

SUSSEX ACADEMY

STRATEGIC

PLAN

2022 - 2025

Message from the Executive Board

We welcome you to the twenty-second year of Sussex Academy. We are a board composed of parents and professionals from various backgrounds and expertise, but what we all have in common is an unwavering commitment to providing the best possible educational home for every one of our students.

Sussex Academy was the first charter school in Sussex County, and has been a trailblazer in the Delaware educational community in many ways. We have worked hard to achieve a reputation of academic excellence, in addition to creating a school environment that promotes social and emotional growth, advanced learning, character development, and opportunities that nurture the whole child. Our strategic plan for the 2022- 23 school year contains five key areas of focus which are: academics, activities, advising, athletics and atmosphere. Our overall goal is to prepare each student for the challenges of life faced beyond Sussex Academy.

The board believes that to achieve Sussex Academy's goals for our students/school, it is through a partnership of parents, community, and school staff. We want to thank you for this partnership and trust as we move forward together during this school year!

Sincerely,

Sussex Academy Executive Board

School Profile

Founded in 2000, Sussex Academy is a tuition-free public charter school providing an accelerated academic program for students in grades K – 12. Sussex Academy's vision is to cultivate globally-minded students of distinction by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and values to become successful, productive citizens in the 21st Century.

- Beautiful 50+ acre campus located centrally in Georgetown, Delaware
- State-of-the-art facilities including two turf fields and aquatic center
- Middle School and High School musical theater programs
- Individualized learning support
- Reputation for being among the top academic public schools K-12 in the state
- Named a Blue Ribbon School (2016)
- First Charter school in Delaware to receive a 10-year charter renewal
- Recognized by the Delaware DOE for exceeding academic expectations in 2018,2019
- Offers Advanced Placement classes in high school
- Ranked 4th high school in Delaware by US News and World Report (2022)



Our Mission

The mission of Sussex Academy is to foster academic achievement and social responsibility in a small school environment where students participate in a highly accelerated college preparatory program that prepares them for the technological and global mindedness needed for the 21st century and that instills ethical conduct and service to others in their day-to-day lives.

Our Vision

Our vision is to cultivate students of distinction by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and values to become successful, productive citizens.

Our Goals

- Maintain high academic performance
- Foster critical, independent thinking, and reflection
- Ensure a safe, respectful school environment
- Advocate personal growth and responsibility
- Provide opportunities for individual and group success
- Model and encourage collaborative decision making
- Facilitate ongoing professional development
- Encourage parental involvement and partnerships
- Promote service and community partnerships
- Instill environmental awareness and social consciousness
- Develop technological competence

School Statistics



Translate webpage to :

[SNAPSHOT](#) [CLIMATE & CULTURE](#) [ACADEMICS](#) [EDUCATORS](#) [FINANCE](#) [ACCOUNTABILITY](#)

Enrollment



1,120

1,120 students were enrolled in school as of September 30, 2021.

[More Info](#)

English Language Arts



77.8%

77.8% of students were proficient in English language arts (ELA) during the 2021-2022 school year.

[More Info](#)

Graduation Rates



100%

100% of the class of 2021 graduated high school in 4 years with a regular high school diploma.

[More Info](#)

Attendance



97.34%

97.34% are on-track in attendance for the 2020-2021 school year.

[More Info](#)

Mathematics



57.23%

57.23% of students were proficient in math during the 2021-2022 school year.

[More Info](#)

College and/or Career Ready



N/A

College and/or career readiness is unavailable for the 2020-2021 school year.

[More Info](#)

Retrieved from: <https://reportcard.doe.k12.de.us/>

Strategic Area #1: Academics

The Academics subcommittee of Sussex Academy's strategic planning committee is recommending the adoption of three overarching goals with eight related strategies. The committee met five times in 2022: February 9, 23, March 16, April 6, 13. These goals and strategies are derived from the data collected through parent and student surveys, administered by the school, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) analysis conducted by the subcommittee, and committee discussion that included feedback from families outside of the committee. Represented in these goals and strategies are Sussex Academy's four lenses: nurturing the whole child, commitment to professional excellence, fortifying relationships, and implementing 21st-century technology. Many of the goals and strategies are inclusive of all grade levels and content areas. The table below is organized in a way that includes the overarching goals and related strategies for each, and to indicate if the goal/strategy applies to k-5 or 6-12, or both, and to which lens(es) are there threads.

Goal 1: Maintain the school's commitment to academic excellence.

Strategy 1: Improve on the horizontal and vertical alignment of curricula through all k-12 disciplines, and communicate progress with all stakeholders.

Strategy 2: Continue to embed executive functioning and coping skills into curricula and school culture to ensure students' overall well-being and academic success.

Strategy 3: Establish an onboarding process and annual commitment for all students and families.

Strategy 4: Evaluate course electives and sequencing of courses and pathways to ensure students are reaching their academic potential and goals, and communicate progress with all stakeholders.

Strategy 5: Review the operational implementation of grading policies and guidelines to ensure there is consistency and integrity across departments and school-wide; provide support for faculty to fully implement; and communicate with students and parents.

Goal 2: Establish a comprehensive professional development plan for all teachers that will support their professional growth and ensure they are using best practices inside and outside of the classroom and school-wide.

Strategy 1: Establish Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to provide a forum for teachers to collaborate, share best practices, and establish consistency in curricula, grading structures, and practices.

Strategy 2: Identify professional development needs for faculty and provide internal and external professional development opportunities and time that help faculty support all students (i.e., differentiation, Social Emotional Learning).

Goal 3: Through data, continue to acquire resources needed to develop, align, and implement a developmentally appropriate elementary curriculum.

Strategy 1: Assess the need for full-time math/reading specialists to support the elementary curriculum and implement as needed.

Strategy 2: Adopt a phonics program for elementary grades to support reading instruction.

Strategic Area # 2: Activities

The activities subcommittee consisted of a Sussex Academy student, educational staff, administration, school executive board representation and a parent. Due to the passion we have for Sussex Academy and this work we at times found ourselves going into the details of the implementation and execution planning stages as opposed to limiting ourselves to establishing the framework for an implementation committee to use to guide their work. We assessed the data presented that had been captured by recent surveys and determined crosswalks amongst the data to come up with specific recommendations/goals. In areas where we did not have the details needed the committee members dug in at the academy to investigate and find details needed to complete our work. This investigation helped each of us due to the silos we have operated in due to our roles at the school. Keeping an open mind and working to determine what was best made collectively with an open atmosphere of respect for each person's role proved valuable throughout the process. One overarching goal that stood out in conversations that applies not only to our goals but should apply to all committees that worked on this strategic plan is the idea of equity. As a school that is classified and even advertises itself as a tuition free public charter school, we must improve on making decisions that focus on equitable access to the educational ecosystem we have all come to love. Without equity we are limiting access to specific student subgroups that should have the same opportunities across the board.

As we applied the idea of equitable decision making sure we also determined from the crosswalk that three specific categories started to present itself with possible implementation strategies sub bulleted below:

Goal 1: Create a clear, comprehensive, vertically aligned school club plan K-12

Strategy 1: Offer a variety of academic and non-academic club choices allowing for students to participate in multiple clubs of choice.

Strategy 2: Create a transparent club funding structure that includes funding for faculty club advisors.

Strategy 3: Bridge or connection between elementary campus and secondary campus clubs to help students sustain interest and build on experience from campus to campus.

Strategy 4: Create a student philanthropy committee to assist in granting additional funds requested by clubs throughout the school year.

Goal 2: Create a transparent funding structure for how activity fees are being allocated

Strategy 1: Work with faculty/staff members from each school to update activity fee amounts (by school) and uses. Provide this information to all SA families. Determine ways to offset, lower or subsidize, when possible, to make sure it is equitable for all students.

Goal 3: Promote and invest more resources into the Arts

Strategy 1: Create a Performing Arts Booster Club (Elementary)for the elementary school and revamp the current secondary school Performing Arts Booster Club (Secondary).

Strategy 2: Hire a chorus director for expanding the music department.

Goal 4: Pursue instituting an activity bus for after school transportation

Strategy 1: Research opportunities/budget to include after school activity transportation for all students to provide equitable access.

Strategic Area # 3: Advising

The Advising subcommittee met a total of four times including the initial meeting following the State of the School address and Strategic Directions kick off meeting. The Subcommittee began with the assessment of available data to inform the areas of strengths and opportunities for improvements. Data sources included parent and student surveys administered by Sussex Academy December 2021- January 2022, themes that emerged from the survey comments and subcommittee discussion, and goals and strategies that may have not been fully realized from the 2019-2023 Sussex Academy Strategic Plan. The Advising Subcommittee then determined four goals with correlating strategies which are intended to strengthen advising and leverage the role of the Academic Counselors to support all students on their educational and developmental journeys.

The Sussex Academy Counseling Department strives to be an essential and valuable resource for enhancing individual well-being and academic success. Our values include endeavoring to model compassion, caring, kindness, and commitment in interactions within our Sussex Academy Community and the broader community. We are champions of functional support, a personalized and integrative approach to counseling which involves understanding how social and emotional health directly affects and interacts with academic performance and achievement. Our ultimate

vision and goal is to support all students on their educational and developmental journeys and to prepare them for post-secondary life as productive and healthy contributors to society and to life.

Goal 1: Create a Counseling Department communication plan that ensures proactive communication to students and families, strengthens relationships with a focus on student well-being and academic success.

Strategy 1: Develop a centralized Advising Communication Platform to meet the needs of students and parents.

Strategy 2: Develop a communication timeline that will standardize the release dates for advising information annually to coincide with the academic calendar and Counseling Department initiatives.

Strategy 3: Provide current Counseling Department information on the Sussex Academy website inclusive of personnel, grade level assignments, contact information, and delineation of counseling roles with a description or FAQ section to guide parents towards the correct personnel.

Strategy 4: Create processes for communication of academic status including paper copies of report cards.

Goal 2: Design a Comprehensive and Personalized Academic Counseling Initiative for students K-12.

Strategy 1: Conduct advising sessions for parents and students for the key transition periods within schools (before K, 5th before entering middle school, 7th before AC/integrated math choices, 8th pre-HS, 11th grade college/career planning).

Strategy 2: Design and implement preparatory courses for PSATs, SATs and evaluate the impact of the courses.

Strategy 3: Include short- and long-term planning via individualized plans to course catalogs to allow students to map out their courses and keep track of credits already completed.

Strategy 4: Fully leverage Naviance Advising Software in the student advising experience.

Goal 3: Clearly define and operationalize the roles within the Counseling Department.

Strategy 1: Develop the roles and responsibilities for each member of the Counseling Department for students and families to better understand the various roles.

Strategy 2: Delineate the aspects of the student experience that are addressed by the Counseling Department such as: academic support, emotional support, and other resources needed by the family.

Strategy 3: Describe the process for discipline and behavioral consequences that do not fall under the scope of the Counseling Department.

Strategy 4: Assess the need for additional support staff and resources needed for the effective functioning of the Counseling Department.

Strategy 5: Evaluate the potential for a structured peer-mentor role or leadership program within the Counseling Department that could enhance the student connection to the secondary campus.

Strategy 6: Initiate Pathways for Collaboration between Primary and Secondary Campuses.

Goal 4: Develop Methods to Generate Staff and Student Retention and Success Data.

Strategy 1: Conduct exit interviews for student and/or staff who transfer to other schools

Strategy 2: Gather information from alumni to assess their perceptions of preparedness for career fields and/or higher education via annual surveys.

Strategic Area # 4: Athletics

Athletics Program Pledge:

To develop the student-athlete as a total person requires personnel and programs to support academic integrity, social responsibility, and competitive athletic excellence. We are committed to developing and sustaining outstanding programs that produce championship results in the classroom and in life.

This athletic strategic plan focuses on attaining excellence in all programs to ensure life-long achievement by student-athletes.

Core Values:

We (coaches, athletes, staff, supporters) are committed to an exemplary Athletic High School Program valuing:

- **Excellence** and high academic and athletic expectations for ourselves and others.
- Development of **character** including respect, responsibility, and integrity.
- Exhibited **sportsmanship** at all times, winning with grace and losing with dignity.
- **Commitment** to athleticism and highest potential resulting from personal goals, hard work, and self-discipline.
- **Wellness** – healthy spirit, mind, and body – in a positive and safe environment.
- Collegiality, character, and **teamwork** -- on and off the field.
- Spirited **competition** and a winning attitude that comports with our core values.

- **Citizenship** on the team, in the school, and throughout our interscholastic region.
- **Enthusiasm** in the joy of the sport and believe that student-athletes should have fun while participating

Goal 1: Attract and maintain quality coaches through a defined hiring process, evaluation, and providing enhanced staff development.

Strategy 1: Commit to a hiring process that reflects coaches and staff who possess Sussex Academy's mission and priorities of academic integrity, social responsibility, and competitive excellence to be used to establish a consistent process for interviewing and hiring decisions.

Strategy 2: Pilot a model of a mission-aligned coaching evaluation system to continually improve coaching practices.

Strategy 3: Develop a process for ensuring compliance of all coaches with mandatory Section VII professional development and certification.

Strategy 4: Identify ongoing professional growth and professional development opportunities for coaches. Establish procedures for connecting professional development with ongoing coaching responsibilities and areas identified for growth as linked to athletic performance.

Strategy 5: Provide budget recommendations to support coach enhancement and development.

Strategy 6: Ensure salaries are competitive with successful neighboring schools with a defined pay scale and opportunities for negotiation.

Goal 2: Create an exciting and accessible experience for fans in an effort to increase attendance and execute memorable experiences for athletes and fans.

Strategy 1: Explore and pilot options for increased student attendance at athletic events.

Strategy 2: Invite/recruit other SA clubs/programs/classes (band/theater/dance/photography) to participate in sporting events at half time, national anthem and/or school mascot.

Strategy 3: Invite/align local media resources to increase media coverage of SA games and events. Highlight student athletes and coaches.

Strategy 4: Create opportunities and incentivize SA staff to chair committees, and support student body involvement for pep rallies, homecoming and state playoff/championship games.

Goal 3: Develop and foster teams that incorporate all student-athletes in the pathways towards perpetual success.

Strategy 1: Provide Athletic Training resources for student-athletes.

Strategy 2: Implement school-based conditioning program for in-season athletes (e.g., after-school training and conditioning programs run by current staff).

Strategy 3: Implement school-based conditioning program for out-of-season athletes (e.g., after-school training and conditioning programs run by current staff).

Strategy 4: Explore development of comprehensive athletic department wellness program for both current athletes and open to interested non-athletes (e.g., mental, physical, nutrition, dietary, etc.).

Strategy 5: Engage sports teams in seeking development and team building off-campus (e.g., through overnight camps, partnerships with sports clubs, partnerships with universities/ colleges, etc.).

Goal 4: Increase efficiency through simplifying processes to allow coaches to focus on their programs.

Strategy 1: Evaluate current athletic facilities and fields in alignment with established standards (e.g., safety, regulation, legal, etc.).

Strategy 2: Develop wish list (in collaboration with Coaches, Athletes, Sports Boosters) for athletic facilities and equipment.

Strategy 3: Sustained evaluation of facilities and fields (in collaboration with Coaches, Athletes, Sports Boosters,...) at the end of each athletic season (fall, winter, spring).

Strategy 4: Evaluate Security Needs for athletic grounds and athletic events.

Strategy 5: Propose transportation plan for safe and dependable transport of athletes to and from athletic events.

Goal 5: Develop the resources required for our student-athletes to achieve their academic, athletic and personal goals in a supportive, healthy environment.

Strategy 1: Project expenses and revenue on recurring expenses/ revenues based on previous year's athletics budget

Strategy 2: Propose an athletic fee per student.

Strategy 3: Establish budget line for professional growth and development of coaches.

Strategy 4: Establish budget for full-time athletic training services.

Strategy 5: Establish budget for Assistant Athletic Director, secondary campus.

Strategy 6: Establish budget for athlete transportation (including van purchase).

Strategy 7: Establish budget for wellness and conditioning initiatives.

Strategy 8: Develop and implement strategies to ensure the equitable allocation of resources among the various athletic programs.

Strategy 9: Create a plan to raise the necessary funds to support prioritized projects over the next 5 years.

Goal 6: Create enriching experiences for Seahawk Athletes.

Strategy 1: Evaluate and explore ways to strengthen the connections and contacts between the high school and middle school athletic programs.

Strategy 2: Educate our athletes on post-secondary playing opportunities.

Strategy 3: Create a Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC).

Strategy 4: Excel in the classroom: Achieve a department GPA of 3.0 or higher, with at least 50% of student athletes achieving this standard.

Strategic Area # 5: Atmosphere

The National School Climate Center (NSCC) defines school climate as the “quality and character of School life” as experienced by students, families, and staff. School life, the NSCC notes, encompasses multiple dimensions – Safety and Security, Interpersonal Relationships, Teaching and Learning, the Institutional Environment, and Social Media. Given the multifaceted nature of school life, maintaining a positive school climate can benefit students not just academically, but also behaviorally, socially, and emotionally.

Survey data indicates that generally stakeholders believe SA is an inclusive, safe environment where people are positive and treat each other with kindness. Data also indicates that SA has work to do to improve its efforts to communicate more regularly and consistently with internal and external stakeholders, provide opportunities for family engagement, encourage an environment where respect in relationships is fostered, and where school spirit is abundant everywhere, not just on the athletic fields.

Goal 1: Communication - at every level, with all stakeholders; meaningful, consistent communication between students and faculty, staff and administration, administration and parents, students and students

Strategy 1: Enhance communication tools to impact student success – Reworked Newsletter; website redesign.

Strategy 2: Mini Homeroom (advisory period) – utilizing this time for checking in weekly, sharing important information.

Goal 2: Community - SA will provide a learning environment that fosters diversity, personal responsibility, and promotes emotional and social wellness

Strategy 1: Restorative Practices - In order to have a restorative school, a restorative equity program requires continuity and consistency and must be prioritized. The following are suggestions for the most successful implementation of a restorative equity program.

Strategy 2: Health Fair/Emotional Wellness Programs – will bring stakeholders together in conversation around health issues facing students – mental health as well as general health; bring in members from the community to participate.

Strategy 3: Handbook Revision – to include all new/updated policies and practices.

Goal 3: Family & Community Engagement - SA will engage stakeholders in a more meaningful way to enrich the school community

Strategy 1: Broaden partnerships with community organizations and individual volunteers to create programs and resources needed by students and families.

Strategy 2: Expand learning opportunities for parents at home, school and/or in the community

Strategy 3: Encourage more parent engagement – PTA, PTSA, Executive Board, Sports Boosters, Performing Arts Boosters.

Goal 4: Seahawk Pride - SA will build a highly visible culture of Seahawk Pride evident in the behaviors, beliefs, values and symbols found within the school and the entire community.

Strategy 1: Student Morale - Events to bring students together, Homecoming (bring alumni back to get involved); class trips/retreat at the beginning of the year; Outward Bound type programs; social events; increased participation at athletic events, plays, etc.

Strategy 2: Community Service events in the Georgetown community to enhance our relationships; local government/civic responsibility; environmental responsibility. Genuine service learning that ties into what they are learning in the classroom; Day of Service.

Strategy 3: A schoolwide Cultural Expedition with projects that center on culture, diversity, etc. across all academic subjects.

Strategy 4: One Book Project (theme for the year, grade level appropriate book that embraces the theme; year end expedition)

Strategy 5: Health Fair (vaping education, drug use education, geared toward different developmental levels) – health education (videos, links, printed materials)

Strategy 6: Alumni Spotlights – encourage SA grads to come back and be a part of the school community; speakers for student assemblies, etc.

Plan Assessment

This strategic plan will be assessed on a yearly basis using the identified progress indicators under each strategic area. The strategic plan is current for five years and will be reviewed and revised as necessary on an annual basis. Additionally, the Sussex Academy Head of School, will keep the board and community apprised and will deliver a presentation on progress of the strategic plan annually at the August Board of Director's meeting.

