



# Schoolwide Plan 2024-2025

## **Comprehensive Needs Assessment**

Dibels Literacy assessment data demonstrated clear room for growth with the majority of our students testing at or below proficiency in the beginning of the school year. All students across the spectrum demonstrated growth in all areas but several need increased improvement to meet and exceed standards. Several mitigation strategies have been put in place to ensure continued and accelerated learning such as one on one daily intensive Orton Gillingham training, (Reading Assist Institute) summer one on one tutoring and the hiring of part-time Reading Specialists to assist and ensure on-going professional learning and development for all teachers. Several teachers trained in Science Based Reading programs over the summer and the school has contracted with a Literacy Specialist to provide year-long professional development training for all teachers.

## **Schoolwide Reform Strategies**

Sussex Montessori will employ the Montessori method. The components within the method: every class begins with a 3-hour uninterrupted work period focused on the standards in the core content areas. Students are given the opportunity to repetition in the doing. During this time the one-on-one daily intensive tutoring will be on-going throughout the school year within the classroom for students not meeting proficiency as well as daily summer support. Special Education support is on-going within the three-hour work period and provided in a separate classroom when required by individual IEP's. The associate teacher will also be working with small groups and assisting students who are working on independent work to ensure authentic engagement and to support classroom management and problem solving. After the 3-hour class work time, students will then participate in outdoor application of science activities as well as related arts activities such as physical education, music and art. Sussex Montessori will use Dibels, DRA, Renaissance Star Assessments and curriculum-based measures to monitor student progress in literacy and math. These will be administered several times per year. Students falling in the bottom 25% will receive additional support in the class during the 3-hour work time, meeting with the teacher in small groups at a greater frequency and for a longer amount of time to provide intervention. Special education support will be provided by the special education coordinator and will be in the general classroom. Students will also receive additional support for OT, PT, speech, etc as identified by IEPs.

## **Instruction by Highly Qualified Teachers**

Teachers will be trained and certified in the Montessori Method. This is a 3-year process. The majority of our teachers have completed their second year of Montessori training as well as participated in four weekend seminars. First and Second year training for the existing and incoming cohort of teachers begin in the summer of 2024 and will continue throughout the upcoming school year. Additionally, teachers will continue with Responsive Classroom training to support academic and social emotional learning, and regularly attend Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) that are focused on professional support around literacy and other curricular areas.

## **High-Quality, Ongoing Professional Development**

Teachers will be engaged in training through UD to earn their certification in Montessori education. The eight teachers who already have their training will serve as coaches to the remaining 9 teachers. In addition, Sussex Montessori will be a Responsive Classroom school requiring that all of your instructional staff have on-going training and coaching in this model for creating a positive climate and culture. Instructional staff will be engaged in weekly lesson study. During this time teachers will be discussing Montessori materials to assist them in strengthening and broadening their planned lessons so that student learning can go deeper addressing higher level thinking. When appropriate new Montessori materials may be introduced to improve and enhance lessons.

## **Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers**

Sussex Montessori School has a partnership with the University of Delaware's Montessori Teacher Training Program to ensure the school has a direct pipeline to highly trained Montessori teachers as well as to provide on-going coaching support and professional development. The school covers the cost of the training for the teachers to attract and retain the very best Montessori trained educators.

## **Parent Involvement**

SMS has a very engaged and active parent engagement group that meets regularly throughout the school year. This group helped develop our School-Parent Compact that is signed by parents, students and administration. Montessori Family Visitation Days, Coffees with the Head of School and Director of Teaching and Learning, student led conferences, *Watch me Work* days, and ParentCamp events and our PTO partnership ensure a close parent/school relationship. Additionally, we hope to hold family discussion dinners hosted by our Social Worker and Counselor who will guide discussion around school success and support needed.

## **Coordination with Early Childhood Programs**

Sussex Montessori School continues to have a partnership with local child-care centers, Head Starts and Boys and Girls Clubs. We work closely together in areas as simple as shared bus hubs but also for the good of our students' academic growth. We have opened our campus and facilities to local childcare and youth-serving organizations to host events and conference at our school and to include workshops on Montessori philosophy and pedagogy for their staff.

## **Teacher Involvement in Assessments Decisions**

Teachers continue with weekly child-study and lesson study meetings to improve instruction, assure efficacy of the Montessori model and for continual improvement of the program. Additionally, we have a site-based decision-making team of teachers who flesh out important school wide decisions as well as a student success committee that is made up of a contingent of teachers, parents, admin. and board. Grade level team meetings and Curriculum team meetings meet regularly with the Director of Teaching and Learning to review data and plan for intervention with students in small group instruction during the morning work time. Coaches also support teachers in identifying strategies and support systems to students who need intervention and enrichment. Dibels, Renaissance Star Assessments and DRA are administered at the beginning of the year and serve to provide benchmark data. These assessments are administered at least 2 other times during the year as a

measure of progress. In addition to these assessments, curriculum-based measures are reviewed weekly to assess student progress toward meeting the standards that were taught.

### **Additional Timely Assistance**

Sussex Montessori complies with the guidance provided by the Delaware Department of Education for MTSS. The formal screening and progress monitoring assessments include but are not limited to:

- DIBELS Reading Assessments
- Renaissance Star Assessments
- Curriculum Based Measurement in Reading
- Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement.

Of note, for children that are known to be at risk, Sussex Montessori School teachers administer both the DIBELS Reading Assessments and the Renaissance Star Math Assessment during the first two weeks of the school year. Children identified as potentially having special education needs will be reviewed in September and a response to intervention plan then developed. For those students who fall below proficiency, one on one daily tutoring will be provided for the entire year and/or until they meet proficiency and above. Dibels assessments will be done in the first two weeks of school to ensure support work begins immediately. Recognizing that children may fall behind at any point on the learning continuum, the teachers at Sussex Montessori School continually monitor the progress of all children. This includes particular attention to the areas of reading and mathematics. For children who are identified at any time in the school year as needing additional support, Sussex Montessori School implements a more intensive and regularly scheduled progress monitoring program to ensure that the child is making progress.

### **Coordination with Federal, State and Local Services**

Title programs funds are used to supplement, not supplant the programs and services delivered to Sussex Montessori students. All Title fund allocations are used to support the identified needs for improving teaching and learning using the Montessori method for the maximum benefit of each child.

### **Title I-A Schoolwide Program Plan Development**

See the response to question 1 above regarding parent and community participation. The input from the student success committee and the site-based decision-making team informed the development of the current plan. Sussex Montessori will continue to engage the parents and the community in a variety of ways in order to get the greatest involvement from a variety of stakeholders through activities such as morning coffees, family engagement activities, etc. On-going staff meetings and team meetings have a portion of the meeting focused on needs and planning for any revisions to the school plan/consolidated grant as well as to assist in the planning for the revisions and/or additions to grant activities. Because we are a small school, it is important to involve and give all staff members a voice.

The assessments identified above will be reviewed regularly throughout the year. Curriculum based assessments will be key in helping the team to determine root causes for any identified needs. In addition to these data, the school community will review end of year Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC), Access, and Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP) data to determine needs for professional development and instructional changes for the following year. However, because Sussex Montessori will be reviewing and planning based upon regular data, the state level assessment results should come as no surprise but should only

serve to confirm what yearlong data is showing. These data will also be used to determine intervention needs for the coming year and grouping of students based on needs. Discipline and attendance data will be reviewed to assess how we are doing in developing a positive climate and culture. Interventions and professional development will be identified to address these needs. Surveys to families will also be used to provide feedback around parent satisfaction, student growth, and sense of school safety and comfort. Research in Montessori schools shows continual growth in student achievement particularly After the first few years in a Montessori environment. It would be important to keep this in mind when reviewing the data and making any recommendations for large scale changes.

### **Student Success Committee**

In the beginning of each school year, Sussex Montessori School will identify and engage a school planning team of stakeholders (aka Student Success Committee) to include Sussex Montessori Board members, school leaders (administrators), teachers and staff (i.e. paras), SMS families (parents/guardians), volunteers, DEI leader, representatives of youth-serving community partners and community-based organizations, as well as local government agency representatives. The planning team—comprised of members representing and/or serving diverse student groups/demographics, needs and services) will review Title 1 documents (i.e. school plan and needs assessment) and summary of academic and non-academic data to help prioritize goals, strategies, and action steps to address the academic and non-academic needs of students. The team will also assess teacher and staff professional development needs as well as budgets and the coordination of resources. Together, this committee of invested stakeholders will help jointly develop and/or inform the Schoolwide Improvement plan for Sussex Montessori School.

### **Identifying Needs and Defining Success in the Montessori Environment:**

The Montessori curriculum gauges student's progress and strategies for effective improvement through daily, in-depth, teacher observation and qualitative data analysis across a period of time. In the Montessori curriculum, there are no numerical or letter grades involved, but rather, the goal is mastery of skill or content. To experience/identify what success looks like in a Montessori environment is to observe it in real-time. You will see the learners on a progression to attaining the following: inner motivation, well-adjusted and prepared for anything life brings them, life skills/world readiness, ability to appreciate a variety of strengths in themselves and others, enthusiasm and joy in everything they do, contributes their talents to others, interest and enthusiasm in learning, growth mindset and perseverance when met with a challenge, ability to set and attain their own goals for life, follows classroom agreements, perseverance and focus while problem-solving, Critical thinking and executive functioning, ability to work independently as well as collaboratively, care for the environment around them (inside and outside the classroom), asks for help, ability to effectively resolve conflict (peace table), Self-knowledge of personal strengths and needs, respect for nature and other non-human life forms.

Moreover, Sussex Montessori School's strategies for improving student improvement include measures to improve student academic achievement and social emotional learning. DIBELS, Star, DERS, Smarter Balanced assessments, and daily progress monitoring tools are used to assess students' academic proficiencies, areas of strength, growth and needed improvement. Aperture is a tool used to assess and identify mental health strengths and concerns. We use the aforementioned measures and tools to develop sophisticated independence, self-awareness, and interdependence skills within a classroom.

As a public Montessori School, we also assess for State Standards and use diagnostic assessments to help our Lead Guides identify specific areas of strength and areas for growth for each learner. We will look for signs

that the learner isn't thriving and address them holistically. Together, these practices along with powerful observational skills give us a well-rounded understanding of each of our learners' needs.

While our work involves increasing the number of students who meet and/or exceed the state's standards proficiencies in Math, Language Arts (Reading/Writing), Science, and Social Studies, our primary goal is to see meaningful, positive growth in each learner from the start to the end of the year, as well as from year to year. Previous year's data trends tell us we can expect to see 10% gain in progress from year to year for every learner. Daily progress monitoring tools (MTSS, 30-minute focus on targeted goals), reading/literacy assistance, and afterschool/summer tutoring are just some of the ways we hope to achieve this growth.