

Sussex Montessori School

Minor Modification Request Submitted 9/12/2018

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CHARTER SCHOOL MODIFICATION APPLICATION QUESTIONS

There are core questions that must be answered by the applicant, regardless of whether the modification is considered a minor or major modification. Additional questions are determined by the specific nature of the request, for example expansion or reduction by more than 15%, change of name, change of location, etc. Please provide clear, complete, and accurate information in response to each question.

Please indicate the type(s) of modification(s) you are requesting by checking all applicable boxes below:

Minor Modification (Section A Only)		Major Modification (Section A <u>AND</u> additional questions identified below)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrollment change (increase or decrease) between 5 and 15%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Agreement Section A only
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change agreement with EMO/CMO	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrollment change (increase or decrease) of greater than 15% Section B
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Start date (one-time) delay	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grade configuration (adding grade levels or reducing grade levels) Section C
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of charter school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational Program (i.e. curriculum) Section D
<input type="checkbox"/>	Existing or planned school facilities or structures (including any plan to use temporary or modular structures)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mission (includes At-Risk designation) Section E
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in terms to current site facility arrangement (i.e. lease to purchase)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace, remove, or add EMO/CMO, or transfer of authorizer Section F
<input type="checkbox"/>	Educator Evaluation Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrollment preferences Section G
<input type="checkbox"/>	A change to the current authorized number of hours, either daily or annually, devoted to actual school sessions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Location change Section H
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Goals for student performance Section I

Section A Core Questions:

1. What modification does the school's Board of Directors want to make to the term(s) of the charter? Identify the page number(s) on which the term(s) is/are stated in the currently approved charter. If the term(s) of the charter the school wants to modify is/are conditions placed on the charter by the Secretary of Education and members of the State Board of Education, state the condition(s) and the date(s) on which the condition(s) was/were placed on the school's charter.

We seek to delay the opening of Sussex Montessori School from September 2019 to September 2020. This is a change to Section 0.1 School Proposal.

2. What is the effective date of the proposed modification?

The effective date would be upon approval of the State Secretary of Education. Opening of the school would move from September 2019 to September 2020. Preopening conditions for the school would be adjusted to reflect this new timeline.

3. The authorizer will review your most recent Performance Review Reports as part of your application. Discuss the school's academic performance, compliance with the terms of its charter, and financial viability as measured by the Performance Framework.

Academic Performance – Not Applicable since school has not yet opened.

Compliance with the Terms of the Charter – Sussex Montessori has had a charter for 6 months. To date, we have worked with DDOE to adhere to all preplanning requirements of the charter. This includes meeting on the preopening requirements, completing board training with DANA, securing a site, submission of the 501c3 application, and initiating a head of school search as outlined in the Charter. In addition, Sussex Montessori has launched an extensive community engagement campaign holding informational meetings and attending events. Our website and logo are in development. The board has completed a thorough cash flow analysis of the planning years. We have begun a conversation with Dorcell Spence and Michelle Lambert to understand our financial due diligence when we receive state funds. Sussex Montessori has also added a new board member from Sussex County, Penny Short of Nanticoke Memorial Hospital. Finally, we have identified a school site, with existing buildings suitable for classrooms and offices pending renovations, and have put an offer on the property.

Financial Viability – There is no performance report required at this time. Please see item 6.

4. Describe the rationale for the request(s). Discuss any relevant research base or evidence that supports this type of request. *(Attachments may be provided)*

We are fortunate to be engaged in due diligence on a site that has the potential to be a

unique Montessori School for Sussex County. However, the site will require renovations and construction to be ready for children. While the state agencies at the PLUS meeting held in August were all very positive, we expect that this project will require various permits that have the potential to delay progress. The added year will allow us to ensure that we have a quality facility ready for children and families in the fall of 2020.

5. Describe how the proposed modification will impact the operation of the school. Include how student achievement, staffing, facilities, and financial viability of the school may be impacted in the current school year and for the remainder of the school's charter term.

The modification will positively impact the operations of the school by providing time to:

- Ensure that the site is ready for opening day.
 - More fully implement a strategic plan for community engagement to reach the entire community in an effort to reach our goal of social and economic diversity in the school.
 - Hold additional workshops for Sussex County teachers in the summer and fall of 2019 to provide information about Montessori training and the opportunities at the school, thereby enhancing the recruitment process.
 - Implement a tiered fund raising plan to support the first years of the school's operations.
 - Allow the Head of School, whom we expect to bring on board in the winter of 2019, to attend Montessori leadership training in the summer of 2019 prior to the school opening.
 - Allow for the planning of additional productive teacher professional days for the start of the school year in 2020.
 - This preplanning will ensure better opportunities for Sussex Montessori to positively impact student achievement in the first years of operation.
6. Indicate the projected impact, if any, of the proposed modification on the school's present financial position, and its financial position going forward. If the modification promises to create financial challenges, indicate how those will be remedied.

Sussex Montessori has received \$850,000 from the Longwood Foundation to support the planning years for Sussex Montessori School. Sussex Montessori has applied for a federal Non-SEA grant and should hear whether we will receive it end of September 2018. We have engaged with Horizon Philanthropic, which is based in Sussex County, to launch a campaign to support the additional funding needed to acquire, renovate, and build on the site. We have held several meetings this summer to extend our outreach to other foundations and individuals. We have secured NCALL financing for the purchase of our site, have established that NCALL will support a construction loan, and have begun conversations with the USDA to take over the long-term financing. After an extensive cash flow analysis, the board feels

comfortable that we can continue to advance the purchase of a site and the hiring of a Head of School with or without the Non-SEA grant.