

## **What is Title I?**

Title I is the U.S. Department of Education's (USED) largest K-12 federal grant program. The purpose of this program is to provide all children significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps. This federal program provides financial assistance to schools with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students to ensure that children meet challenging state academic standards.

## **How Title I Funds May Be Used**

More than 50,000 public schools across the country use Title I funds to provide additional academic support and learning opportunities to help low-achieving children master challenging curricula and meet state standards in core academic subjects. Initiatives that can be supported with Title I funds include:

- Summer school programs or other extended-day or week programs;
- Additional professional development relevant to improving the academic achievement of struggling students, such as how to use data effectively in the classroom, how to support struggling readers, effective classroom management strategies, etc.;
- School improvement activities for a cluster of struggling schools, such as instructional coaches for a group of Title I schools with similar challenges, a Principal Academy to support leaders of Title I schools, etc.; and
- Other permissible Title I activities.

At Sussex Montessori, Title I funds are used to provide additional support for classroom instruction.

Among other requirements, the Title I law requires schoolwide schools to:

- Perform a comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school.
- Develop a schoolwide plan with parent and stakeholder engagement that describes the strategies the school will implement to address its needs.
- Address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of those at risk of not meeting state standards.
- Spend funds consistent with the school's needs and schoolwide plan.

## **Parent and Family Engagement**

Sussex Montessori believes that strong family involvement and family education leads to strong relationships and increased student success. There is a proven connection between family engagement and academic performance. Also, by being involved, families serve as role models for community service, a very Montessori concept. To help each child succeed and provide

opportunities for families to lead by example, we have created many different ways for parents and families to participate:

- Opportunities for parents to learn about child development and parenting will be offered through a PTO sponsored Parenting Education Series.
- A variety of volunteer opportunities will be available, and parents will be encouraged and welcomed to support in a way that works best for them.
- Space will be allotted for parents to gather with resources and materials.
- Twice a year, “Watch Me Work” days will be scheduled for families to observe in the classroom.
- Twice a year, conferences will be held for all students and teachers will be accountable for communicating with parents/families for each child (in person or by phone) to share academic/social progress.

### **Parents Right to Know**

Parents receive notification letters when their children receive Title I services and are taught by a non-certified teacher for four or more consecutive weeks.

In addition, parents have the right to learn about the credentials of teacher(s). Parents with access to the internet may access the link on the Delaware Department of Education (DOE) website. Parents without access to the internet are welcome to contact the Head of School to request this information.

### **Annual Title I Meetings for Families**

Sussex Montessori School invites parents and families to attend our annual Title I information meeting, where we will explain the requirements of Title I, describe our plans and activities and ask for feedback, and explain the rights parents and families have to be involved. This will be accomplished by:

- Providing communication of all key programs, activities, and school progress in a timely manner.
- Communicating with families in a format and language that can be easily understood, to the extent possible.
- Providing regular updated information on the school’s website as it relates to parenting resources.

In addition, Sussex Montessori will include parents, board members and other school staff in the decision-making process around how funds for parental involvement will be spent.

### **Title I Complaint Procedures**

A parent, family member, or any other individual or organization who feels that the school is not meeting its responsibilities under Title I should first discuss the problem with the Head of School.

To file a formal complaint with the school, you must send a signed, written letter specifying the alleged violation by the school of a federal statute or regulation that applies to the school including facts, evidence and documentation of the alleged violation. The letter may be sent to: Head of School, Sussex Montessori School, P.O. Box 1686, 24960 Dairy Lane, Seaford, Delaware 19973.

Upon receipt of the complaint, Sussex Montessori School will issue a letter of acknowledgement that contains the following information to the complainant:

- The date the school received the complaint;
- How the complainant may provide additional information;
- A statement of the ways in which the school may investigate the complaint;
- Sussex Montessori's commitment to issue a resolution to the complaint.

The Head of School will investigate or designate a building administrator to investigate the complaint. The complaint investigator will:

- Carry out an independent onsite investigation of the complaint;
- Review all relevant information and make an independent determination as to whether the Charter has complied with the federal program(s) in question;
- Issue a complaint investigation report, entitled Letter of Findings, to the complainant that addresses each allegation in the complaint and contains Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Corrective Actions (with a specified timeline) where warranted, as well as the reasons for the Charter's final decision.

If the investigator determines that a violation has occurred:

- There will be corrective action to return to compliance.

If the investigator concludes that no violation of law or regulation has occurred:

- Attempts will be made to resolve or negotiate the programmatic concern;
- A complaint investigation report, entitled Letter of Findings, will be issued to the complainant that addresses each allegation in the complaint and contains Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Corrective Actions (with a specified timeline) where warranted, as well as the reasons for the Charter's final decision.

All complaints and responses will be kept on file in the office of the Head of School.

You may appeal the school's decision to the Delaware Department of Education, or send an initial complaint directly to the Delaware Department of Education, by mailing a signed letter containing the information requested above to:

Secretary of Education

Delaware Department of Education 401 Federal Street Ste 2, Dover, DE 19901-3639

The full State of Delaware Official Federal Programs Complaint Procedures can be found in the Delaware Administrative Code, Title 14, Section 258. A link to this regulation may be found below:

English: Federal Programs General Complaint Procedures

<https://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/200/258.shtml>

Español: Procedimientos generales de quejas para los Programas Federales

<http://freirewilmington.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/SEAComplaintSpanish.pdf>