this work in AY23-24 with support from an instructor at the UDMTR. The PD schedule allows for three session throughout the year to develop UBD units that reflect the interdisciplinary Montessori approach and ensure all standards are met.

**Social-Emotional Learning**

- We significantly increased social and emotional support for all learners. Using in-house staff and outside community supports (attached) , we surrounded our learners with group sessions, one one-on-one counseling, trauma-informed therapy sessions, mindfulness, and yoga.

**State Assessment Preparation**




- State assessments are taken on Chromebooks. While technology is an integral part of the Montessori curriculum as a tool for gathering and organizing information, we have realized that our children need specific opportunities to use Chromebooks to practice test taking. We are introducing Chromebooks earlier this school year and are having students take advantage of the practice tests for state testing. In year 2022-23, we invited Dr. Katia Foret to train teachers on the Resources and best practices available to them through the DeSSA platforms. They would use the diagnostic assessments and practice assessments to lift the academic language, what the questions would look like, and how to use strong strategies to approach each question set.

**MLL Learning**

- MLL program development is a priority for us. We are evaluating our program with the support of the Student Success Center at the University of Delaware and together, we will develop teacher training and professional development goals, as well as identify the materials and Montessori supplementary materials that are required to enhance our MLL instruction.

We believe that these additions to our overall school improvement planning will make a significant impact towards actualizing our goals and identified and targeted areas of improvement. We can now focus on systematically using data to track progress, inform instructional decisions, and bring children into the fully implemented Montessori curriculum.

**Applicant Evidence :**

		
RAI_Professional Development Services Suss...	Counseling Services 2022-2023 SY.xlsx	Sussex Montessori Year-Long PD Schedule[2...

Uploaded on 10/1/2023 by Lisa Coldiron

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Uploaded on 10/1/2023 by Lisa Coldiron

**5.2. Supplemental Academic Performance Data**

Q19. Provide any academic performance-related evidence, supplemental data, or contextual information. In this section, you may provide graphs and/or charts to supplement your narrative as Appendix 1.

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 20

**Applicant Comments :**

The initial charter identified that we would need to have diagnostic assessments to aid us in creating individualized learning plans for all of our learners. We initially elected to go with the paper versions of Dibels and Acadience Math. The paper versions gave teachers the ability to observe and follow each learner's thinking and strategies they employed to solve problems and demonstrate their literacy skills. These platforms were not designed to be integrated into an online database for data analysis and report generation.

In preparation for our final growth in student population, K-6, we transitioned to the online versions of our benchmark and progress monitoring tools. As Acadience does not have the capacity for online syncing with our newly developed dashboard, we elected to purchase the STAR Reading and Math diagnostic tools for our academic reporting needs. We continue to use Dibels as a screening and progress monitoring tool.






This year, we have launched our full cadre of online diagnostic tools, that will capture MTSS data, IEP interventions, Academic Benchmarking and Progress Monitoring, and SEL risk assessments. All of this data is housed on a platform called Panorama. This platform will hold our dashboard data, aid us in collecting MTSS/SEL data, create surveys for our learners, teachers and families, as well as provide us with interventions strategies and tools for our learners demonstrating in T-2 and T-3 academic and social emotional needs.

We have also added Aperture, which is an online tool that assesses the CASTLE questions for our K-6 grade learners. The Dessa-mini has 8 questions. If a learner is flagged, our student support team will provide our learners with the full survey.

Dibels and Dessa data is attached which shows progress across the past 2 years. (2020-2023)



Applicant Evidence :

 2023 smarter balanced math and ELA scores...	 AllGradesStatus_2020_DIBELS8thEdition_4-2...	 Dibels 21-22.docx	 Dibels 22-23.pdf
Uploaded on 9/9/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	Uploaded on 9/9/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	Uploaded on 9/9/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	Uploaded on 9/9/2023 by Lisa Coldiron
 DESSA 2021-22.docx			
Uploaded on 9/9/2023 by Lisa Coldiron			

**Q20. Reflect on other aspects of the school's academic performance that may not be captured by the DSSF. Highlight successes, challenges, root causes, and describe how the school will address the challenges.**

We consider our strong successes to be that our students have made continual incremental academic growth and are invested, joyful, quality learners. As one parent shared in a recent email, "Everyone who works at SMS is seriously so kind and so helpful! I feel so welcome!" And, from another recent parent email, "As a parent, I am absolutely thankful for the safe, warm, loving, gentle, kind, uplifting, nurturing and fun-filled learning and student exploration-led environment that Sussex Montessori provided for my family. My child thrived emotionally, socially, inter-personally and reached so many academic achievements at Montessori."

Opening a Montessori charter school during a global pandemic was a tremendous, challenging feat. The combination of teacher training and professional development, (so critical to Montessori efficacy), being challenged and shortened due to the pandemic, coupled with student and teacher absences (due to quarantining and 10-day home absences) hindered academic student growth. Despite the challenges, our students exhibited continual incremental academic growth as evidenced by Dibels data over the span of three years. (attached)

During the 2020-21 school year, and in the height of the pandemic, our doors were open to students whose families chose to attend in-person learning. Construction on our large, beautiful classrooms was not completed until November of 2020. As a result, our students attended classes in a hybrid model within our smaller on-site modulars. Due to distancing requirements and safety concerns, our learners only attended in-person learning two days a week. Additionally, we provided families with online learning and weekly home work packets. Despite these efforts, typically expected learning and academic growth was impacted. This is evidenced in the scores of our students as well as students across the country.

The 21-22 school year was even more challenging due to repeated, required quarantines and absences. We had significant student absences and over 350 staff absences during this year alone. (data attached)

2021-2022 school year: 53,132 – 49,383 = **3,749 total absences**

2022-2023 school year: 62,348 – 56,830 = **5,518 total absences**

The impact of high absenteeism among young learners is well researched and documented. This is articulated well by the National Center for Education Statistics: "Teacher effectiveness is the strongest school-related determinant of student success,<sup>1</sup> (<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/attendancedata/chapter1a.asp#f1>) but chronic student absence reduces even the best teacher's ability to provide learning opportunities. Students who attend school regularly have been shown to achieve at higher levels than students who do not have regular attendance. This relationship between attendance and achievement may appear early in a child's school career. A recent study looking at young children found that absenteeism in kindergarten was associated with negative first grade outcomes such as greater absenteeism in subsequent years and lower achievement in reading, math, and general knowledge."

As we approached the 22-23 school year, we were poised to have a strong year. The pandemic was beginning to slow down, and we were hoping for stronger attendance and an overall healthy community. This year, however, brought different challenges. One of our teachers had a high-risk pregnancy and was put on bed rest and did not return until the last week of school. Her husband, another one of our educators, and a 2-3 teacher, was out for four months for FMLA and a third teacher has had chronic health issues that required a leave of absence. We were unable to find substitutes (due to the on-going teacher shortage) with the credentials needed to fill in the gaps; however, we were able to insert our associate teachers with Delaware State certifications into the missing positions. Because our school has a teacher and associate teacher in every classroom, we were able to rotate certified associates into those classrooms. While we were grateful for their flexibility and willingness to support the school and our learners, without the Montessori certifications and credentials, they were not able to deliver the full depth and breadth of the standards-based Montessori curriculum.

We are now poised for a strong school year with eight of our seventeen teachers having completed their two-year Montessori Training, (equivalent spent for a masters degree), an additional three are in their final year of training, and six teachers are in their first year of training. Our teachers are dedicated, excited and determined to deliver the highest level of excellence and integrity. We have a strong program in place to support our newer Montessori teachers with on-going in-person coaching and weekly after-school lesson practice. This is all occurring in tandem with the DTGSS evaluation process, goal setting, coaching and mentoring by their certified Sussex Montessori School colleagues.









To support students who are below grade level in Literacy, we have contracted with Reading Assist over that past three years and will continue to have three on-site tutors to support those specific students. As data demonstrates, (attached) this has been a successful partnership. The University of Delaware Montessori Teacher Residency program is providing Literacy professional development around the Science of Reading in public Montessori schools. Professional development also consisted of understanding data and how that impacts instructional decision making.

To address excessive student absences, we have several vans bringing students to and from school for those families who do not have access to their own transportation and therefore cannot get to the various bus hubs. Additionally, we have increased after-school activities to encourage school involvement. Currently, we offer the following after school enrichment activities: Girls on the Run, Sports Camp, Photography, and Chess. With only two years of in-school chess as a special, and two years of after school chess club, our students placed first and were nationally recognized as an unrated, new team! This year we are hoping to add an after-school book club, and an art and music club. We continue to work closely with our parents around the importance of regular school attendance through parent education presentations and our very popular parent camp program.

Another impact to academic success what the significant social emotional needs of our students returning to in-person learning. When we opened our school, and our students returned to classrooms, we noticed significant behavioral challenges that we knew was impacting learning for those learners who were struggling with regulation as well as those impacted by the behaviors of others. We immediately contracted with a local non-profit organization (Children and Families First) as well as with a retired to school counselor to begin and facilitate small group sessions. We have continued this practice and have found it has made, and continues to make, a strong and positive impact on student behavior which directly impacts classroom culture and academic outcomes. As a school, we offer our students: group SEL sessions, one-on-one counseling sessions, mindfulness, yoga/stretching, check-in, check-out, and Responsive classroom techniques. We are pleased that our students and families have responded so positively to these interventions. Overall, we are seeing the positive impact it has on our students as evidenced by fewer calls for classroom assistance. (data attached - Behavioral data and Counseling Services Provided)



**Applicant Evidence :**

 Behavior incident total 2020-21.docx Uploaded on <b>10/1/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	 Sussex Montessori - Reading Assist Dashboa... Uploaded on <b>9/9/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	 Sussex_Montessori_-_Reading_Assist_SY22-2... Uploaded on <b>9/9/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	 Sussex_Montessori_-_Reading_Assist_Summe... Uploaded on <b>9/9/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>
 Behavior Data 2022-23.xlsx Uploaded on <b>10/1/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	 Counseling Services 2022-2023 SY.xlsx Uploaded on <b>10/1/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	 SMS Absences 2021-2022 (ADA ADM Report)... Uploaded on <b>10/1/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	 SMS Absences 2022-2023 (ADA ADM Report)... Uploaded on <b>10/1/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>

**Q21. Provide and reflect on additional information regarding academic-related indicators your school would like the Accountability Committee to consider. (This could include social and emotional development, attendance and retention, student engagement, student discipline, and others as appropriate.) Highlight successes, challenges, root causes, and describe how the school will address the challenges.**

Our school opened during the pandemic and supports an underserved community. What we immediately noticed, when we opened our doors in 2020, was the significant social and emotional needs of our entire community: our teachers, our students, and our families. The needs were overwhelming! As office calls increased for intense student classroom behaviors, and teacher absences for mental health and Covid days elevated, it became intensely apparent that we needed support for our entire school family. We immediately reached out to the outside community for mental health support and resources. We began small group sessions for our students around anger, fear, grief, impulse control and trauma which was/is supported by our staff social worker and a local non-profit organization and community partner, Children and Families First. Additionally, we invited parents to come together through our special populations group, and our overwhelmingly popular, Parent Camps. As a result of these interactions, and deep, vulnerable sharing, we learned of the immensity of the needs of our children and families and their sincere desire for support for their children and themselves. Teachers, parents and caregivers alike were recognizing the outcry of the children. We are pleased to share that the number of intense student behaviors has decreased significantly, which is evidenced by data collected. We are continuing these practices this school year as we are strongly aware of the connection between student social-emotional well-being and academic growth and success.

**Student Support Services:**

We began by supporting our students with group therapy sessions involving both our social worker and including the support of outside mental health consultants (Milestones Consulting). This was made possible for us because of the Safe and Supportive School Improvement Practices Program applied for through the Delaware Department of Education. We formed eight Mentoring groups (4 female and 4 male) that ran weekly for five weeks, directly impacting 64 students. Additionally, nine students who were experiencing Tier 3 behaviors had access to weekly individual therapy on campus. Moreover, we hired a Student Support Guide, using ESSER funds, to push into classrooms to regularly check in and check out with students while supporting them with restorative practices using the Responsive Classroom® Model as well as on-site, real time teacher and parent coaching. (pro-active and reactive classroom support). (Data Attached)

**Teacher Support Services:**

Recognizing that our teachers have also been adversely impacted by the pandemic and by the behaviors and needs of our students, we were able to support our teachers with eight after-school psycho-educational group therapy sessions. When teachers feel supported and have a safe place to share their concerns and anxieties, we know that this, by extension, positively impacts the entire community: our learners, our climate and culture. Our teachers matter to us; it is critical they feel seen and heard. Additionally, we provided professional development sessions around recognizing the mental health needs of our students and how to support them within the classroom using restorative practices. Responsive Classroom® practices are used within the classroom and modeled using interactive modeling by our Student Support Guide. Last year we used ESSER funds to contract with a Responsive classroom guide who was able to be on campus to respond to teachers who needed support in real time. (i.e. a teacher calls for support in the classroom, and rather than removing the child immediately, the Student Support Guide responded and modeled how to de-escalate and calm the child, the classroom and the teacher - proactive coaching calls reflected in behavior data attached.) This was an especially efficacious practice for our newer teachers.

**Parent and Care-Giver Support Services:**

Collectively, we had over 125 parents attend our four parent camp meetings. The response and commitment of the families was tremendous! Overwhelmingly they asked for more parent educational sessions and group sessions with other parents. (All 18 families (100%) in one parent camp group session, titled "Positive Parenting 101: Using Language to Promote Effective Communication Between Parents and Children, requested consistent parent support group meetings.) Our intention is to offer quarterly parent meetings/group sessions with our Student Support Guide and Social Worker as facilitators. Such sessions will directly impact and support our parents/care givers, our students and community at large. In order to ensure that all parents have access to this programming, we provide dinner for families and children, as well as child-care and purposeful activities.

**Attendance:**

Impacting our academic outcomes, and impacting schools across the country, was the significant number of missed days for students and teachers. The years of required 10-day quarantines and sensitivities to impending health issues resulted in copious missed days for students and teachers. As a school, we are sensitive to the learning loss our students experienced and are putting many measures in place to support our students in academic and social emotional growth without over pressuring them. They are still children in need of wholeness and joy. Our students have great joy in learning and that this continue for our students is critical to our ultimate goal... that our children be joyful, engaged, independent curious learners.

**Documenting Successes with Data:**

As a school, we recognize the need to collect data efficiently and effectively on all the items listed above. Therefore, we have purchased the Panorama Education data platform. Panorama Education empowers our school with the ability to collect and analyze data about academics, social/emotional learning, school climate, and family engagement through researched-backed surveys, actionable data reports and intervention tracking tools. We have purchased and have begun using Star Reading and Math, Dibels-mClass, and the Dessa mini (Aperture) three times a year to ensure full understanding of where are students are and what supports they need. As a school we have adapted our school schedule to allow for weekly PLCs for all grade level bands. PLCs will focus on: curriculum/standards-based decision making, MTSS (child study), Data/IEP's and Progress Monitoring.

**Applicant Evidence :**

 Behavior Data 2022-23.xlsx Uploaded on <b>10/1/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	 SSSI report 2023.docx Uploaded on <b>9/23/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	 Counseling Services 2022-2023 SY.xlsx Uploaded on <b>9/23/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	 Behavior incident total 2020-21.docx Uploaded on <b>10/1/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>
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## 6. Organizational Performance

The Organizational Performance Framework reflects expectations the charter school is required to meet through state and federal law and the charter performance agreement, and seeks to provide information regarding these key questions:

- Is the school organizationally sound and well operated?
- Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations and sound public stewardship?
- Is the school meeting its obligations and expectations for appropriate access, education, support services, and outcomes for students with disabilities?

### 6.1. Organizational Performance Framework

#### SUMMARY AND OVERALL RATINGS

YEAR	Education Program				Governance & Reporting			Students & Staff			OVERALL RATING
	Mission Fidelity	Applicable State & Federal Requirements	Students with Disabilities	English Learners	Governance & Public Stewardship	Overnight & School Management	Reporting & Requirements	Student Rights	Teacher Certification and License Requirements	Facilities, Transportation, Health, & Safety	
	1a	1b	1c	1d	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	4a	
2020-21	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Meets Standard
2021-22	M	AS	AS	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	Meets Standard

M: Meets Standard  
AS: Approaching Standard  
F: Far Below Standard

Q22. Describe the school's organizational performance over the current charter term. (This section is for the school to address any overall rating where the school has not met standards. The school will be able to address individual metrics in the sections below.)

We are working closely with the Department of Education and the Access Center to build a strong, effective Special Education Department. We begin the 2023-24 school year with a new, highly experienced and dedicated special education coordinator to lead this work. All teachers have undergone professional development on Formal Data Collection and Progress Monitoring, data-based decision making, FAPE and writing effective IEP's. Professional Development will continue throughout the entire year to ensure continued growth and understanding. We hired a new, experienced Special Education Coordinator to help support and drive these initiatives. School schedules have been adjusted to allow for weekly level meetings to support Curriculum, Data and MTSS work and additional professional development days have been added to our school calendar. All grade levels will be meeting weekly with the Special Education Coordinator. The August PD plan, Data Based Decision making power point and year-long professional learning plans are attached. As a school, we hired additional Special Education teachers to support our growing special education population and ensure all their needs and goals are being met.

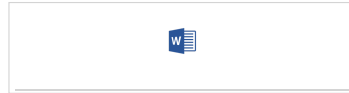
We currently have a Compliance agreement with the Department of Education. Our yearlong professional development plan reflects the interventions we have put into place to ensure compliance and growth. (attached) Additionally, we are meeting monthly with the Exceptional Children's group to ensure growth to exemplar. We have established a leadership team of staff who are supporting this important work.

#### Applicant Evidence :



Sussex Montessori 2021-2022 Compliance M...

Uploaded on 9/26/2023 by Lisa Coldiron



DBDM Evidence Outline Revision-Final.docx

Uploaded on 9/23/2023 by Lisa Coldiron



2023-2024 Professional Learning Action Plan...

Uploaded on 9/23/2023 by Lisa Coldiron



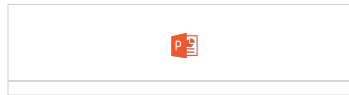
Sussex Montessori Year-Long PD Schedule[2...

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AUGUST 2023 SUMMER IN[20635].docx

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Sussex Montessori \_ Data-Based Decision-M...

Uploaded on 9/19/2023 by Lisa Coldiron

Q23. Discuss management and operations successes and challenges during the current contract term. Areas you may want to consider as appropriate:

#### School Leadership

Day-to-day operations including: transportation; facilities; food service; staffing (hiring, retention, professional development, evaluation); health and safety; community engagement



A success of Sussex Montessori School is that we were open as a school, ready to receive students in the 2020-21 school year. This was accomplished with the due diligence and dedication of the SMS school board, a determined Head of School, and the creative thinking and determination of the teachers and staff. Construction and materials were delayed and the already planned school calendar and day-to-day schedules painstakingly developed were required to pivot and pivot quickly. As a school, we navigated all of this to ensure we had a school open and ready to receive students and teachers. We are proud to share that our doors were open and welcomed students in person from day one. Each subsequent year, we have added additional students and classrooms. We now are open for K-6th grade. To support our growing school and its needs, we recently hired a Director of Finance and Operations and a Facilities Manager.

The board of Sussex Montessori School is grateful for the diligent, determined leadership of our Head of School. Ms. Coldiron has persevered with grace and courtesy through the challenges of continually keeping the staff focused on the mission and the greater good for children and families.

We have had strong Montessori Leadership in our Director of Teaching and Learning (DTL) position. This position has successfully transitioned from the original DTL to a new DTL in the summer of 2022. The original DTL had personal family reasons for leaving the school. The new DTL has/is completing all the state required training to ensure that the school is in compliance with all academic and teaching standards.

Our Food Service staff has been excellent and has been flexible and creative in providing healthy meals to our community. When Covid caused our food vendor to go out of business, we reached out to the local Boys and Girls Club which continues to provide healthy meals for our students. We support healthy meals with campus gardening and harvesting. Additionally, we continue to apply for grants to allow us to cook our meals in-house.

Another success of this school is that we have been able to hire teachers who were willing to spend two years in Montessori training. We cover the cost of tuition and provide fleet vehicles for staff engaged in training. We have been fortunate to have a strong group of committed staff who have been with us since the school's inception. This dedicated core group of educators is the heart of the school. This group is becoming the leaders and mentors of new staff who have come onboard. Additionally, we have a committed group of Associate teachers in every classroom, some of whom are Delaware certified educators. We have been intentionally building the bench with our Associate teachers to become future Montessori Lead teachers.

Professional development for teachers has been strong and effective. We have an MOU with the University of Delaware Montessori Teacher Residency Program which works closely with our staff for their Montessori training. Additionally, we have been doing a significant amount of literacy professional development with the staff aligning our program with the Science of Reading. We have done and continue to do a significant amount of professional development training with Responsive Classroom and Restorative practices.

We are fortunate to have a strong facility manager and nurse who work closely together regarding wellness and safety. As a growing school, we continue to adapt and adjust as our campus changes to ensure safety across the campus. For example, we are adding campus cameras, we have re-keyed every classroom and quad, added campus signage etc., added an outdoor PA notification system and are reviewing campus fencing options.

While community engagement was challenging during the first two years due to the pandemic, we have since been able to grow significantly in this area. We have three (very well attended) parent camp meetings every year, we have offered several language and math parent/family education sessions and we offer Montessori visiting days twice a year. All of these have been very well attended with over 200 families attending the visiting days and upwards of 70 families attending one of our summer parent camp events! As we enter this new year, 2023-24, we are excited to welcome volunteers into the classrooms to read to children, enjoy lunch together, play with the children during recess, work one-on-one with learners who thrive better with individual attention and, in general, to have a presence at our beautiful school.

**Q24. Address any measure(s) where the school did not meet standard or is approaching standard.**

We are working closely with the Center for Disability Studies to ensure we in compliance across all federal and state guidelines regarding students with disabilities. Currently we have a compliance agreement with the Department of Education (Please see section 6.2 Q 22 for more details). We have hired a new Special Education Coordinator who brings years of experience in both the local districts and charter schools and added a second Special Education teacher to our staff to support our growing special education community of learners. Additionally, we have hired outside professional development content experts to enhance our already robust curriculum. Our calendar has been amended to include an additional professional development day each month to ensure professional growth and learning regarding data-based decision making, progress monitoring and understanding IEP's and federal requirements as well as to support growth in literacy. As a staff, we have set aside an hour and a half weekly for PLC's. We will be rotating through the following: curriculum growth and efficacy, MTSS and Child Study and IEP writing and follow through. Our intention is to be an exemplar. The entire school community is deeply committed to this work.

## 6.2. Educational Program

**Q25. Mission-Specific Goal(s): As Appendix 2, provide the results (data source) of the school's mission specific goal(s). Remember not to include any personally identifiable information (PII).**

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#### Applicant Comments :

We have established a DDOE goal to have a 10% increase in Literacy assessments as determined by the DIBELS assessment. (Results and growth from 2021-22, and 2022-23 attached). This goal has been addressed throughout this report. We will use this opportunity to focus on the Mission-Specific goals of Sussex Montessori School.

- The mission of the Sussex Montessori School (SMS) is to nurture the development of empathetic, collaborative, persistent and innovative global and community citizens in accordance with the time-tested philosophy of Maria Montessori.
- The Vision of the Sussex Montessori School (SMS) is to use the Montessori Method to educate children through authentic personalized learning experiences, respectful relationships, opportunities to innovate, and a focus on global citizenship.

Core to our mission and vision is to create an authentic Montessori public school true to the philosophy and pedagogy of Dr. Maria Montessori. The NCMPs Foundational Commitments for Public Montessori (<chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.public-montessori.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Foundational-Commitments-for-Public-Montessori.pdf>) outline the key requirements for a Montessori School. Initially, this is measured by the following: every classroom has a Montessori certified educator (or in a Montessori training program), every classroom has a prepared environment with essential Montessori materials as suggested by the American Montessori Society, every classroom is multi-age, and every school day has a 2-3-hour uninterrupted work cycle (a block of time uninterrupted by specials).

Research shows that for the Montessori pedagogy to have the strongest impact on academic progress, it must be implemented with fidelity. In the original charter, we identified the Essential Elements Rubric (EER) for Montessori Schools and the use of the Developmental Environmental Rating Scales (DERS) both developed by NCMPs as key tools in this work. In addition, we have conducted parent surveys specifically focused on the mission of the school.

[Developmental Environmental Rating Scales \(DERS\)](https://www.ders-app.org/) (<https://www.ders-app.org/>)

In AY 21-22 all the teachers and school administration were trained in the use of the DERS as a tool to observe and reflect on teacher-to-child interactions, child-to-child interactions, and the classroom environment. The Director of Teaching and Learning has been working with DDOE to integrate this observation tool as a part of the Delaware Teacher Growth and Support System (DTGSS) for SMS.

Essential Elements Rubric (EER) (<chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.public-montessori.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/NCMPs-Essential-Elements-for-Public-Montessori-Implementation.pdf>)

The Essential Elements for Montessori in the Public Sector considers five domains: Adults, Montessori Learning Environment, Family Partnership, Leadership and Organizational Development, and Assessment. The first two domains reflect the fidelity of Montessori implementation, while the latter three domains provide insight into the level of a school's sustainability. Each domain of the rubric is comprised of a series of standards of practice (the essential elements), that are further divided into indicators representing a school's present reality.

In April 2023 in preparation for reauthorization and as outlined in the original charter, the school engaged NCMPs to do a full-on campus review of the school with the Essential Elements Rubric (<chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.public-montessori.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/NCMPs-Essential-Elements-Rubric-2023.pdf>). (Oral Report Review attached) This involved three full days on campus visiting every classroom, a debriefing with the teachers, administrators, and board, and a full written report to guide us forward.

Some of their findings:

#### Assets:

- *Industrious & Responsible Children*
- *Dedicated and responsive Faculty and Staff*
- *Purpose-built Facilities & Flexible Spaces*
- *Strong Complement of Montessori Materials*
- *Opportunities for Outdoor Learning*
- *Pedagogical Leadership & Support*
- *Commitment to Montessori Teacher Training*
- *Associates and Support Staff in Classrooms*

#### Opportunities and Recommendations:

##### Community

- Celebrate and champion SMS' accomplishments
- Build opportunities for staff collaboration and coherence Curriculum & Instruction
- Prioritize Montessori materials, lessons, and key experiences
- Foster complex and integrated work across the curricula
- Curate opportunities for student autonomy, purpose, and mastery

##### Assessment

- Establish tools, protocols, and expectations for scientific observation
- Leverage formative data to inform Montessori lesson planning

#### Comments from NCMPs as a result of the review:

- In conversations with the SMS team, it is clear that board leadership, school administration, teachers, and staff are committed to providing a high-quality Montessori education to a diverse student population. SMS is a young school, just now completing its third school year, and continuing to weather the follow-on complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- That each of the classroom teachers at SMS are Montessori-trained, or are in training, represents a sturdy base from which to grow, and has significant school-wide cultural and implementation implications. Schools that can foster community and build capacity through a lens of shared pedagogical priorities are more apt to keep their focus on what matters most: the healthy, holistic development of its students.
- There is a collegial ease among most staff members, and staff often exhibit a calm, peaceful, and energized demeanor when interacting with their students. Lesson presentations, when observed, were generally clear, precise, and introduced with curiosity and purpose. Students appeared to be comfortable with school personnel, and there was often seen a warm and reciprocal attitude of care between the school's adults and children. Though SMS is a young program, the collective attributes of its teachers are rooted in behaviors aligned to positive developmental outcomes for children.
- Family partnership is a priority for SMS. The school employs a full-time Community Engagement Specialist, and families have access to the school's social worker/counselor and licensed school nurse as needed. SMS offers bus transportation for those students living in Sussex County, breakfast and lunch each day, and after-school activities like "Girls on the Run" and chess. In addition, the school serves as a conduit for accessing general wrap-around supports (e.g. rent and food assistance, etc.) and full subsidies are available for all school supplies/activities. SMS understands that a school community is not solely defined by what happens in its classrooms. SMS coordinates special events throughout the year including family cookouts, open houses, parent education, "Parent Camp", "Watch Me Work", and the "Montessori Museum". Such staffing, resources, and community events reflect how fostering strong school-home relationships is at the heart of the school's work. SMS values its students and families, inviting collaboration from the moment the student's educational journey begins; the school not only invites family engagement, but frames this relationship with everyone – parents, grandparents, guardians, and caregivers – as an investment.





The Board has established as a lead strategic goal for “Sussex Montessori School to become a model for future public Montessori schools in Delaware”. The review provided by NCMPs will guide us as we determine the action plans to meet this goal. It is clear that the work of the next 3 years before our next review is to develop consistency, continuity, and coherence around our mission statement.


**Applicant Evidence :**


Dibels 22-23.pdf

Uploaded on 9/4/2023 by Lisa Coldiron


Dibels 21-22.docx

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Sussex Montessori School_ EER _ Preliminary...

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**Q26. Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development As Appendix 3**, provide the following documents as evidence of curriculum alignment to Delaware Content Standards: Provide an electronic copy of curricula including scope and sequence documents, units, assessments and content covered per core content area (Mathematics, English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Visual/Performing Arts, World Languages, Health and Physical Education) for each grade level the school serves. The documents should demonstrate clear alignment with the Delaware Content Standards (including Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, and Next Generation Science Standards) in all content areas. Evidence to establish adherence to the state’s expectations regarding **ELA standards and instruction** through the grade bands should include the following:

- Evidence of the adoption of a high quality instructional resources as defined by EdReports.org., which includes the scope and sequence documents showing units of study with their corresponding anchor texts and culminating tasks with the intended pacing for each grade/course; **OR** curricular resources/documents that meet the criteria of the appropriate IMET from achievethecore.org, including additional resources selected to support areas where the curriculum materials were weak per EdReports.org (yellow or red). Scope and sequence documents must include:
  - featured anchor texts of knowledge building units around topics of inquiry/exploration and intended pacing for each grade/course. These should reflect the distribution of text types and genres required by the standards as outlined in Appendix B.
  - a set of targeted grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards for each unit.
  - alignment to the foundational reading skills and intended pacing for each grade must be included for grades K-5.
- Sample learning experiences (lesson/unit) and assessments with their corresponding rubrics.
- Opportunities provided and embedded within curriculum for professional learning and strategic use of curricular resources.
- In addition, there needs to be a well-articulated academic MTSS process for reading that includes screening, diagnostics, evidence-based interventions, and progress monitoring.
- For grades 9-12, English course sequences/programs of study should be provided. No curricular documents are required for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate SL or HL, or dual enrollment courses.
- Description of the professional learning structures for the ELA teachers and how the vision for professional learning adheres to the state’s standards for professional learning. Please provide sample professional learning goals for the ELA department since the last renewal.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state’s expectations regarding **Math standards and instruction** through the grade bands should include the following:

- Evidence of the adoption of a high quality, standards aligned instructional resource as defined by EdReports.org. This includes the scope and sequence documents showing alignment to standards and intended pacing for each grade/course; **OR** curricular resources/documents that meet the criteria of the appropriate IMET from achievethecore.org including additional resources selected to support areas where the curriculum materials were weak per EdReports.org (yellow or red). Scope and sequence documents showing alignment to standards and intended pacing for each grade/course must be included in this documentation.
- Sample learning experiences (lesson/unit) and assessments
- Opportunities provided and embedded within the curriculum for professional learning and strategic use of curricular resources.
- Description of the professional learning structures the mathematics teachers engage in and how the vision for professional learning adheres to the state’s standards for professional learning. Please provide sample professional learning goals for the mathematics department since the last renewal.
- In addition, there needs to be a well-articulated academic MTSS process for mathematics that includes screening, diagnostics, evidence-based interventions, and progress monitoring.
- Additionally, for grades 9-12, Mathematics course sequences/programs of study should be provided. No curricular documents are required for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate SL or HL, or dual enrollment courses.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state’s expectations regarding **Social Studies standards and instruction** through the grade bands should include the following:

- Scope and sequence showing standards targeted and major topics for each grade/course in the school.
- One sample assessment aligned to state standards – intended to provide evidence of student achievement of standards - for each grade/course in the school.
- No curricular documents are required for AP, IB, or dual enrollment courses.
- Schedule of time allotted for social studies instruction in each grade

Evidence to establish adherence to the state’s expectations regarding **Science standards and instruction** through the grade bands should include the following:

- Evidence of the adoption of a high-quality instructional resource as defined by EdReports.org or curricular resources that meet the criteria of the EQUiP rubric from nextgenscience.org, reviewed by an external evaluator that is not the materials publisher.
- The LEA must provide a scope and sequence for each grade level that includes the unit topic, the unit phenomenon, standards that are covered in that unit, what the students do and figuring out in the unit, and include a lesson and sample assessment from K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, depending on the structure of the school.
- Schedule of time allotted for science instruction in each grade
- A Response to the following questions:
  - What is the professional development plan to support continuous three-dimensional learning along with your instructional resources?
  - Describe how you ensure accessibility for all students in science.
  - Describe how your administrators are monitoring science instruction to ensure the shifts in science are occurring.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state’s expectations regarding **Visual/ Performing Arts standards and instruction** through the grade bands should include the following:

- Scope and sequence showing National Core Arts Standards/Delaware State Standards targeted and major topics for each grade/course in the school.
- One sample assessment and rubrics aligned to state (NCAS) standards – intended to provide evidence of student achievement of standards - for each grade/course in the school.
- Schedule of time allotted for arts instruction in each grade band.



- No curricular documents are required for AP, IB.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state's expectations regarding **World Languages standards and instruction** in grades 9-12 should include the following:

- Curriculum map or scope and sequence showing the targeted Delaware World-Ready Standards for Learning Languages, state proficiency targets and major learning contexts (themes) for each level of language instruction.
- One sample assessment and accompanying scoring rubric from one learning context--intended to provide evidence of student growth in proficiency--for each level of language instruction.
- No curricular documents are required for AP, IB.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state's expectations regarding **Health Education standards and instruction** in grades K-8 and 1/2 credit in high school (grades 9-12) should include the following:











- Curriculum map or scope and sequence showing the National Health Education Standards/Delaware State Standards targeted and attention to the specific learning concepts for each grade.
- One sample document outlining adherence to the hours requirements for specific health concepts in Regulation 551.
- One sample assessment and accompanying scoring rubric aligned to state standards - intended to provide evidence of student achievement of standards - for each grade level in the school.

Evidence to establish adherence to the state's expectations regarding **Physical Education standards and instruction** in grades K-8 and 1 credit in high school (grades 9-12) should include the following:

- Curriculum map or scope and sequence showing alignment to the Delaware physical education standards and grade level expectations.
- One sample assessment and accompanying scoring rubric aligned to state standards - intended to provide evidence of student achievement of standards - for each grade level in the school (example: state physical fitness assessment data and programming provided by the Delaware Department of Education)
- No curricular documents are required for elective Physical Education courses, which should not exceed 1 credit to fulfill graduation requirements.

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 100

**Applicant Evidence :**

 Attachment 4B - Curriculum Overview_2.docx Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	 Sussex Montessori Physical Education Curric... Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	 Sussex Montessori School Math Curriculum ... Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	 MTSS_Child Study Protocol.pdf Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Lisa Coldiron
 MTSS.docx Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	 Sussex Montessori Health Education Curricu... Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	 Attachment 4A - A Day in the life.doc Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	 Sussex Montessori Visual and Performing Ar... Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Lisa Coldiron
 Sussex Montessori ELA Curriculum Map _SM... Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	 Sussex Montessori Interdisciplinary Social St... Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Lisa Coldiron		

**6.3. At-Risk Students, Students with Disabilities, and English Language Learners**

Q27.If applicable, describe any changes or enhancements the school has made based on findings from audits, investigations, or other administrative proceedings related to at-risk students, students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, or Multilingual Learners.



**Enhancements to our practices supporting our MLL instruction, tracking and programming:**

With respect to our MLLs, we have implemented a fully functioning WIDA/Access program that is facilitated by a staff coordinator. The coordinator oversees all assessments of Kindergarten learners and students in grades 1-6 that qualify for educational MLL services. We have a certified staff who delivers MLL instruction to our qualifying multi-language learners. This instructor provides materials and supports to our teachers who have MLL learners in their classrooms.

We have already identified a need for school wide professional development and training for all of our teachers. We plan to implement the MLL Resources available on the DOE website, send teachers to the annual WIDA conference, create supplementary Montessori materials and use the STAR Reading & Math platform as both a benchmark and progress monitoring tool to carefully track our learners' growth in their English proficiency. Progress monitoring will occur bi-weekly. Monthly PLCs that focus on Curriculum and Instruction will have a recurring agenda item for teachers to report on their MLL student's progress. We will begin to prepare for and deliver this critical work in the spring of 2024 and as part of the summer 2024 in-service training agenda.

Our WIDA data shows that our middle school MLLs, in particular, (4-6 graders) are proficient speakers and who comprehend English. The data also shows that they are not proficient in reading, writing and specific literacy skills. Going forward, these learners will receive daily targeted instruction during the MTSS sessions scheduled across our academic school year. (See Summative Roster) Those that qualify for 'sheltered' and 'intensive' support will receive it during the MTSS sessions as well as by the MLL certified instructor.








Additionally, the Spec Education coordinator and the director of teaching and learning work together to ensure that MLL learners that also qualify for Spec Ed services receive them through the lenses of MLL best practices and in compliance with all DDOE requirements.

**Students with Disabilities**

We are working closely with the Department of Education and the Access Center to build a strong, effective Special Education Department. We begin the 2023-24 school year with a new, highly experienced and dedicated special education coordinator to lead this work. All teachers have undergone professional development on Formal Data Collection and Progress Monitoring, data-based decision making, FAPE and writing effective IEP's. Professional Development will continue throughout the entire year to ensure continued growth and understanding. We hired a new, experienced Special Education Coordinator to help support and drive these initiatives. School schedules have been adjusted to allow for weekly level meetings to support Curriculum, Data and MTSS work. All grade levels will be meeting weekly with the Special Education Coordinator. The August PD plan, Data Based Decision making power point and year-long professional learning plans are attached. As a school, we hired additional Special Education teachers to support our growing special education population and ensure all their needs and goals are being met.

We currently have a Compliance agreement with the Department of Education. Our yearlong professional development plan reflects the interventions we have put into place to ensure compliance and growth. (attached) Additionally, we are meeting monthly with the Exceptional Children's group to ensure growth to exemplar. We have established a leadership team of staff who are supporting this important work.

**Applicant Evidence :**

 DE96144090_Summative_Roster-WIDA 2023-...	 DBDM Model	 DBDM Evidence Outline Revision-Final.docx	 2023-2024 Professional Learning Action Plan...
Uploaded on <b>9/25/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	Uploaded on <b>9/25/2023</b> by <b>Jori Martinez-Woods</b>	Uploaded on <b>9/25/2023</b> by <b>Jori Martinez-Woods</b>	Uploaded on <b>9/25/2023</b> by <b>Jori Martinez-Woods</b>
 DBDM Phase 1 Evidence 09-15.docx	 DE96144090_Summative_Roster-WIDA 2023-...	 Sussex Montessori 2021-2022 Compliance M...	
Uploaded on <b>9/25/2023</b> by <b>Jori Martinez-Woods</b>	Uploaded on <b>9/27/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	Uploaded on <b>10/1/2023</b> by <b>Lisa Coldiron</b>	

Q28. Describe any changes or enhancements to the process by which at-risk students, students with disabilities and gifted and talented students are identified and the evidence that the school was able to provide the right resources and services for these students.



As a school, we spent the summer reviewing and revising our existing procedures to enhance our screening processes, our progress monitoring and our MTSS systems and procedures. The team consisted of the following: Our Special Education Coordinator, gen-ed teacher, two associate teachers, special education teacher, the Director of Teaching and Learning and the Head of School. We determined that we needed to add a universal screener (DESSA mini) to determine levels of Social Emotional and Behavioral needs. This platform also provides interventions that can be used to support students who might flag in one area or another. We have added Panorama as a data dashboard to house our data so that we have a clear picture across all domains for each student. Panorama also provides SEL supports that can be used as interventions for individual students, small groups and whole class activities. Additionally, we added Star Reading and Math assessments for early identification of any at-risk students and/or gifted and talented students. Star Reading and Math also provides support for progress monitoring.

As a Montessori School, each classroom environment has not only copious grade level materials, but materials for students who are ready and capable of working above their grade level. We call these projects and works 'extensions' to the grade level standards. The learners are working at a Depth of Knowledge (DOK) solid 3 and 4 level. They are thinking strategically and extending their thinking to innovate and apply what they have mastered at the Depth of Knowledge 1 and 2 levels. They are also encouraged to go beyond the classroom to do research, hold interviews and make presentations to the class as follow up work.

Both education research and federal mandates point toward the desirability of well-implemented inclusion programs for Multi- language learners (MLLs) and special education students. Within an inclusion model, bringing interventionists to the general education classroom, rather than separating students for support services, is an optimal model for supporting students with special educational needs. The logic of the Montessori method uniquely situates its classrooms both to support and benefit from a push-in model of special education and ELL instruction.

At the same time, the impact of the Montessori model is strengthened through a push-in program and, in turn, weakened when students are pulled out of the classroom for services. Push-in services allow MLL and special education students to receive the services they need while reaping the same benefits of the standards-based, content rich Montessori program as their classmates

**Montessori Education offers:**

- Mixed age groups and fully differentiated instruction—A full array and level of materials is available within each multi-grade classroom. Instruction is differentiated for all students, making the differentiation for those with ELL and SPED needs an easily incorporated and natural part of the classroom.
- Individual and small group lessons—The entire Montessori classroom is set up around one-on-one and small group work. When an interventionist comes in and offers such lessons, it fits well within the norm of the classroom and in no way disrupts or stands out from the usual flow of the classroom.
- Uninterrupted three-hour work period—Montessori classrooms are structured around a three-hour work period during which students move freely between work areas and materials. This structure allows the interventionist to work with students at a mutually agreeable time, minimizing interruptions, supporting student choice and thereby enhancing learning.
- Materials that move from the concrete to abstract—Montessori materials begin with concrete representations and then move to abstract for all students. These same materials are easily accessible to MLL and special education students and can be used by push-in teachers to reinforce regular lessons.

Additionally, Sussex Montessori School hired an additional Special Education Teacher to support our learners with disabilities. With a new Special Education Coordinator and two strong Special Education educators, we now have a team to support pushing-in and pulling-out (when needed) across the campus. This support is invaluable to the students and staff alike as noted above. Additionally, we have worked, (and will continue to work) with the Autism Workgroup. Their wisdom and guidance has been tremendous. We have attended meetings with their team, and they have sent experts to our school to observe and coach us in best practices. We are extremely grateful for this support! Our entire team of supports: Speech, OT, PT, SEL, para-professionals, social worker and our Special Education teachers are working "boots on the ground" in and around every classroom. Our practice of one lead teacher and an associate teacher in every classroom results in a teacher to student ratio of 1:13 ratio. This is necessary for a successful Montessori classroom but also supports, in a special way, our students with disabilities. This affords us the ability to support students needing 5-10 one on one academic support, 5-10 minute breaks in their day by taking them for short walks, or sitting quietly by the Koi fish peace pond to decompress before returning to class and to their work cycle.

We are confident that these additional resources will allow us to view each child academically, behaviorally, and social emotionally.

**Q29. Describe any changes or enhancements to the process by which Multilingual Learners are identified and the evidence that the school was able to provide the right resources and services for these students.**



#### MLL Procedures at SMS:

Each year we begin by sending out the Home Language Surveys to all of our families. Once returned, the MLL coordinator gives the K-Screener to all of our newly enrolled Kindergarten learners. We also follow up with our K-1 teachers to ask them after our initial assessments if any learners, who have not yet turned in a survey, might need a call home or an additional survey sent home.

Families receive a letter informing them of their learners' eligibility for MLL services. The screener results and survey information are then in-put into the ClassLink English Learners Tile. The learners, depending on their language proficiency, will receive ESL instruction from the certified instructor as well as the classroom teacher during the daily MTSS session.

#### Towards Best Practices for MLL:

Jori Martinez-Woods, the Director of Teaching and Learning attended the first MLL Coordinators meetings on 9/21/23. Ashlee Miller (ammill@udel.edu) spoke and shared that the Student Success Center has partnered with DDOE to offer support services to Delaware's schools to ensure that each school is providing high quality services to MLL learners. She partners with schools by providing an assessment and evaluation of the school's programming, assists in goals setting and implementation planning. Jori has reached out to Ashlee to meet with the Sussex Montessori team, Lisa Coldiron-Head of School, Anna Ornelas-Moore-MLL Coordinator and Cheryl Martin-Certified MLL Instructor to begin the process.

Jori has also reached out to Maria Rodriguez and Cary Knight, MLL-DDOE Field Agents to visit our campus and support us in providing the best services possible for our learners.

Jori (Director of Teaching and Learning) has registered for two PDMS learning opportunities for MLL k-2 and 3-8 that she will use as a basis for PD training with teachers with MLL learners in their classrooms.

#### Montessori Curriculum and Practices Embed Best Practices for MLL Learners:

The following are methods that make instruction accessible for MLL Learners and are already embedded within our Montessori Practices:

- We infuse instruction with peer-to-peer discussion and exploration across the curricular areas
- We offer adapted or engineered texts when reading materials are dense
- We provide daily opportunities for written expression in all content areas with the use of scaffolds and accommodations
- We use open-ended questions and post them for learners to see
- We provide sentence stems for responses
- We intentionally pair students for discussion and modeling routines
- During MTSS, we provide a similar text in the student's home language
- We offer sentence starters or paragraph frames and encourage drawing, labeling and the use of the home language.

#### Additional ways that a Montessori classroom supports Students with disabilities and our MLL student learners

- Mixed age groups and fully differentiated instruction—A full array and level of materials is available within each multi-grade classroom. Instruction is differentiated for all students, making the differentiation for those with ELL and SPED needs an easily incorporated and natural part of the classroom.
- Individual and small group lessons—The entire Montessori classroom is set up around one-on-one and small group work. When an interventionist comes in and offers such lessons, it fits well within the norm of the classroom and in no way disrupts or stands out from the usual flow of the classroom.
- Uninterrupted three-hour work period—Montessori classrooms are structured around a three-hour work period during which students move freely between work areas and materials. This structure allows the interventionist to work with students at a mutually agreeable time, minimizing interruptions, supporting student choice and thereby enhancing learning.
- Materials that move from the concrete to abstract—Montessori materials begin with concrete representations and then move to abstract for all students. These same materials are easily accessible to ELL and special education students and can be used by push-in teachers to reinforce regular lessons.

We are aware of the importance of providing the services that our MLL learners need and have a strong plan going forward to enrich our programming. We have identified DDOE resources, and have begun initial conversations to assess and evaluate our programming. We will be expanding what we already have begun to ensure that we are utilizing the best practices for our MLL learners to grow in their English proficiency.

## 6.4. Governance and Reporting Requirements

Q30. Describe how the board has provided oversight in the areas of academics, finance, and operations, including legal compliance.



Sussex Montessori's Board of Directors and its associated committees meet monthly, if not more frequently, to ensure proper oversight of academics, finance, and operations. Board committees include an executive, finance, development and facilities committee. All board members serve on at least one board committee and attendance by all board members, at committee and board meetings, is consistently at or above 90%.

The executive committee meets weekly. Its agendas are established based upon needs identified during Head of School and Board Chair meetings. In these initial years of operation, the executive committee has leveraged its vast experience in educational leadership, legal and compliance related areas, and operational insight to support the Head of School's development and the establishment of board level systems. These systems, including regular committee engagement and tri-annual board retreats, are designed to strengthen the school's protocols and policies, monitor academic progress, and encourage organizational resilience and operational efficiency. The executive committee and board chair have also enlisted outside experts as needed. These include national organizations designed to support and evaluate public Montessori initiatives, consultants with expertise in executive leadership development and school culture initiatives. Over time, and with the expansion of leadership roles at the school level, more of these responsibilities are being led by the Head of School and her leadership team with oversight from the executive committee. The executive committee has designed and overseen the annual Head of School evaluation process described in more detail in question 32.

The finance committee meets monthly to review the budget and advise the Head of School on asset allocations, grants management and budgetary planning. They have worked closely with a business manager who has a strong understanding of Delaware school finance. Anticipating her pending retirement, a new position was recommended by the Head of School and, with board approval, a Director of Finance and Operations was added to the school's leadership team in Fall 2023. This person is getting support and training from our current finance manager throughout fy24. This person continues to work closely with the finance committee to ensure continued excellence in fiscal management. A Citizen's Budget Oversight Committee also meets regularly to provide additional input.

The development committee works closely with a contracted fundraiser to identify, apply for and manage grants and donations that have significantly increased the school's ability to provide high quality programming and facilities for our students. To date the committee has largely focused on funding for facilities. As this need begins to stabilize over the next year, we look forward to raising funds for programming.

The facilities committee meets weekly to oversee the extensive renovation of Sussex Montessori's campus. This has included the building of three classroom quads, the renovation of a large barn into classrooms, common space and breakout space for supplemental instruction and special services (speech, OT, etc.) and the renovation of a house that serves as the school's main offices and health/wellness center. Another shared building provides additional space for related arts classes and food/nutrition. The facilities committee has worked closely with the finance committee and facilities staff to fund contracts for all construction and maintenance needs. Additionally, based on recommendations from the Head of School, this committee has overseen the installation of safety and security measures and a new outdoor play area for SMS students.

**Q31. Discuss board-related successes and challenges during the current charter term. Areas you may want to consider as appropriate include:**

- **Membership and recruitment**
- **New member induction and ongoing governance training**
- **Meeting attendance**
- **Board self-evaluation**
- **Progress on particular board-level projects**





• **Membership and recruitment**

Sussex Montessori's founding board has evolved into an operational board with increasing membership from the surrounding community. Retention of key founding board members has lent stability to the school's leadership while some members transitioning off also allowed for the recruitment of new, skilled and passionate community members. Succession planning for the position of Board President is underway with full board involvement and alignment to a newly developed strategic plan.

• **New member induction and ongoing governance training**

The SMS board has developed a new member recruitment and induction process aimed at transparency, consistency and board stability. Interested community members can learn more about becoming a member on the school's website. Resources located on the site include a school board guide to provide insight into the role and responsibilities and a board member application. One to one outreach is also done by the Board President, a board governance committee and Head of School as needed. Upon completion of the board application, prospective members meet with the governance committee and the committee makes a final recommendation to the board. New members are supported by the Board Secretary and the Director of Finance and Operations to access the state portal, complete the required DDOE trainings, and to complete their background checks. Continuing to transition founding members off the board and adding additional local community members is an ongoing goal as terms expire.

• **Meeting attendance**

Sussex Montessori enjoys almost 100% board member attendance at monthly meetings. Committee members also attend their committee meetings with great regularity.

• **Board self-evaluation**

Through both tri-annual board retreat practices and a 2022 board member self-evaluation, the SMS board has reflected on our practices, developed and implemented a regular self-evaluation process. This process also informed the board's recent strategic planning initiative that included input from board members, school faculty and staff and SMS families. The new strategic plan now includes metrics to measure progress across all board and school initiatives that will be monitored by board and school committees. The board is focused on continually evaluating and implementing best practices in board governance and committee leadership for charter schools.

• **Board Growth and Development**

The Board understands that in its role it must protect the mission of the school which is to provide an innovative and unique model of education using the Montessori Pedagogy. To do this we have periodic retreats where we have brought various expertise to support us in this goal. This includes a day long work show with Jonathan Wolff who works with Montessori boards across the county and most recently brining the NCMPs team who conducted the Essential Elements Review to debrief and provide guidance to us.





• **Progress on Board Level Projects**

The Board has focused in these first years on the work of hiring and supporting the Head of School, ensuring that classrooms spaces were ready for the start of the year, fund raising, and ensuring that we operate a financially sound school. The FY23 year brought an opportunity to focus on strategic planning. Now that we have children in the school, families that we serve, and teachers who are ready to work with the Head of School to move the school forward we can focus the board's energies on supporting this work. The Board established these goals:

- 1) Successful Reauthorization
- 2) Become a model for future Public Montessori Schools in Delaware,
- 3) Create a diverse, equitable and inclusive community mindset.
- 4) Maintain procedural, governance and financial goals to ensure long-term stability and sustainability
- 5) Complete the facilities vision of the campus to include k-6 classrooms, shared space, outdoor education opportunities and community involvement – the school is a community resource

Please see section 9 for more on this plan.


**Applicant Evidence :**

			
NCMPS _ Letter to SMS Board of Directors (0...	Sussex Board Training Letter.pdf	Board Self-Eval 2022.pdf	Strategic Plan Document_6.23.23_GENERAL ...
Uploaded on 9/25/2023 by Linda Zankowsky	Uploaded on 9/24/2023 by Linda Zankowsky	Uploaded on 9/19/2023 by Trish Hermance	Uploaded on 9/19/2023 by Linda Zankowsky

Q32. Describe the process used by the board to evaluate school leadership.

The Board chair completed DPAS training in the fall of 2020. However, the board felt that we needed a HOS evaluation that would reflect the attributes of Montessori School Leadership. The SMS board submitted to DDOE and received approval for an alternative Head of School evaluation tool prior to the opening of the school. The board completes this evaluation annually. Each board member completes an assessment of the HOS using a common rubric. Those results are shared with the executive committee, aggregated for distribution to the whole board and shared with the Head of School. The Board President shares the feedback with the Head of School and works with her to develop related goals for the subsequent year. The Board President also provides the Head of School with regular feedback through weekly meetings and a mid-year check in. The Board has also engaged a leadership mentor for the Head of School to provide personal feedback and support in these initial years of the school's operations.

**Applicant Evidence :**


Sussex Montessori School HAI.pdf
Uploaded on 9/24/2023 by Linda Zankowsky

Q33. Describe the school's process for succession planning including identification, development and retention of school leaders.

The SMS strategic plan goal 4 states that the board will, "Maintain procedural, governance and financial goals to ensure long-term stability and sustainability". A priority for fy24 is to develop and implement a succession planning strategy to ensure that board membership and school leadership is aligned with the mission/vision of SMS. The board has begun discussions about succession planning for both the Head of School and the Board President. Stability in these positions have been key in these initial years but for the health of the school long term, we recognize the need to plan for succession as needed. Leading a Montessori school takes a unique leadership approach so board members stay involved with national organizations focused on Montessori education and leadership. These organizations serve as potential recruitment sources for future school leaders. Leadership pipelines also exist within SMS. A teacher serves on the board of directors, and teachers serve on site-based leadership teams.

Q34. Share how the Board supports the school. Speak to the Board's involvement in events, operations, and fundraising activities.





The SMS board is actively engaged in supporting the school.

**Events**

The board attends a variety of school events throughout the year including the “watch me work days”, board visitation day, special recognitions of students or staff, school cookouts, meetings with funders, and events to thank our funders to name a few. Going forward, the board chair has charged each board member to be present informally in classrooms several times a year so that the board members understand and can support the Montessori philosophical stance of the school. Board members have held meetings with the staff on the funding of the school, the facility needs, and for input in the strategic planning process. The board understands that to support the school, we must be actively engaged in the life of the school.

**Operational:**

Charter schools have limited staffing for the vital operational functions during the start up years. This is particularly evident in western Sussex County where the local schools receive fewer local dollars than any other district in Delaware. In addition, Sussex Montessori School opened at the height of the pandemic when additional operational issues needed to be addressed. The Sussex Montessori School board has risen to support the HOS throughout these initial years by providing operational support in areas of our expertise. For example:

- one of our board members, the president of the local hospital, stepped quickly into the role of COVID Task force chair and was available to assist the head of school with all the various issues related to the pandemic.
- Other board members had backgrounds in teacher certification and were able to support the Head of School as we filled teaching positions and served on initial interviews as requested.
- Another board member has knowledge of transportation issues and was able to support the creation of the van hubs and creatively consider the double bus runs required to safely bring children to school.
- Others participated in the facility committee providing weekly oversight ensuring that we had facilities ready to welcome children each year as the school grew.
- The SMS board is also focused on the funding and infrastructure that is needed to support children, teachers, and parents in the school. Some examples include that the board has supported the Head of School to add more PD days to the calendar, to provide funding for transportation support for children, and to be available to engage with parents as needed.

These are just a few of the many ways that the SMS board has supported the many operational issues that needed to be addressed as the school opened.

**Fundraising:**

This has been a primary focus of the board as there is no funding for capital expenses for charter schools. The board settled on the property on Stein Highway shortly after the charter approval. We had a USDA backed construction loan that enabled us to initiate the construction of the first two classroom quads to open in 2020. In addition to that loan, the board has raised approximately \$8,000,000 dollars in grants and donations since the school's inception to allow us to expand classroom spaces for each year of the school's growth. These funds have come from our Delaware Foundations who have generously supported this initiative in Western Sussex County as well as our local leaders who see the value that the school brings to the community. Going forward we look forward to turning our attention to funding to support student programming and teacher professional growth.

**Q35. Appendix 4: Current Organizational Chart**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

**Applicant Comments :**

Since opening, the school has grown from 260 children to its current enrollment of approximately 440 children. We anticipate enrollment to continue to grow to our fully authorized charter capacity. A growing school means more operational demands. It was clear that the Head of School had too many direct reports related to the school's operations. The school recently added the role of Director of Finance and Operations to address this issue and allow the Head of School to better focus on the long-term vision for the school. The attached organizational chart reflects this direction.

**Applicant Evidence :**

	
Sussex Montessori Org Chart 23-24.pdf	SMS Distributive Leadership Model 23-24.pdf

Uploaded on 9/16/2023 by Trish Hermance

Uploaded on 9/16/2023 by Trish Hermance

**Q36. Appendix 5: Board member and school leader succession plans**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

**Applicant Comments :**

Please see the attached document outlining the SMS Board Member and School leaders succession plans.

**Applicant Evidence :**


SMS Succession Plan 2023.pdf

Uploaded on 9/23/2023 by Linda Zankowsky

**6.5. Students and School Environment**

**Q37. Describe how the school solicits feedback from parents and students regarding satisfaction with the school. Provide summary data and reflect on the feedback. How does the school use this information to inform ongoing school improvement?**

The school has contracted with Panorama Education to allow us to collect valid and reliable feedback regarding teacher/student relationships, engagement, school safety, parent satisfaction, teacher satisfaction etc. Panorama allows us to consistently collect climate surveys. As a school, we review all survey data to look closely for areas of potential growth. Parent/Educator and student surveys specifically drive the schools' strategic plans and staff day to day programming.

July board retreats are the time for the board and Head of School to review the survey data which is used to focus and inform decisions and progress areas for improvement for family relations and academic progress. The Board and Head of school use this information to review the long-term strategic plan goals, short-term goals for the upcoming year, and where funds or grants may be obtained to ensure that we have the resources needed to accomplish our goals.



Applicant Evidence :

		
2022_Family Survey Data_All_220619 (1)[1986...	Parent Survey_2023_EOY_sussexmontessoric...	SMS Parents VIDEO.mp4

Uploaded on 7/17/2023 by Lisa Coldiron




Uploaded on 7/17/2023 by Lisa Coldiron

Uploaded on 7/19/2023 by Lisa Coldiron

Q38. **Appendix 6: Please upload an up-to-date Fire Inspection Certificate**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

Applicant Evidence :

		
2nd Qtr. 2022 - Sussex Montessori[198526].pdf	2nd Qtr. 2023 - Sussex Montessori School an...	PR-214192_Plan_Review.pdf

Uploaded on 7/17/2023 by Lisa Coldiron


Uploaded on 7/17/2023 by Lisa Coldiron

Uploaded on 9/23/2023 by Linda Zankowsky

Q39. **Appendix 7: Please upload an up-to-date Insurance Certificate(s)**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

Applicant Evidence :


CoI_Certificate[199914].pdf

Uploaded on 7/19/2023 by Lisa Coldiron

Q40. **Appendix 8: Please upload Navigate report for SY21/22 and SY22/23.**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

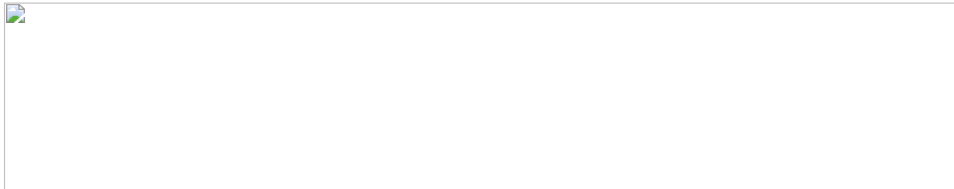
Applicant Evidence :

	
safeplans_2021_safety_plan_report_b.pdf	safeplans_2022_safety_plan_report_b.pdf

Uploaded on 7/17/2023 by Lisa Coldiron

Uploaded on 7/17/2023 by Lisa Coldiron

**6.6. Teacher Retention**



Q41. **Enter 2022-2023 PERCENT of Teachers RETAINED**

SCHOOL YEAR	% TEACHERS RETAINED	TEACHERS RETAINED	# OF TEACHERS ELIGIBLE
2020-21	First Year	First Year	10
2021-22	100%	10	10 + hired 4 new teachers
2022-23	56.25	9	16

Q42. **Enter 2022-2023 NUMBER of Teachers RETAINED**

Eleven of our original staff from 2020 remain with us as the heart of our team. As a school, we support our teachers by providing all tuition costs for Montessori Certification as well as providing fleet vehicles for travel to and from the University of Delaware's Montessori program. Additionally, we support their ongoing growth through Responsive Classroom training and providing travel and tuition costs for national conferences. This is a huge commitment for our teachers and the school. We are committed to developing our bench of Montessori trained teachers through a Montessori pathway to certification through our Associate teacher program. (More about retention in Q 17)

Q43. **Enter 2022-2023 NUMBER of Teachers ELIGIBLE**

16 Teachers are currently on staff, 15 Associate Teachers and 2 Special Education Teachers.

Q44. **Explain successes or challenges of implementing the school's teacher retention plan.**



The success of Sussex Montessori has been the development of a core group of teachers who joined the school during the first two years. These teachers are committed to mentoring new teachers, to serving in leadership roles, and to development Sussex Montessori School to be a model of Montessori in the public sector. These teachers serve as curriculum leads, team leaders, and on the site based decision making team.

One of the greatest challenges of opening a new charter school during the pandemic has been recruiting and retaining teachers. Not only are our teachers required to obtain additional Montessori credentials during their summer break (which in some states is equivalent to a Masters degree), but they have been faced with the extraordinary challenge of supporting students who have either not been in school at all, and/or students who did not have any academic support at home during the pandemic. They are diligently working to support academic growth for every child in their care while at the same time supporting the intense social and emotional needs of children who have experienced a significant trauma. We are overwhelmed at the dedication of these teachers who choose to stay for the good of today's children.

To support these "boots on the ground" teachers, we had a therapist offer monthly group therapy sessions (on campus after school) specifically for our teaching staff, we hired (using ESSER funds) a Responsive classroom trainer to spend the entire year pushing into classrooms for both student and teacher support of classroom management and behavior and we offered fleet vehicles for all staff traveling to Montessori training. Teachers receive a salary increase upon completion of their Montessori training. All of these supports were put into place specifically to support teachers in the areas in which they expressed stress and concern. It is critical to us as a school, that our teachers feel supported and appreciated.

Q45. Describe how the school's professional development plans have evolved over the course of the charter term to support teachers and leadership.



As a Montessori School, we strongly believe in the efficacy of the Montessori philosophy and pedagogy. All of our Lead teachers participate in a 24-month MACTE certified Montessori teacher education program through the University of Delaware's Professional and Continuing Studies division. In many states, this is the equivalent to a master's degree in Montessori education. Additionally, we have included a few associate teachers in Montessori training to further solidify Montessori efficacy in every classroom. Tuition is provided by the school. All teachers are supported with on-site coaching from the University of Delaware Montessori Teacher Residency Program.

On site professional development for staff has consisted of the following: Responsive Classroom, Playworks, Trauma Informed Care, MTSS/ Data Based Decision Making, IEP writing and Literacy. We have sent several of our Associate Teachers to the Reading Assist Institute for training on the Orton Gillingham Reading Program for additional K-1 classroom-level support. Additionally, we have had an internationally respected Montessori consultant (Jonathan Wolff) provide professional development twice a year for all staff. The Leadership team is coached regularly by Jonathan Wolff as well.

The way in which we approach professional development is in line with how we prepare our learners. We center teacher needs, are responsive to those needs and design professional development and modeling to support their needs. Our overarching goals for the 2022-23 school year are outlined below. The goals were derived from the Site Based Decision Team and through the strategic planning goals that came out of SMS Board retreat meetings. The goal is to become a Public Montessori School of Distinction.

Our four 4 primary school-wide focal points for the next two to three years are:

- 1) Montessori Fidelity and Efficacy
- 2) Ensuring that All Means All through the MTSS Process and Special Education Programming
- 3) Increasing Parent Understanding of Montessori/teaching and children's learning
- 4) Continuing to Codifying Montessori Procedures & Policies:

**SUSSEX MONTESSORI SCHOOL FOCUS GOALS FOR 2022-23 ACADEMIC YEAR**

1 Montessori Fidelity and Efficacy:

Tools:

- Site based decision making team
- Active & regular coaching cycle: observation & feedback
- Mentoring by the Director of Teaching and Learning, DOE Mentoring Program Mentors &-the University of Delaware Montessori Teacher Residency Program
- Regular Level Team Meetings focused around curriculum
- Data Based Decision Making /State and Benchmark Assessments
- Transparent Classroom and Panorama
- Weekly PLC- and Curriculum Alignment to the Common Core

2 MTSS/ SPEC ED: ALL MEANS ALL

Tools:

- Data Based Decision Making Systems
- Assessments - STARS, DIBELS, Formative classroom based
- Benchmarking and progress monitoring
- Weekly PLCs: Aperature/SEL/Tiered Interventions
- Weekly PLCs: SPEC ED Data gathering and progress monitoring process, Child Study Process

3 Parent Education: Understanding Montessori/teaching the language of Montessori

- Parent Camps
- Journey Walks /Parent Education on Curriculum
- Family Visiting Days
- 'Watch Me Work' Days

4 Codifying Montessori Procedures & Policies:



- All meetings begin w/ commonly held agreements
- American Montessori Society required materials lists
- Bi-annual materials inventory process
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion included in all staff & parent meetings
- Responsive classroom coaching, modeling, observation & feedback/goal-setting
- Morning/Closing meetings
- Language of reverence
- Development Environment Rating Scale /Essential Elements Assessments

Our summer in-service training agenda, our academic year PLCs, and our monthly Professional Development days centered the work, training and discourse required to achieve our stated goals. Our Site Based Decision Making Team, made up of SMS faculty and staff, also provide invaluable input into our PD scheduling and needs as a result of their leadership.

The summer in-service training agenda of 2023 was designed as an extension of the 2022 PD calendar. We also added a 2-day new staff and faculty orientation and on-boarding training.


We centered our new Assessments, Progress Monitoring, MTSS-Data Based Decision Making, Lesson planning and tracking through Transparent Classroom. Our faculty took a deep dive into IEP planning, delivery, and data collection with our newly hired and experienced SPEC Ed coordinator. The Paras and Associates staff received behavior management and support training, literacy trainings and as well as training a related to their work within a Montessori prepared environment.

We will continue to support our faculty and staff in these areas through weekly PLC opportunities, early dismissal days, and Friday PD days. We will have a designated PD data analysis day following each Beginning of Year (BOY), Middle of Year (MOY) and End of Year (EOY) assessment sessions to ensure that we are making the most of our data collection and instructional planning.

This year, we will continue to focus on Understanding by Design-Integrating Social Studies and Science with the Social Studies and Science coalition support, Science of Reading, HB198 and HB365, and strengthening our Standards Based curriculum alignment with our Montessori curriculum standards, ensuring all Common Core standards are addressed across our curricular model. Katia Foret will continue to support us with SBAC training and PD focused on developing our learners' familiarity with SBAC tests and expectations.

The DTGSS Observations and Montessori Mentoring and Coaching Models also offer critical professional development supports and follow-up PD sessions that are designed to address each individual teachers' specific needs. Angela Socorso, has been instrumental in providing our Director of Teaching and Learning the PD that is needed to fully implement the DTGSS teacher development system alongside the DOE Mentoring programming that occurs throughout the school year. Angela has been an invaluable partner in assisting us to align our model to the new DOE DTGSS model.

**Applicant Evidence :**


Sussex Montessori Year-Long PD Schedule.d...

Uploaded on **9/24/2023** by **Jori Martinez-Woods**

**Q46. Describe how the school's completion of educator evaluations has evolved over the course of the charter term.**

The SMS newly hired Director of Teaching and Learning (2022-23), was trained over the summer on the new DTGSS system. The Director made observations, held debriefing sessions, and entered the observations into the Data Service Center DTGSS system. The goal and expectation is to conduct all DTGSS observations and debriefings with fidelity as well as to maintain documentation in the system.

As the 2022-23 academic year was our first year of the full implementation of our Montessori model post-covid, there was parallel work going on to set the environments, prepare the materials and outline the expectations of a high-fidelity Montessori program. Within the Montessori model, there are also observational tools (DERS-Developmental Environment Rating Scale) which ensure that the environments are prepared, the interactions among the teachers and learners are welcoming and engaging, and that the teachers and their associates are modeling the procedures necessary to the development of a thriving classroom climate and community.

Our commitment to having a highly trained staff, combined with the support required is a worthwhile endeavor. We have a fantastic faculty this year. This requires that our Director of Teaching and Learning support them each in developing their goals using the DERS and DTGSS as tools.

Educator evaluations at a Montessori school are two-fold.

**DTGSS:**

After the initial round of benchmark assessments to include the STAR Math & Reading and Dibels mClass 8 edition, and DELLS & WIDA for Kindergarteners, the Teachers create a student and teacher smart goal for the academic year based on their data analysis. The DTL (Director of Teaching & Learning) approves each goal within the Data Service Center DTGSS system.

In addition to the three 15-minutes DTGSS observations, followed by a debrief. and maintaining the required documentation in the Data Service Center, the DERS will also be given 2 times for teachers with 2+ years of experience and 3 times for our teachers with 1-2 years of experience. The Montessori Leads will also set a personal and student goal after the debrief of their DERS.

**6.7. Closure Requirements**

**Q47. Describe the school's plan for procedures it will follow in the event of the closure or dissolution of the school. The plan should, at a minimum, address each of the following areas:**

- Current balance of contingency reserve funds to be used to cover accrued expenses including summer pay obligations (identify estimated amount for the 2023-24 school year), final audit (identify estimated cost), and other expenses typically incurred by June but paid in July or thereafter.
- If the current contingency reserve balance is insufficient to cover the estimated costs identified above, discuss the school's plan for ensuring the required funds are set aside, including the timeframe for meeting this requirement.



- **Identification of the individuals responsible for handling the school's final closeout activities after closure or dissolution (i.e., who will process any final payments, coordinate the final audit, etc.).**

In the unlikely event that the Sussex Montessori Charter School (SMS) should close or suspend operations, the organization currently has a net cash position (contingency reserve funds) of approximately \$1.8 million, as identified in our 2022-2023 audit to cover accrued expenses, including summer pay obligations. As of June 30, 2024, the accrued salaries and accounts payable are anticipated to be approximately \$685,000. The school's annual mortgage payment is \$307,536. The school is financially prepared to cover these potential and other liabilities, such as compensated absences.

In the event of closure or dissolution of the school, SMS has reserve funds set aside to assure that all employees are paid according to their contractual agreements with the school. All cash and cash equivalents will be distributed first to satisfy outstanding payroll obligations for school employees and then to the remaining creditors of the school. The school's Board reviews its fund balances and financial projections annually to ensure its reserve balances cover such a contingency.

The Head of the School, Director of Finance and Operations, and Board President would handle all final closeout activities and coordinate the final audit should the school close or cease operations. Those individuals are Lisa Coldiron, Head of School; Precious Benson, Director of Finance and Operations; and Linda Zankowsky, Board President. These individuals will work closely with the DOE Charter School Office staff to ensure a timely and effective closure of all school operations.

The SMS Board of Directors would work closely with DDOE concerning steps forward (parent notifications, transfer of records, disposition of school assets, etc.) to ensure a smooth and orderly closure and transition. The school would follow all legal and regulatory requirements, such as those in Delaware Code 512, §16.



## 7. Financial Performance

The Financial Performance Framework is a reporting tool that provides the Department of Education with the necessary data to assess the financial health and viability of charter schools in its portfolio for the purposes of an annual review. The framework summarizes a charter school's financial health while taking into account the school's financial trends over a period of three years. Please utilize the hyperlink in this sentence for more information about the Financial Performance Framework (<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/2626>).

### 7.1. Financial Performance Framework

#### SUMMARY AND OVERALL RATINGS

YEAR	Current Ratio (Working Capital Ratio)	Debt to Asset Ratio	Days Cash	Debt Service Payments / Loan Covenants	Aggregated Three-Year Total Margin	Cash Flow	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	Enrollment Variance	Student Retention	Financial Management & Oversight	OVERALL RATING
	1a	1b	1c	1d	2a	2b	2c	2d	3	4	
2021-22	M	M	M	M	Not Rated	Not Rated	M	M	Not Rated	M	Meets Standard

M: Meets Standard  
AS: Approaching Standard  
F: Far Below Standard

**Note:** On June 18, 2020, the State Board of Education approved the updated Financial Performance Framework. Below is the school's historical data.

#### Historical Financial Framework Data

YEAR	Near Term Indicators				Sustainability Indicators					OVERALL RATING
	Current Ratio	Days Cash	Enrollment Variance	Default, Loan Covenants, & Debt Service Payments	Total Margin	Debt to Asset Ratio	Cash Flow	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	Financial Management & Oversight	
1a	1b	1c	1d	2a	2b	2c	2d	3		
2020-21	M	M	M	M	Not Rated	M	Not Rated	M	M	Meets Standard

Q48. Using the results contained in the Financial Performance Framework, describe the school's financial performance over the current charter term. (This section is for the school to address any overall rating where the school has not met standards. The school will be able to address individual metrics in the sections below.)

Not Applicable - The Sussex Montessori School has met standards in all areas that the school was rated. The school's overall rating was Meets Standards for each year the framework was calculated.

The school's financial performance remained strong during our initial charter term.

Q49. Identify changes to financial practices that the school has implemented to improve the school's financial outcomes.

The school is approaching its maximum grade configuration and must manage based on slower revenue growth. In July 2023, the school hired a Director of Finance and Operations who will provide increased focus on the school's operations with the goals of greater efficiency and productivity. The Director will be cross-training with the current contracted business manager to take over the school's financial reporting in the 24-25 school year. We will continue to have monthly Finance Committee meetings led by the Board's treasurer and periodic off-site strategic meetings to align our financial and academic goals as identified in the strategic plan.

Q50. Address any measure(s) where the school did not meet the standard.

Not Applicable - The Sussex Montessori School has met standards in all areas that the school was rated (the school was not rated in two areas). The school's overall rating was Meets Standards.

Q51. Describe how the school developed and implemented a corrective action plan in response to audit findings (if applicable).

Not Applicable - The Sussex Montessori School has not had any identified audit findings during any audits during our Charter term.

Q52. Appendix 9: Upload a Summary of Findings from Independent Audits (if applicable).

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10





**Applicant Comments :**

Not Applicable - The Sussex Montessori School has not had any identified audit findings during any audits during our Charter term.

**Q53. Appendix 10: Upload a Final Fiscal Year 2023 Revenue & Expenditure Budget Report in the prescribed Department format**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

**Applicant Evidence :**

SMS - June 2023 Financial Report.pdf

Uploaded on 9/15/2023 by Michelle Hastie

**Q54. Appendix 11: Upload an Approved Preliminary Fiscal Year 2024 Budget in the prescribed Department format. The budget narrative should make clear the assumptions on which the school bases its key revenue and expenditure projections. In addition, the budget and narrative should describe any anticipated changes to the school's financial position and clearly articulate the financial impact of any proposed modifications on other aspects of the school's education program and operations (e.g., new curriculum or instructional materials, modified staffing structure, decreased or increased enrollment, etc.).**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

**Applicant Evidence :**

BUDGET NARRATIVE FOR SMS CHARTER REN...

Uploaded on 9/29/2023 by Michelle Hastie

SM - REVISED Preliminary Budget with Augus...

Uploaded on 9/29/2023 by Michelle Hastie

SMS - FY24 State and Local Revised Budget P...

Uploaded on 9/29/2023 by Michelle Hastie

SM - Preliminary Federal Budget - August 20...

Uploaded on 9/29/2023 by Michelle Hastie

Capital Budget Year Ending June 30, 2024.pdf

Uploaded on 10/2/2023 by Michelle Hastie

**Q55. Appendix 12: Upload a Fiscal Year 2023 Audited Financial Statements (if final report is not available, a draft version is acceptable until final version is completed).**

Upload Required File Type: pdf, image, excel, word, text Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 10

**Applicant Evidence :**

Sussex Montessori School, Inc. - Financial St...

Uploaded on 9/29/2023 by Michelle Hastie



## 8. Innovative Practices

Q56.

Describe effective systems, structures, and/or processes that have led to significant school improvement that could be replicated at other schools. Please include the data that supports the success of these practices. Areas you may want to consider, as appropriate:

- Leadership
- Professional Learning
- Instructional Transformation
- Equity
- Culture and Climate Shift
- Collaboration/Partnerships



## Leadership

As a school, we are committed to a strong, productive, and supportive school culture. This requires that all stakeholders have a role in decisions making for the school. We formed a **Site Based Decision Making Team (SBDMT)** comprised of: Administrators, Teachers, An Associate Teacher, paras, Community Engagement Specialist and enrichment specialists. The purpose of the SBDMT is to work as a collective, diverse body in the best interests of the Sussex Montessori Charter School community. The duties of the team include but are not limited to considering and/or implementing plans regarding students' social, emotional, and educational needs, addressing specific concerns of the staff, developing and/or revising policies and procedures regarding school activities and events, and providing constructive feedback and suggestions to the board as requested. (By-Laws of the SBDMT are uploaded) This pro-active group supports the health and well-being of the school culture through communication, family engagement support and suggestions, problem solving and over-all community support. This team facilitated the Commonly Held Agreements that the staff drafted together which guides our interactions and how we have agreed to show up as a team and SMS community member. (attached)

The school has three team level leads (For the 5-6 age group, the 6-9 age group and the 9-12 age group). **Level Leads** are responsible for setting monthly meetings with their colleagues, they set the agenda (guided by team input) and any follow up meetings. Level meetings discuss curriculum, standards, enrichment, and child study. Additionally, there are three **curriculum leads:** Language Arts, Math and Culture. The Curriculum leads have open office hours monthly which allows staff to stop in with and questions and to seek support.

We have strong **student leaders** at our school as well! We have: junior bus captains, peace keepers and safety patrols. All of these positions are held by our Upper Elementary students (6th year students - 12 year olds) and elected monthly by their peers. The Junior bus captain supports the teacher bus captains in ensuring all of the correct students are on the bus and that bus etiquette is maintained according to agreed upon agreements. Peace Keepers are student leaders who are voted on by their peers and attend Kindergarten and First grade recess to initiate appropriate play and help negotiate any conflicts. Safety Patrols have set locations on campus at the end of the day to encourage walking and general safety across the campus.

We have a very engaged group of **parent leaders** who facilitate and attend our Parent Camp meetings. (Attendance data, flyers and picture link attached) The entire school and parent community comes together in support of this initiative. It is an opportunity for families to interact and support each other as well as the school. Parent leaders who facilitate participate in a professional learning course to prepare them to facilitate their sessions. (<https://sussexmontessoricharter.com/sms-parentcamp/> (<https://sussexmontessoricharter.com/sms-parentcamp/>))

Additionally, we have a strong PTO Parent leadership group who facilitate and plan student activities and teacher and school supports.

## Professional Learning

As a professional learning community, our teachers engage in multiple professional learning opportunities. Through our partnership with the University of Delaware Montessori Teacher Residency (UDMTR) program, our teachers spend two years working towards their Montessori certification. UDMTR sends coaches regularly to assist teachers and support their continued growth.

As a school, we are committed to Responsive classroom approach as a way to build a strong school culture that supports children's social/emotional development. This research based approach stems from the Montessori philosophical stance empowering children with the skills needed to engage with their peers. We have prioritized this support in the first three years with ongoing PD an coaching. We will be continuing to build ongoing opportunities for this training as new teachers complete their Montessori Training.

We have weekly after-school "Montessori Lesson Study" sessions that support, train, and guide teachers in their teaching and learning specifically with the Montessori materials. Each teacher in Montessori training has weekly coaching provided by UDMTR.

Several teachers have participated in Child Study coursework offered through the National Center For Montessori in the Public Sector, and well as Trauma Informed Teaching through the Department of Education. Going forward we are emphasizing various professional learnings related to Special Education and the Montessori classroom.

Our Associate Teachers participate in monthly PLC meetings with the Director of Teaching and Learning. This provides an ongoing opportunity to enhance their understanding of the Montessori pedagogy and their role in the classroom.

## Instructional Transformation

What makes Sussex Montessori School's instruction transformative is its commitment to the Montessori methodology and pedagogy as well as adhering to the expectations and regulations of the Department of Education. Our classrooms are multi-age classrooms and support individualized learning plans for every student. In mixed-age classrooms, older learners build patience and empathy as they help others by sharing their expertise with learning tasks they have already mastered. By assisting younger learners, older students further learn their work. (We remember what we teach!) Younger learners also have the opportunity to lead as all students are working on their individualized learning plans according to their academic and developmental level. In general, our students stay in their same class community for 2-3 years which allows for a strong community culture to be built and maintained. When the new school year begins, we are able to jump right into our work cycles as we have a strong group of students who are ready to model behavioral and academic expectations for our younger learners.

Every classroom has two adult leaders in their classroom: a Lead teacher and an associate. The Lead teacher holds Delaware teacher certification and is either a fully certified Montessori teacher or is in training. Many of our associate teachers are working towards their teaching certification as well as their Montessori Credentials.

To support our families in understanding their child's education, we offer Montessori visiting days. These have been extremely well attended! Family members arrive at school and spend the afternoon being guided and led by their child. The child has decided what they wish to teach their parent/guardian, has prepared their lesson and then presents this lesson for their parent/guardian or their classmates parent/guardian. It is a very powerful model that allows a student to own their learning, share it, and feel a sense of pride and accomplishment. Heard by many, MANY parents as they leave this very special day, "Wow!! Had I learned math that way when I was younger, I would have understood it!"

## Equity

As a school, we are committed to supporting all of our families who choose to attend Sussex Montessori School. We are located in a low-income area and many of our families have transportation challenges and food insecurity. As such, we have the following in place to support all of our families:

- Supplemental Transportation
- Food Pantry - addressing food insecurity
- Grant funds to provide access to student field experiences
- Investment into equitable distribution of Montessori Materials (15-20K per classroom)
- Prioritized hiring of multilingual staff (French, Spanish, Creole)
- Prioritizing hiring a diverse staff

The Board has included as a strategic goal the development of an "equity mindset" at the school.

## Culture and Climate Shift

As a new school, Sussex Montessori teachers, administrators, and the board have been focused on building the kind for school culture and community that is welcoming, accepting, and supports all learners with unconditional acceptance. This is a huge challenge. We have laid a strong foundation for this work.

As a school, we use the evidence-based Responsive Classroom model in all of our classrooms which is a student-centered social emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline. It trains and guides teachers into creating classroom communities that allow students to develop strong social skills thus helping them thrive within their class and school community.



As a professional community, we have developed our own Commonly Held Agreements (attached) that guide the way we work with one another, how we show up as a community and how we support one another as a school community. We welcome new staff with two days of on-boarding and welcome our Kindergartners with summer Kinder-camp to ease their transition to their new school. Additionally, we offer summer meetings to allow new students in the upper grades to become acclimated to their new school and to the Montessori pedagogy and philosophy.

**Collaborations and Partnerships:**

The school has built and maintains many community partnerships that support various aspects of our work. This table provides a summary for these programs.

<p><b>Partnerships to supporting the Montessori Pedagogy</b></p> <p>Montessori Works, DE</p> <p>National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector</p> <p>First State Montessori Academy</p> <p>Delaware Department of Education</p> <p>University of Delaware Montessori Teacher Residency</p> <p><b>Partnership Supporting the Charter School</b></p> <p>Delaware Charter Network</p> <p>Delaware Department of Education</p> <p><b>Partnerships to Support Reading</b></p> <p>Reading Assist Institute</p> <p>University of Delaware Montessori Teacher Residency</p> <p><b>Partnerships to Support Children's Mental and Physical Health</b></p> <p>Minds Over Matter</p> <p>Children and Families First</p> <p>Healthy Foods for Healthy Kids</p> <p>Clothing Our Kids</p> <p>Food Bank of Delaware</p> <p>Harry K Foundation</p> <p>Milestones Consulting</p> <p><b>Programming Partnerships</b></p> <p>UD Cooperative Extension</p> <p>4H</p> <p>Playworks</p> <p>Master Gardeners</p> <p>Girls on the Run</p> <p>Chess Masters of Delaware</p> <p>Freeman Stage</p> <p>Boys and Girls Clubs</p>
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**Applicant Evidence :**

SMS Site Based Decision Making Team Bylaw...	Commonly Held Agreements.docx	Parent Camp Attendance Data.docx
Uploaded on 9/19/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	Uploaded on 9/19/2023 by Lisa Coldiron	Uploaded on 9/19/2023 by Lisa Coldiron



## 9. Looking Forward: Plans for the Next Charter Term

This section provides the school with an opportunity to discuss plans for the next charter term. Schools should identify any anticipated changes to the school's educational program, governance model and financial outlook and must identify any proposed changes that would require modification of a material provision in the school's charter contract or that are likely to impact the school's academic or organizational success or its financial sustainability. As a general rule, the school should identify any changes that are relevant or significant with respect to the performance outcomes that the school has agreed to meet or are otherwise relevant to the school's renewal and continued authorization and operation as a public charter school. The authorizer reserves the right to request additional information so that it may sufficiently assess the impact and planning for such changes. Even if proposed changes would occur several years into the next charter term, the authorizer strongly encourages applicant to outline them here.

### Q57. Describe any significant changes to the essential terms of the school's educational program, including but not limited to the school's mission, course of study, instructional program, grade levels served.

We do not anticipate significant changes to the essential elements of our original charter. The school has effectively been open for three years; this is the first year for 6th grade. Much of that time was impacted by Covid. The Board and school administration are looking forward to a time of consolidation and refinement of practice to ensure that our children continue to grow socially and emotionally as well as academically, that strong relationships are built with all stakeholders, and the school is thriving across all measures.

### Q58. Describe any anticipated changes to the governance of the school, including but not limited to board composition, committee structure, and/or amendments to by-laws.

The board is in the final stages of transitioning from a founding board to an operational board. One of our initial goals at the time of authorization was to begin to transfer the non-Sussex County members from the board and add Sussex County membership. We have had four New Castle County members leave the board since that time and have successfully replaced them with Sussex County leadership. We currently have two board members who live outside of Sussex County. We anticipate that during this next five year period we will be transitioning these board members to Sussex County members.

The board has adopted a strategic plan for the next three - five years. We are establishing board/staff committees to focus on this plan during FY24 upon completion of the reauthorization process. These goals include:

1) Become a model for future Public Montessori Schools in Delaware, 2) Create a diverse, equitable and inclusive community mindset. 3) Maintain procedural, governance and financial goals to ensure long-term stability and sustainability 4) Complete the facilities vision of the campus to include k-6 classrooms, shared space, outdoor education opportunities and community involvement – the school is a community resource

The Board made a minor revision to the bylaws to define the board terms. We do not anticipate significant changes to the bylaws.

#### Applicant Evidence :

	
Strategic Plan Document_6.23.23_GENERAL ...	SMS Bylaws (amended March 2022) (1).pdf

Uploaded on 9/17/2023 by Linda Zankowsky

Uploaded on 9/19/2023 by Linda Zankowsky

### Q59. Provide detailed information on the board's plan to assess its performance annually and hold itself accountable for achieving its goals and govern effectively.

#### Board self-evaluation

Through both tri-annual board retreat practices and a 2022 board member self-evaluation, the SMS board has reflected on our practices, developed and implemented a regular self-evaluation process. This process also informed the board's recent strategic planning initiative that included input from board members, school faculty and staff and SMS families. The new strategic plan now includes metrics to measure progress across all board and school initiatives that will be monitored by board and school committees. The board is focused on continually evaluating and implementing best practices in board governance and committee leadership for charter schools. With this in mind, we have used our triannual retreats to provide governance training and to learn more about our work as a Montessori Board. This work includes support from the Delaware Charter Network, Presentations by Jonathan Wolff a national Montessori Board consultant, and the Essential Elements Rubric review report from the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector.

### Q60. Describe any anticipated changes to the school leadership or staffing model and any proposed changes to the management of the school, including any changes to the school's relationship with a third-party education service provider, if one exists. If the school does not currently contract with a Charter Management Company but intends to do so during the next charter term, if the school currently contracts with a Charter Management Company but does not intend to continue to do so during the next term, or if the school intends to make material modifications to its existing management agreement, the school must contact the authorizer for additional information prior to the submission of this application.

The school has no relationship with and does not anticipate a relationship with a Charter Management Company.

In anticipation of the retirement of our contracted business manager, we have hired a Director of Finance and Operations who will be working closely with our current business manager this year to take over the financial reporting in FY25.

The board anticipates changes in leadership over the next five years. In preparation for this, the board is establishing a leadership search committee so that relationships are built within the various national Montessori organizations that support potential leadership searches when the time comes.

### Q61. Describe how state data systems will be used and monitored to support informed decision-making in the areas of academic performance, organizational management, and financial viability. Include any coordinated professional development intended to sustain these processes.



Sussex Montessori School's board adheres to the performance monitoring process outlined in the school's original application. Please see uploaded table outlining the areas being monitored, who is accountable and reports to the board.

The Board and Staff participate in various trainings provided by DDDOE including the following:

- Board Governance
- Financial Governance
- Special Education Due Process Training
- Our DFO is participating in required financial and human resources trainings
- The Director of Teaching and Learning participates in required trainings on DEGGs, special education, and curriculum.
- The Student Success Committee is comprised of the Director of Teaching and Learning and the teachers who serve as curriculum leads at the school. They participate in state PD in their various curriculum areas.
- There is ongoing training in E-school and other systems that the state uses to track data.

There is an annual review in April conducted by the Board Secretary and the DFO of all new staff and board members who may need the above required training.

**Applicant Evidence :**



Sussex Montessori School Performance Mon...

Uploaded on 9/17/2023 by Linda Zankowsky

**Q62. Describe the current status of the school facility and discuss any anticipated changes in facilities needs or location. Ensure that the budget narrative (Appendix 11) explains how the school's facilities plans are reflected in the budget.**

Since the purchase of the property in Seaford in 2018, Sussex Montessori has:

- Secured a USDA loan of \$7.6 million and raised an additional \$8 million to complete construction of beautiful indoor and outdoor spaces for children to experience the Montessori curriculum.
- built 3 classroom pods with 4-6 classrooms in each pod for a total of 14 classroom spaces in new construction. This year, the school is completing the addition of 3 modular classrooms for a full enrollment and 17 classroom spaces. State of the art ventilation and carefully designed facilities that allow for outdoor, experiential learning allowed us to bring children to campus immediately during Covid.
- renovated the first floor of the carriage house to serve a food service location and common areas.
- renovated the first floor of the historic barn to include a food pantry, clothing closet, some office spaces, classroom spaces, restrooms, and shared common areas for meetings. It is expected that the second floor of the barn will become open community space by the end of 2025.

Our facility priorities going forward are to:

1. Ensure the school is a secure and safe environment.
2. Ensure sufficient Montessori classroom spaces. - this has been accomplished
3. Address faculty space needs for meetings, prepping materials, etc.
4. Purchase adjoining land to create flexibility for potential playing fields
5. Raise funds and build permanent classrooms by 2030
6. Develop and implement an asset management system so that there is an active database of information to track major expenditures.

The school has hired a Maintenance Supervisor who brings strengths in working with contractors and managing our ongoing projects as well as ensuring that the day-to-day facility needs are met. He, along with the Director of Finance and Operations sit on the board facility committee which currently meets weekly to monitor projects. It is expected that once the last push for construction on the barn is completed, this committee will begin meeting monthly.

We continue to be in a phase of construction to support the enrollment and vision of the original charter. Facility needs for the future would be the addition of one classroom space to support expanding our charter to full enrollment allowed. Currently we are authorized for 455 children. The five percent allowance over this would require one additional classroom space over the current classroom spaces available. This would most likely be an additional modular unit.

**9.7. Projected Enrollment**

**Q63. Fill out the five-year enrollment chart by grade level (see Resources). Ensure that the chart allows for the natural progression of students from year to year.**

- **Note:** This will become the school's authorized enrollment for the new charter term.
- **Note:** An increase or decrease in enrollment exceeding 5%, but less than 15%, is considered a minor modification of the school's charter. 14 Del. Admin. C. § 275.9.9.1.4. An increase or decrease in enrollment exceeding 15% is considered a major modification of the school's charter, which requires a review by the Charter School Accountability Committee and the assent of the State Board of Education. See 14 Del. C. § 511(b)(2); 14 Del. Admin. C. § 275.9.8.1.3. As such, if the projected enrollment is increasing or decreasing by 5% or more over the term of the charter, the school is required to submit a Charter Modification Application (<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/4361>) including budget sheets, and a budget narrative reflecting the new enrollment figures.

Upload Required File Type: excel Max File Size: 30 Total Files Count: 20

**Applicant Comments :**

SY 23-24 projections are based on Six (6) Grade K/1 classrooms, Five (5) Grade 2/3 classrooms, One (1) 3/4/5 classroom, and Five (5) Grade 4/5/6 classrooms for a total of 17 classrooms.


SY 24-25 and beyond: Moving forward, each classroom would carry a minimum of 26 students per class, with total student enrollment at or below the allowable 5% over charter enrollment of up to 478 students. Our administration and board will work together to equalize the number of students per grade level to just beyond the approved charter enrollment per grade, and to shift the balance and number of classrooms accordingly to service all students (for as many as 18 classrooms total).



Resources


Projected Enrollment.xlsx

Applicant Evidence :


SMS Projected Enrollment (SMS Reauthoriza...

Uploaded on 10/1/2023 by Kaneisha Savage

**9.8. Measuring Academic Progress**

The school's responses to the next 4 questions in this section will be used to populate the Academic Performance section of the school's new Performance Agreement.

Q64. Explain how the school's Board and School Leadership Team will measure and evaluate the academic progress of individual students, student cohorts, and the school as a whole throughout the school year, at the end of each academic year, and for the term of the charter.

**Progress Monitoring and Benchmarking Platforms:**

STAR Reading and Math, WIDA, and DIBELS are our Benchmark and Progress Monitoring Assessments.

These are given as benchmarks at the Beginning Of Year, Middle Of Year, End Of Year.

After each assessment session, administration, team leads, curriculum leads, SPEC Ed leadership, and will review the schoolwide and level specific data. We will share out our observations and findings in an all staff meeting that follows the assessment window.

**In subsequent Data PLC meetings:**

The teachers will complete a data analysis form on their learners after each assessment session and come to a PLC that focuses on the data story told in each teacher's classroom. We will look for trends, improvement, areas of growth, and strengths. In areas where learners are thriving, we will highlight the instructional practices in those rooms and discuss them for implementation in other level classrooms. Classroom observations will also be conducted by teaching staff who want to grow in specific areas that their colleagues excel in.

STAR Reading and Math will be used biweekly to progress monitor our MTSS sessions' impact and T2 & T3 interventions. The MTSS session instruction and T2 and T3 interventions will be tracked for growth and studied for improvement. Data will be collected to evidence growth and progress. Our targeted learner populations are learners with IEPs, MLL learners not at English proficiency, and our general education learners who are below grade level.

The composition of the MTSS sessions make up will be fluid based on the learners' needs and demonstrated progress. In Montessori, all learning groups are fluid and tailored to the individual needs of all learners.

At the end of the year, all data will be collected and reviewed by the administrative team and board to review and identify patterns, trends and discuss what actions had the most impact for our learners and any areas that we need to address through PD and PLC work as a school, at our levels and within classrooms.

Our findings will support us in identifying the areas of growth, and how we will address these areas in the weeks, months and years to come. Our findings will our educational initiatives, inform our professional development agendas, coaching & mentoring and instructional materials.

We also have a similar structure in place with the NCMPs (National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector). This is called an Essential Elements Review. The same process is taken as it relates to our Montessori Model work to identify strengths and areas for growth for the Montessori Public Charter. (See attached Essential Elements Rubric)

We are forward thinking and are excited to learn from each year's progress reports.

Applicant Evidence :


June-2018-Board-Packet-Essential-Elements...

Uploaded on 9/23/2023 by Jori Martinez-

Woods

Q65. Outline the clearly measurable annual performance status and growth goals that the school will set over the course of the next charter term in order to monitor and evaluate its progress accelerating student achievement. Include information about proposed school's student performance goals and the DSSF.





**1. Describe the student performance standards for the school as a whole.**

All students will perform to their creative and intellectual best. The criteria for the student performance is not only to perform well on state standardized tests, but to demonstrate behaviors and attitudes consistent with our mission. At this time, there are not specific reliable and valid assessments for leadership, innovation and responsible global citizenship. As research informs the development of such assessments; SMS will explore their use to measure our mission appropriate outcomes. Specifically, SMS will aim to achieve the following goals:

**DeSSA Summative Tests:**

- Math/ELA/Social Studies/Science

**Diagnostic Assessments:**

- Dibels
- STAR Early Reading & Numeracy/Reading/Math
- Aperture: Flags mental health needs and provides CASEL survey for identifying SEL needs and wellbeing (Dessa mini)
- Panorama: MTSS full complement of academic and social emotional learning resource

**Performance Goal 1:**

SMS will demonstrate that its students are increasing in academic achievement, as measured by the Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA) in the areas of Math, ELA, Social Studies and Science and on Diagnostic assessment tools as follows:

Target: By the third year of next charter term, and for each year thereafter, 50 to 69 % of students will make growth sufficient to maintain or achieve proficiency.

Target: by the third year of the next charter term, and for each year thereafter, SMS will have between 60 and 79 % of all students meeting their growth targets.

Target: by the third year of the next charter term, SMS will have between 50 and 69 % of students in the lowest quartile of performance meeting their growth targets.

Target: By the end of the third year of the next charter term, the school's average proficiency rate on DeSSA of reading and math will meet or exceed the statewide average student performance of schools serving the same grades.

**Performance Goal 2:**

SMS students will exhibit positive behaviors related to academic success through:

Target: Each year the school will have fewer reportable incidents pursuant to Delaware Code, Title 14, Section 4112, than the average for public schools in Sussex County with a similar grade configuration.

**Performance Goal 3:**

Given SMS's emphasis on the development of character, innovation, and global citizenship each student will:

Achievement Target: Demonstrate growth on the continuums of development in each of these areas as documented by teacher observations, student portfolios, student reflections on their work, and parent surveys documenting their observations of their children's growth in these areas.

Achievement Target: Beginning year three, SMS 6th graders will demonstrate the development of these skills and their academic achievement through a year-long study or service project culminating with a performance presented to the school community.

Q66. In addition to the State's mandatory assessments, identify the primary interim assessments that the school will use to assess student learning needs and demonstrate academic progress throughout the year. Explain how these interim assessments align with the school's curriculum, performance goals, and Delaware Content Standards (Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Next Generation Science Standards).



The Sussex Montessori School curriculum is aligned with the common core state standards. (See references to the CCSS standards within our submitted curriculum guides.)

The National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector has published a Montessori Curriculum Guide that is aligned with the CCSS standards that are utilized as a guide for SMS lesson planning.

#### **Interim Assessments:**

The STAR Reading and Math Assessments are the tools that we utilize to assess student learning needs and demonstrate academic progress throughout the year. As a benchmark, the assessment will be given at the Beginning, Middle and End of each academic year. The benchmark data will then be used to inform the frequency of our progress monitoring schedules for our learners. Learners who are not performing at grade-level will be progress monitored on a bi-weekly basis. Those performing at above grade level will be progress monitored to ensure that they are progressing to their full capacity.

**Observation** is a cornerstone of the Montessori Method. Each student is frequently and regularly observed while working with the Montessori materials and while participating in recess and special classes such as art, music, or physical education. The teacher takes notes on the students and records descriptions of learning style, attitudes towards school, habits of concentration, initiative and persistence, abilities to form and sustain friendships, self-discipline, and sense of responsibility to other members of the class and community. Through observation and careful tracking of the student's work with the materials, the teacher can assess which skills a child has mastered and determine their readiness to advance in the curriculum or provide additional supports for those who are challenged.

In practice, the Montessori teacher is trained in a response to intervention model based on daily teacher observations and records, which leads to decisions about the classroom environment, materials needed to support each child, and specific lessons. The quality Montessori school enhances these observations with a comprehensive classroom-based assessment system that monitors and documents outcomes against goals for learning using results to improve learner outcomes and school effectiveness from entry through sixth grade. An effective assessment system to support student growth is one that focuses on multiple classroom-based formative assessments allowing teachers to interact with and observe children individually with tools that focus their observations on specific aspects of learning and development.

With all of this in mind, Sussex Montessori School uses formative and summative assessments tools for progress monitoring, screening, diagnosis, and for program evaluation focusing primarily on the individual development of the child. These assessments will include Montessori classroom-based individual assessments, student portfolios, teacher observations, and anecdotal records, complementing standardized assessments to evaluate individual student progress against the goals for learning and to document programmatic strengths to develop improvement plans. Each academic year's data, including Smarter Balanced results, will be compared to past data to measure current progress, the objective being that each child will meet or exceed their goals for annual yearly progress. The DIBELS Math and ELA Assessments and the Star assessments are all aligned to Common Core Standards.

#### **Reading/Writing**

Assessment will address the following areas identified in the Common Core State ELA Standards: phonemic awareness, phonics acquisition, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, self-monitoring, and increased student awareness of meta- cognitive strategies. Sussex Montessori will use the DIBELS and the Star assessments. In addition, teachers will use think-aloud, reading logs, written retellings and summaries, and spelling assessments.

Assessment in writing will view student writing through the lenses of the six traits of writing: ideas, conventions, word choice, organization, sentence fluency, and voice. A writing continuum will be used to determine where a child is making progress and where he may need additional support. Rubrics available on the DDOE website based on the genre of the Common Core State Standards including Argumentation/Opinion Text based writing, Informational or Explanatory Text Based Writing, and Narrative Text.

#### **Mathematics & Geometry**

In addition to Montessori Lesson Observation, which is designed to allow the teacher to assess a child's progress using standardized Montessori materials, SMS will use a variety of assessments for progress monitoring. As is annotated in the submitted Mathematics unit, SMS teachers will rely on STAR Math which will be given 3 times a year as well as bi-weekly for tier 2 and 3 children as a progress monitoring tool. The tools to prepare 3-6 grade learners for the SBAC tests are plentiful. Our teachers will be developing our learners' technology skills, utilize the Interim tests as diagnostic tools as well as practice assessments to both gain a stronger understanding of how the learners are addressing the test items but also to instruct test taking strategies, vocabulary and usage of the universal tools.

These classroom-based formative and summative assessments will be used to provide a frame of reference to confirm and enhance the teacher's observations in the classroom. Each assessment will be individually administered. The assessments will be used to inform the next steps for instruction as well as to confirm a teacher's observations that a child may be "at risk" leading to further interventions to support the child.

#### **Integrated Science/Social Studies/ The Montessori Social and Cultural Curriculum:**

SMS will use the resources of the Delaware Science and Social Studies Coalitions to monitor progress in these areas. The Amplify Science Kits are utilized to bring hands on learning and experimentation to ensure that the learners have first-hand experience with the science standards in both the Montessori and CCSS science standards outlines.

Our Upper Elementary teachers have integrated the HB198 and HB318 requirements into their lesson planning.

In addition, SMS will use any required state assessments in these areas to evaluate the program, alignment of the curriculum and monitor student achievement. In addition, Montessori classrooms rely on specific classroom performance-based formative and summative assessments. The Social Studies Schoology groups also contain a variety of resources, including assessments and performance tasks that measure a learner's understanding of the concepts and standards.

The Montessori assessments allow the demonstration of the students' integration of their knowledge reading, writing, speaking/listening, and mathematics with their developing understanding of the essential questions in these areas.

Several specific classroom-based assessments used in the Montessori classroom are:

**Classroom presentations:** Classroom presentations by students enhance planning skills, give opportunities for public speaking, increase confidence, and give children the chance to experience pride in their accomplishments.

**Peer/Reciprocal Teaching:** Whether a student has sufficient knowledge of a work material to be able to teach it to peers is an important Montessori assessment tool that is employed on a constant basis. Peer teaching allows a child to solidify learning and place the educational gains in a meaningful context aiding long-term retention and the transfer of knowledge.

**Portfolio:** Students at SMS will create electronic portfolios that reflect the development of their understanding of the essential questions embedded in the cultural curriculum. These portfolios will be self-evaluated against rubrics, shared by students with parents, and be a cumulative record of the child's development.



**Q67. Explain how the school will collect and analyze student academic achievement data, use the data to refine and improve instruction, and report the data to the school community. Identify the person(s), position(s), and/or entities that will be responsible and involved in the collection and analysis of assessment data.**

**Progress Monitoring and Benchmarking Platforms:**

STAR Reading and Math, WIDA, and DIBELS are our Benchmark and Progress Monitoring Assessments. These are given as benchmarks at the Beginning Of Year, Middle Of Year, End Of Year.

The STAR Reading and Math Assessments are the tools that we utilize to assess student learning needs and demonstrate academic progress throughout the year. As a benchmark, the assessment will be given at the Beginning, Middle and End of each academic year. The benchmark data will then be used to inform the frequency of our progress monitoring schedules for our learners. Learners who are not performing at grade-level will be progress monitored on a bi-weekly basis. Those performing at above grade level will be progress monitored to ensure that they are progressing to their full capacity.

After each assessment session, administration, team leads, curriculum leads, SPEC Ed leadership, and will review the schoolwide and level specific data. We will share out our observations and findings in an all staff meeting that follows the assessment window. There is a full day professional development workshop to follow each benchmarking period to allow for level specific discussions, as well as vertical team conversations. The goal is to improve our practice of data informed decision making where the data is actually informing our lesson planning and ultimately demonstrating a positive impact on our learner's growth.

**In subsequent Data PLC meetings:**

The teachers will complete a data analysis form on their learners after each assessment session and come to a PLC that focuses on the data story told in each teacher's classroom. We will look for trends, improvement, areas of growth, and strengths. In areas where learners are thriving, we will highlight the instructional practices in those rooms and discuss them for implementation in other level classrooms. Classroom observations will also be conducted by teaching staff who want to grow in specific areas that their colleagues excel in.

STAR Reading and Math will be used biweekly to progress monitor our MTSS sessions' impact and T2 & T3 interventions. The MTSS session instruction and T2 and T3 interventions will be tracked for growth and studied for improvement. Data will be collected to evidence growth and progress. Our targeted learner populations are learners with IEPs, MLL learners not at English proficiency, and our general education learners who are below grade level.

The composition of the MTSS sessions make up will be fluid based on the learners' needs and demonstrated progress. In Montessori, all learning groups are fluid and tailored to the individual needs of all learners.

At the end of the year, all data will be collected and reviewed by the administrative team and board to review and identify patterns, trends and discuss what actions had the most impact for our learners and any areas that we need to address through PD and PLC work as a school, at our levels and within classrooms.


Our findings will support us in identifying the areas of growth, and how we will address these areas in the weeks, months and years to come. Our findings will our educational initiatives, inform our professional development agendas, coaching & mentoring and instructional materials.

We also have a similar structure in place with the NCMPs (National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector). This is called an Essential Elements Review. The same process is taken as it relates to our Montessori Model work to identify strengths and areas for growth for the Montessori Public Charter. (See attached Essential Elements Rubric)

We are forward thinking and are excited to learn from each year's progress reports.

Jori Martinez-Woods-Director of Teaching and Learning, will be responsible and involved in the overall planning, scheduling, and maintaining of the validity of all testing at SMS. She is responsible for the collection and analysis of assessment data, in addition to the teacher test administrators, the WIDA coordinator, Anna Ornelas-Moore, and Cheryl Martin, our MLL certified Instructor, Alyson Silva, our Spec Ed Coordinator and her team, Maggie Durig and Morgan Haislett. The Math, Language Curriculum, Integrated Social Studies and Science lead teachers will be involved in the analysis of their respective content area data. They will meet with the Director of Teaching and Learning, the Head of School to discuss trends, assess growth and propose plans for the improvement of their content area curriculum implementation and instructional practices.

**Applicant Evidence :**


NCMPS-Essential-Elements-Rubric-2023.pdf

Uploaded on 10/1/2023 by Lisa Coldiron

**Q68. Describe the corrective actions the school will take, pursuant to 14 Del. C. § 512(5), if it falls short of student academic achievement expectations or goals at the school-wide, classroom, or individual student level. Explain what would trigger such corrective actions and who would be responsible for implementing them.**



DELAWARE CODE states:

(5) The school proposes a satisfactory plan for evaluating student performance and procedures for taking corrective action in the event that student performance at the charter school falls below such standards which are reasonably likely to succeed.

The response below has been put in place as a wholistic school wide intervention plan to rigorously put us on a clear trajectory towards accomplishing our student academic achievement goals and expectations as a Public Montessori Charter School. The Director of Teaching and Learning, the Head of School, the academic leadership team and the Spec Ed Coordinator would all have a role to play in the implantation process.

**HOW DO YOU KNOW HOW YOUR STUDENTS ARE DOING?**

**Observation** is a cornerstone of the Montessori Method. Each student is frequently and regularly observed while working with the Montessori materials and while participating in recess and special classes such as art, music, or physical education. The teacher takes notes on the students and records descriptions of learning style, attitudes towards school, habits of concentration, initiative and persistence, abilities to form and sustain friendships, self-discipline, and sense of responsibility to other members of the class and community. Through observation and careful tracking of the student's work with the materials, the teacher can assess which skills a child has mastered and determine their readiness to advance in the curriculum or provide additional supports for those who are challenged. In practice, the Montessori teacher is trained in a response to intervention model based on daily teacher observations and records, which leads to decisions about the classroom environment, materials needed to support each child, and specific lessons. The quality Montessori school enhances these observations with a comprehensive classroom-based assessment system that monitors and documents outcomes against goals for learning using results to improve learner outcomes and school effectiveness from entry through sixth grade. An effective assessment system to support student growth is one that focuses on multiple classroom-based formative assessments allowing teachers to interact with and observe children individually with tools that focus their observations on specific aspects of learning and development (Salinger, 2001; Zankowsky, 2006).

**Progress Monitoring and Benchmarking Platforms:**

STAR Reading and Math, WIDA, and DIBELS are our Benchmark and Progress Monitoring Assessments. These are given as benchmarks at the Beginning Of Year, Middle Of Year, End Of Year.

The STAR Reading and Math Assessments are the tools that we utilize to assess student learning needs and demonstrate academic progress throughout the year. As a benchmark, the assessment will be given at the Beginning, Middle and End of each academic year. The benchmark data will then be used to inform the frequency of our progress monitoring schedules for our learners. Learners who are not performing at grade-level will be progress monitored on a bi-weekly basis. Those performing at above grade level will be progress monitored to ensure that they are progressing to their full capacity.

After each assessment session, administration, team leads, curriculum leads, SPEC Ed leadership, and will review the schoolwide and level specific data. We will share out our observations and findings in an all staff meeting that follows the assessment window. There is a full day professional development workshop to follow each benchmarking period to allow for level specific discussions, as well as vertical team conversations. The goal is to improve our practice of data informed decision making where the data is actually informing our lesson planning and ultimately demonstrating a positive impact on our learner's growth.

At the end of each academic school year, the administrative team will sit with the data, the trends and plan for the multi-layered approach that we will implement to ensure continued growth for our learners. This may include targeted PD, individualized coaching and modeling, a new approach to a school wide practice, or a level wide intervention.

**WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU NOTICE STUDENTS ARE STRUGGLING TO MEET BENCHMARKS?**

Observation is our formative assessment tool. We track our learner's progression to mastery of a concept through a Montessori lesson and practice tracking platform called Transparent Classroom. If a learner is struggling to practice the lesson presentations successfully, the teacher notes that a follow up lesson is in order. If the learner continues to struggle after a variety of instructional approaches are given using a diversity of materials, then the teacher will begin to observe whether the learner is struggling in other areas and inquire into a root cause of the challenges that the learner is facing. The teacher will also reach out to the family to learn more about the learner. If after 3-4 weeks of collecting data, making anecdotal notes, taking photos of the learner's works, a teacher may request that the learner's profile be brought to a "Child Study when the concerns are not being resolved. (See Child Study Protocol attachment). The Child Study team meets and provides interventions and discusses the Tier level the learner is demonstrating behaviors for. The teacher will then observe and collect data to evidence the intervention for a minimum of 4 weeks. If the concern continues or grows more intense and is truly becoming a barrier to their learning or thriving in the environment, then the team may consult with the Spec Ed consultant and/or support services staff to gain insight.

The Diagnostic or Interim Assessments, STAR Reading/Mathematics and Dibels, will be utilized to understand more about the learner's academic strengths and weaknesses in the areas of struggle.

The learner would participate in specific interventions daily that are informed by the assessment data during the MTSS sessions. Again, their work artifacts would be collected to demonstrate progress. The learner would also be progress monitored during the MTSS sessions as additional data points.


If the learner is reading below grade level, they may qualify for daily 45-minute Reading Assist tutoring supports.

**INCLUDE SYSTEMS YOU HAVE PUT IN PLACE THAT HAVE WORKED.**

Child Study has made a difference in the Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 behaviors and academic needs as an initiative that gives teachers and families a whole child understanding of the learner and their family's needs. Adding the MTSS sessions and collecting data have and will continue to make a greater impact. Providing PLCs on specific topics, Curriculum and Instruction, MTSS/Child Study, IEP and Spec Ed Supports, have and will continue to make a significant impact on reinforcing the new practices, building data collection systems, and focused conversation, planning and the mid-course correction work that make interventions truly effective.

We have added additional staff, a Director of Finance and Operations, additional student support staff, an additional Spec Ed teacher, Progress monitor tools and been trained by the ACCESS project to deepen our Data Based Decision Making practices and implementation procedures.

**Applicant Evidence :**


ChildStudyProtocol8.19edit.pdf

Uploaded on 9/23/2023 by **Jori Martinez-Woods**


Child Study Protocol Slides.pdf

Uploaded on 10/1/2023 by **Lisa Coldiron**


MTSS.docx

Uploaded on 10/1/2023 by **Lisa Coldiron**



## 10. Compliance Certification Statement

Q69. The Board of Directors of this charter school certifies that it will materially comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of the charter relating to the education of all students enrolled at the school. We have reviewed the Delaware Charter Law (14 Del. C. Ch. 5) and 14 DE Admin. Code § 275 in Department of Education regulations (Regulation 275), and have based the responses in this renewal application on the review of these documents. Signature of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors (or designated signatory authority)

Signature

Q70. Name of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors (or designated signatory authority)

Linda S. Zankowsky, Ed.D.

Q71. Title (if designated)

Board Chair

Q72. Date of Signature

Mon Oct 02 2023 (Eastern Daylight Time)





11. Renewal Application Certification Statement

Q73. I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for renewal of a charter school is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; that this application has been approved by the school's Board of Directors; and that, if awarded a renewed charter, the school shall continue to be open to all students on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement. This is a true statement, made under the penalties of perjury. Signature: Chairperson of Board of Directors (or designated signatory authority)

Signature

*Linda Zankowsky*

Q74. Date of signature

Mon Oct 02 2023 (Eastern Daylight Time)

Q75. Name of Chairperson of Board of Directors (or designated signatory authority)

Linda S. Zankowsky, Ed.D.

Q76. Title (if designated)

Board Chair

Q77. Date of approval by board of directors

.....

**Applicant Comments :**

Because of the timing of our board meetings and final document uploads to the reauthorization, a final board vote on the reauthorization document will occur on October 17th in our scheduled board meeting. The board has reviewed the draft content in their September meetings and is well aware of the content of the document.

Average Score and Performance Distribution, by Assessment: Sussex Montessori, 2022-2023

Assessment Name	Test Group	Test Grade	Test Reason	Student Count	Average Score	Performance Distribution	Date Last Taken										
Grade 4 Math - Summative	Summative	4	Spring 2023	61	2402 ± 11	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Percent Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>52%</td> <td>32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30%</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16%</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2%</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Percent Count		52%	32	30%	18	16%	10	2%	1	05/19/2023
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52%	32																
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Grade 3 Math - Summative	Summative	3	Spring 2023	53	2364 ± 11	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Percent Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>62%</td> <td>33</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19%</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15%</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4%</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Percent Count		62%	33	19%	10	15%	8	4%	2	05/16/2023
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Grade 5 Math - Summative	Summative	5	Spring 2023	47	2405 ± 12	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Percent Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>74%</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21%</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2%</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2%</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Percent Count		74%	35	21%	10	2%	1	2%	1	05/10/2023
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Average Score and Performance Distribution, by Assessment: Sussex Montessori, 2022-2023

Assessment Name	Test Group	Test Grade	Test Reason	Student Count	Average Score	Performance Distribution	Date Last Taken										
Grade 4 ELA - Summative	Summative	4	Spring 2023	61	2405 ± 12	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Percent Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>61%</td> <td>37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16%</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11%</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11%</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Percent Count		61%	37	16%	10	11%	7	11%	7	05/10/2023
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Grade 5 ELA - Summative	Summative	5	Spring 2023	47	2438 ± 14	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Percent Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>53%</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23%</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17%</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6%</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Percent Count		53%	25	23%	11	17%	8	6%	3	05/05/2023
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Grade 3 ELA - Summative	Summative	3	Spring 2023	53	2340 ± 13	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Percent Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>64%</td> <td>34</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19%</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11%</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6%</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Percent Count		64%	34	19%	10	11%	6	6%	3	05/04/2023
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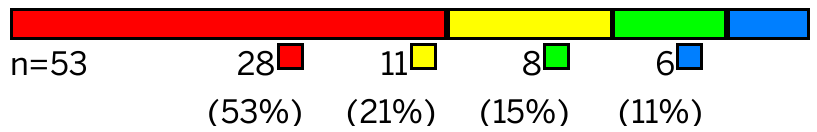
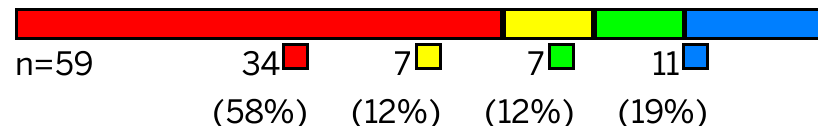
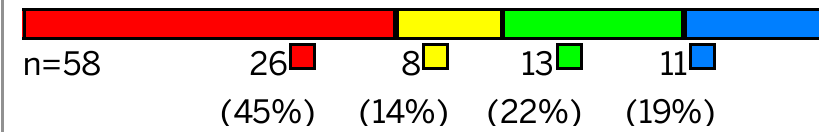
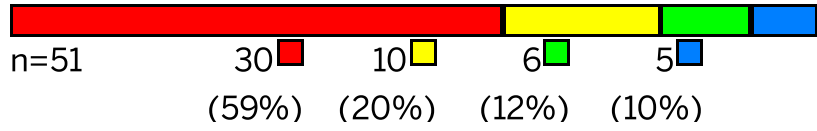
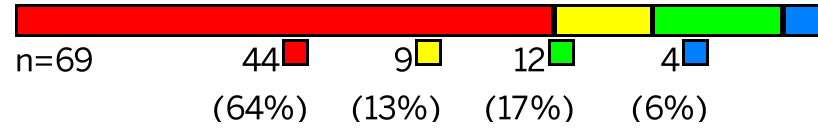
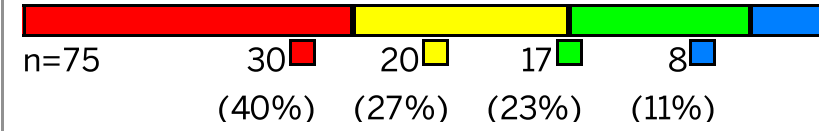
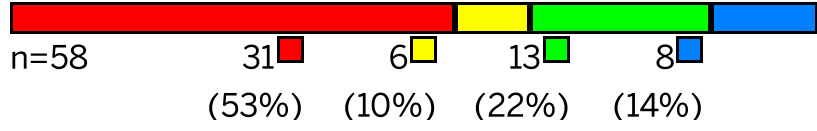
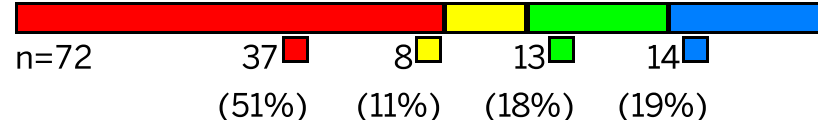
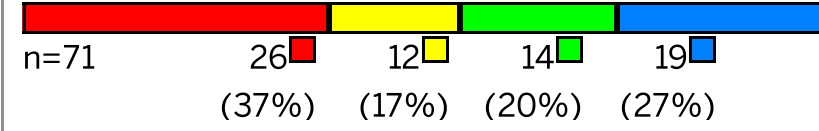
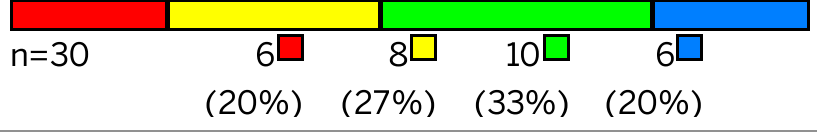
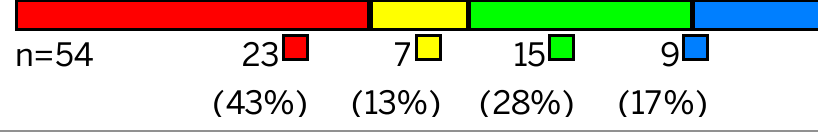
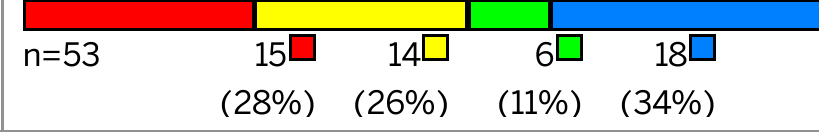
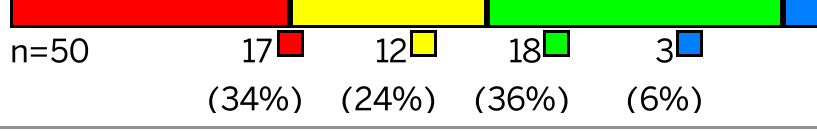
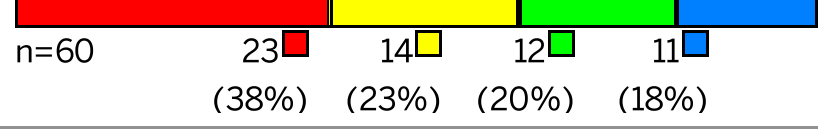
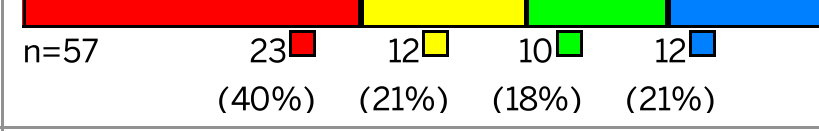
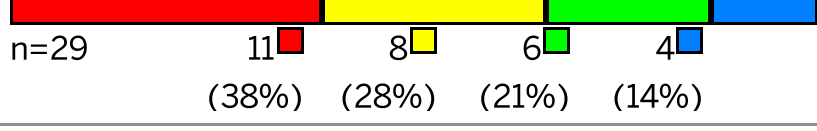
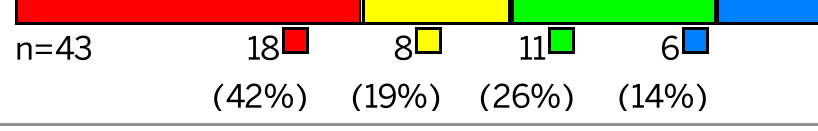
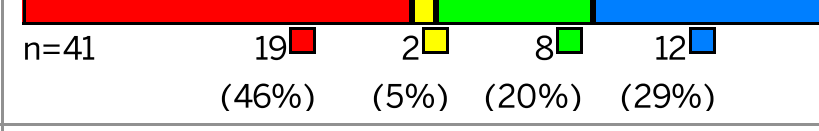
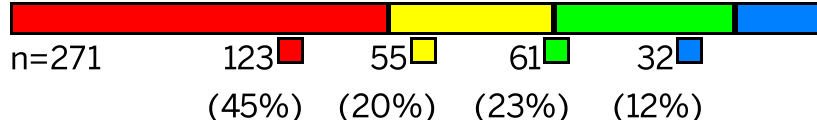
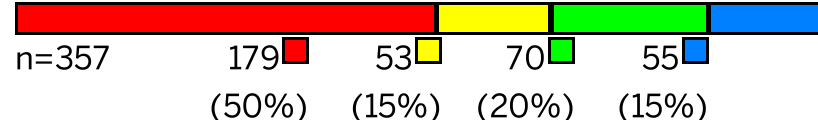
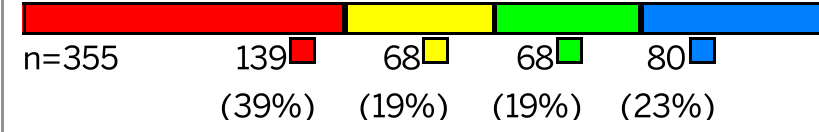
Grade	Beginning	Middle	End
<b>K</b>	<p>n=70 35 (50%) Intensive Support, 10 (14%) Strategic Support, 25 (36%) Core Support, 0 (0%) Core^ Support</p>	<p>n=67 38 (57%) Intensive Support, 15 (22%) Strategic Support, 8 (12%) Core Support, 6 (9%) Core^ Support</p>	No students with data.
<b>1st</b>	<p>n=47 25 (53%) Intensive Support, 5 (11%) Strategic Support, 5 (11%) Core Support, 12 (26%) Core^ Support</p>	<p>n=42 28 (67%) Intensive Support, 5 (12%) Strategic Support, 6 (14%) Core Support, 3 (7%) Core^ Support</p>	No students with data.
<b>2nd</b>	<p>n=53 17 (32%) Intensive Support, 12 (23%) Strategic Support, 16 (30%) Core Support, 8 (15%) Core^ Support</p>	<p>n=52 22 (42%) Intensive Support, 6 (12%) Strategic Support, 14 (27%) Core Support, 10 (19%) Core^ Support</p>	No students with data.
<b>3rd</b>	<p>n=41 14 (34%) Intensive Support, 6 (15%) Strategic Support, 11 (27%) Core Support, 10 (24%) Core^ Support</p>	<p>n=25 9 (36%) Intensive Support, 2 (8%) Strategic Support, 9 (36%) Core Support, 5 (20%) Core^ Support</p>	No students with data.
<b>4th</b>	No students with data.	No students with data.	No students with data.
<b>5th</b>	No students with data.	No students with data.	No students with data.
<b>6th</b>	No students with data.	No students with data.	No students with data.
<b>All</b>	<p>n=211 91 (43%) Intensive Support, 33 (16%) Strategic Support, 57 (27%) Core Support, 30 (14%) Core^ Support</p>	<p>n=186 97 (52%) Intensive Support, 28 (15%) Strategic Support, 37 (20%) Core Support, 24 (13%) Core^ Support</p>	No students with data.

**Legend** n = Number of Students ■ Intensive Support ■ Strategic Support ■ Core Support ■ Core^ Support

**Results Based On** K-Beginning: LNF K-Middle - 1st-Beginning: NWF-CLS 1st-Middle - 8th-End: ORF-Words Correct

# Dibels 2021-22

<b>K</b>	<p>n=71    45 (63%)    14 (20%)    12 (17%)    0 (0%)</p>	<p>n=50    34 (68%)    8 (16%)    6 (12%)    2 (4%)</p>	<p>n=58    35 (60%)    7 (12%)    11 (19%)    5 (9%)</p>
<b>1st</b>	<p>n=83    61 (73%)    7 (8%)    9 (11%)    6 (7%)</p>	<p>n=44    28 (64%)    5 (11%)    4 (9%)    7 (16%)</p>	<p>n=62    33 (53%)    8 (13%)    10 (16%)    11 (18%)</p>
<b>2nd</b>	<p>n=65    39 (60%)    12 (18%)    8 (12%)    6 (9%)</p>	<p>n=57    37 (65%)    5 (9%)    10 (18%)    5 (9%)</p>	<p>n=59    32 (54%)    7 (12%)    10 (17%)    10 (17%)</p>
<b>3rd</b>	<p>n=65    30 (46%)    8 (12%)    12 (18%)    15 (23%)</p>	<p>n=61    31 (51%)    8 (13%)    13 (21%)    9 (15%)</p>	<p>n=59    21 (36%)    8 (14%)    13 (22%)    17 (29%)</p>
<b>4th</b>	<p>n=49    14 (29%)    15 (31%)    15 (31%)    5 (10%)</p>	<p>n=46    18 (39%)    11 (24%)    6 (13%)    11 (24%)</p>	<p>n=50    17 (34%)    13 (26%)    14 (28%)    6 (12%)</p>
<b>5th</b>	No students with data.	No students with data.	No students with data.
<b>6th</b>	No students with data.	No students with data.	No students with data.
<b>All</b>	<p>n=333    189 (57%)    56 (17%)    56 (17%)    32 (10%)</p>	<p>n=258    148 (57%)    37 (14%)    39 (15%)    34 (13%)</p>	<p>n=288    138 (48%)    43 (15%)    58 (20%)    49 (17%)</p>

Grade	Beginning	Middle	End
<b>K</b>	 <p>n=53 28 (53%) 11 (21%) 8 (15%) 6 (11%)</p>	 <p>n=59 34 (58%) 7 (12%) 7 (12%) 11 (19%)</p>	 <p>n=58 26 (45%) 8 (14%) 13 (22%) 11 (19%)</p>
<b>1st</b>	 <p>n=51 30 (59%) 10 (20%) 6 (12%) 5 (10%)</p>	 <p>n=69 44 (64%) 9 (13%) 12 (17%) 4 (6%)</p>	 <p>n=75 30 (40%) 20 (27%) 17 (23%) 8 (11%)</p>
<b>2nd</b>	 <p>n=58 31 (53%) 6 (10%) 13 (22%) 8 (14%)</p>	 <p>n=72 37 (51%) 8 (11%) 13 (18%) 14 (19%)</p>	 <p>n=71 26 (37%) 12 (17%) 14 (20%) 19 (27%)</p>
<b>3rd</b>	 <p>n=30 6 (20%) 8 (27%) 10 (33%) 6 (20%)</p>	 <p>n=54 23 (43%) 7 (13%) 15 (28%) 9 (17%)</p>	 <p>n=53 15 (28%) 14 (26%) 6 (11%) 18 (34%)</p>
<b>4th</b>	 <p>n=50 17 (34%) 12 (24%) 18 (36%) 3 (6%)</p>	 <p>n=60 23 (38%) 14 (23%) 12 (20%) 11 (18%)</p>	 <p>n=57 23 (40%) 12 (21%) 10 (18%) 12 (21%)</p>
<b>5th</b>	 <p>n=29 11 (38%) 8 (28%) 6 (21%) 4 (14%)</p>	 <p>n=43 18 (42%) 8 (19%) 11 (26%) 6 (14%)</p>	 <p>n=41 19 (46%) 2 (5%) 8 (20%) 12 (29%)</p>
<b>6th</b>	No students with data.	No students with data.	No students with data.
<b>All</b>	 <p>n=271 123 (45%) 55 (20%) 61 (23%) 32 (12%)</p>	 <p>n=357 179 (50%) 53 (15%) 70 (20%) 55 (15%)</p>	 <p>n=355 139 (39%) 68 (19%) 68 (19%) 80 (23%)</p>

Legend n = Number of Students ■ Intensive Support ■ Strategic Support ■ Core Support ■ Core^ Support

Results Based On DIBELS 8 Composite Score

DESSA	Grade 3 (SY21)		Grade 4 (SY22)	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
<b>Math</b>				
Far Below the Standard (PL1)	30	68%	27	60%
Below the Standard (PL2)	9	20%	13	29%
Meets the Standard (PL3)	4	9%	5	11%
Exceeds the Standard (PL4)	1	2%	0	0%
State Average (proficient)		30%		
<b>English Language Arts</b>				
Far Below the Standard (PL1)	26	59%	18	46%
Below the Standard (PL2)	9	20%	10	26%
Meets the Standard (PL3)	6	14%	8	21%
Exceeds the Standard (PL4)	3	7%	3	8%
State Average		35%		



# Reporting

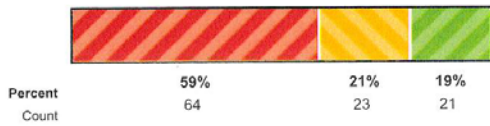
Performance Distribution, By Test Group: Sussex Montessori, 2021-2022

Filtered By **Test Reasons:** All Test Reasons | **Reporting Time Period:** 07/01/2022 | **Sorted By:** Date Last Taken

### Summative Mathematics

Grades Tested: 3, 4

Tests Taken: 108 Date Last Taken: 05/20/2022



### Summative ELA

Grades Tested: 3, 4

Tests Taken: 110 Date Last Taken: 05/20/2022



# Reporting

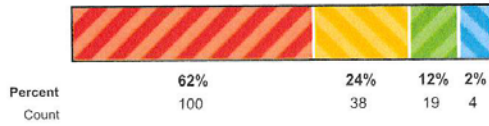
Performance Distribution, By Test Group: Sussex Montessori, 2022-2023

Filtered By **Test Reasons:** All Test Reasons | **Reporting Time Period:** 07/01/2023 | **Sorted By:** Date Last Taken

### Summative Mathematics

Grades Tested: 3, 4, 5

Tests Taken: 161 Date Last Taken: 05/19/2023



### Summative ELA

Grades Tested: 3, 4, 5

Tests Taken: 161 Date Last Taken: 05/10/2023

