School-Level

Parent and Family Engagement Plan/Policy

School Parent and Family Engagement Policy

Sussex Montessori School

School Year 2026- 2027

Revision Date 09/1/2026

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, **Sussex Montessori School** receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy that contains information required by section 1116(b) and (c) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The policy establishes the school's expectations for parent and family engagement and describes how the school will implement a number of specific parent and family engagement activities, and it is incorporated into the school's plan submitted to the local educational agency (LEA).

The **Sussex Montessori School** agrees to implement the following requirements as outlined by Section 1116:

- Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under Title I, Part A, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under Section 1114(b) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

- Update the school parent and family engagement policy periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school, distribute it to the parents of participating children, and make the parent and family engagement policy available to the local community.
- Provide full opportunities, to the extent practicable, for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.
- If the schoolwide program plan under Section 1114(b) of the ESSA is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.
- Be governed by the following statutory definition of parent and family engagement and will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition:

> Parent and Family Engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:
>
> (A) Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning
> (B) Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school
> (C) Parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child
> (D) Other activities are carried out, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA

DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE SCHOOL WILL IMPLEMENT REQUIRED SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS

JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Sussex Montessori School will take the following actions to involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely manner in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs, including opportunities for regular meetings, if requested by parents, to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their child and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

- Sussex Montessori School will host a meeting(s) in the Summer (between June and August or before the next school year begins) for parents to review and modify the current Parent and Family Engagement (PFE) policy and plan.

- Additionally, the school plans to work in conjunction with the parent organization to host a Parent-Education / Open House event which will include a meet and greet with families at the beginning of the school-year. This event may allow the school to unveil the PFE policy and will be coupled with a fun activities and campus/classroom tour(s) to draw more parents.
- These sessions will be available in-person and/or well as virtually with breakout rooms.

ANNUAL TITLE I MEETING

Sussex Montessori School will take the following actions to conduct an annual meeting, at a convenient time, and encourage and invite all parents of participating children to attend to inform them about the school's Title I program, the nature of the Title I program, the parents' requirements, the school parent and family engagement policy, the schoolwide plan, and the school-parent compact.

- Sussex Montessori School will host its Annual Title 1 meeting in September or October of each year. The Annual Title 1 meeting may be combined with an Open House, Family Resource Fair (table with community resources and partners), or other Back 2 School event. The meeting will provide an overview of the Title 1 program at SMS, the Montessori curriculum used, and may incorporate a campus tour or display of classroom materials and student's work.
- The Annual Title 1 meeting may be held on SMS campus and/or virtually for parents who cannot attend in-person. The Recorded session will be made available on school website or social media.
- To limit some of the barriers families may face in participating in the meeting, the school may provide an interpreter/translator and make efforts to provide food and childcare.
- While the Annual meeting may likely be held at the school, other parent activities/meetings may be held in the various communities (community centers, other towns) through Sussex County.
- The School will use information from a family survey to identify the best day and time to host this meeting. Parents may receive communications with at minimum three date options for the Annual Title 1 meeting- week night, weekday, and weekend option. The final date will be selected based on responses and official meeting announcements will go out to parents at least 2 weeks prior to the confirmed date.

COMMUNICATIONS

Sussex Montessori School will take the following actions to provide parents of participating children the following:

- Timely information about the Title I programs
- Flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide with Title I funds, transportation, childcare or home visits, as such services relate to parent and family engagement.
- Information related to the school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand:
- Sussex Montessori School may provide and distribute the Parent and Family Engagement (PFE) policy via the following means:
    - Website (Parent Portal)
    - Registration /Enrollment Sessions (Spring)
    - Printed materials (mailed if requested/needed)
    - Summer Parent Meet & Greet Event (discuss PFE)
    - Emails (with information about SMS Title 1 Program) early in school year
    - Student/Family Handbook
- The Parent and Family Engagement Policy may be available in multiple languages (including English and Spanish)

SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT

Sussex Montessori School will take the following actions to jointly develop with parents of participating children a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards.

- Sussex Montessori School will host a meeting(s) with parents, staff, and community stakeholders to jointly develop the School-Parent Compact before the start of the school year.
- The School-Parent Compact will be distributed in one or more of the following ways:
    - Parent/Teacher Conferences (held in the Fall)
    - Thursday Folder (a designated school folder will go home on Thursdays with each child with important information for parents to review or sign)
    - Fall Annual Title 1 Meeting (hardcopy and/or digital copies)

RESERVATION OF FUNDS

If applicable, **Sussex Montessori School** will take the following actions to involve the parents of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent by:

- Sussex Montessori School will release details of increased Title 1 funding exceeding $500,000 with families within 3 weeks of notification for the approved budget.
- The school will distribute a family engagement survey with suggestions (i.e five recommendations given by parent organization, PTO, or student success committee) of parent engagement activities, trainings, and/or resources upon which these funds may be spent. Feedback from the parent engagement survey will help determine how this 1% is spent.

COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Sussex Montessori School will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement programs and activities with other Federal, State, and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children by:

- Sussex Montessori School may create a Community Resource Center where parents may access information about available family support services and community resources on site.
- The school may host a Community Resource Fair where representatives from various community and social service organizations can connect face to face with parents to share information and resources.
- The sharing of community events /services and information about family support services and resources will be distributed/communicated in the school Newsletters and brochures, website, and social media pages.
- The school may invite partners to speak to parents during quarterly parent engagement activities and events.
- Overall, the school seeks to partner with local youth serving organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club, as well as childcare facilities and mental health services to provide educational outreach to families at least once a quarter.

BUILDING CAPACITY OF PARENTS

Sussex Montessori School will build the parents' capacity for strong parent and family engagement to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school and the community to improve student academic achievement through the following:

- Providing parents with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessments used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards; and
- Materials and training to help parents to work with their child to improve their child's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parent and family engagement
- Providing assistance to parents of participating children, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following:
    - The challenging State's academic standards
    - The State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments
    - The requirements of Title I, Part A
    - How to monitor their child's progress
    - How to work with educators to improve the achievement of their child

- Sussex Montessori School seeks to increase parent involvement and education/understanding of the Montessori curriculum/philosophy and State academic standards through the following ways:
    - ParentCamps – the school will host sessions to promote open dialogue, information sharing, meaning communication and connection between families, school staff, and community members. Through opportunity, equity, and access, stakeholders participating in Parent Camp sessions are heard, seen, and valued. As a result, family, community, and school partnerships are strengthened.
    - Welcome Sessions– to welcome and orient newly enrolled families to the Montessori Classroom and Curriculum. (to also include classroom and campus tours)
    - Readiness Fairs– to prepare registered families with important school and classroom information and academic, social-emotional and other community resources before/at the beginning of the school year. Families have the opportunity to meet other families, teachers and staff, and community partners.
    - Open House & Parent Education Materials–provide written materials and Open House events centered around the Montessori Philosophy & Curriculum in efforts to educate parents about the Montessori learning tools classrooms use, state standards and tests/assessments. This will take place early in the school year and may include Child-led Montessori videos of the materials used and their purpose.

- "Parents as Students" – the school may host fun, educational sessions where parents receive hands-on Montessori lessons by teachers. This activity will help parents truly understand how different subjects are taught in the Montessori classroom. Some of these lessons may be taught by actual Montessori students (via workstations)
- "Watch Me Work" Days - parents may visit as quiet observers during a live classroom setting.
- "Family Visitation Days" - parents receive child-led tour of classrooms and display of student's work.
- Digital Classroom Observation- parents may observe teachers working with students, providing lessons, and monitor child's development, progress and success through digital platforms such as the Transparent Classroom app.
- State Assessment Workshops specifically designed to educate parents about the Common Core standards and Smarter Balance State Assessments.
- Fall /Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences – opportunities for parents to discuss children's learning/progress, how prepared their child is, and what changes need to happen for them to improve or meet academic proficiencies.

- Up-to-date Communications, Support and Technical Assistance through the use of different apps (i.e. Transparent Classroom, Zearn, Readworks, Panorama, Zoom, Emails) to keep parents informed of student's daily/weekly learning, assignments, areas of need/ improvement and ways they can help their child grow, prepare for tests, etc.
- Montessori at Home. Available resource for Montessori-related activities parents can do at home with their children. This may include suggestions for additional materials/assignments that parents and students can work on to build their skills/competency.
- Online Parent Portal - List of Resources (classroom/learning resources and apps used by teachers/parents).
- Skill-Building & Technical Support - Post YouTube Videos, tutorials, webinars or in-person sessions on how to use certain classroom apps (i.e. Zoom 101) for families who may not be proficient in using various technologies.

BUILDING CAPACITY OF SCHOOL STAFF

Sussex Montessori School will provide training to educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school by:

- Professional Development (Equity) Training and Coaching throughout the year and during the summer months

- Overview of Montessori Philosophy and Pedagogy; basic Montessori concepts (such as the Prepared Environment, Human Tendencies, and the Planes of Development); The role of the adult in the classroom; and more specifically the role and expectations of the Associate Teacher.

- When feasible, Sussex Montessori School may consider hiring a Resource Officer (police officer/paid position) to provide extra security and develop safety plan. This will only be done should the need for security in this fashion arise.