

## **Professional Development [14 Del. C. § 512(6)]**

### **1. Describe the professional development plan, including standards and opportunities that will be offered to the staff. ...**

In their chapter focusing on *High-Quality Research-Based Professional Development*, Dagen and Bean (2014) emphasize that the research demonstrates that basic components such as a focus on content, active learning, duration and ongoing support are related to professional learning that impacts student learning. These are fairly standard themes across the research and clearly need to be considered by SMS leadership as they seek to impact the daily experience of students through the adults that work with them. However, I SMS will also address this statement from Dagen “We propose a third wave, a recognition of the importance of the culture within which teachers work and the need for distributed leadership that helps teachers focus on the goal of improving student learning” as the leaders consider the ideal professional learning community to impact student learning in a Montessori School.

#### **a. Prior to School Opening and ongoing PD**

##### Montessori Training – Teachers who are not already Montessori prepared

Each of the lead teachers in the school will be required to be Montessori certified. As described above, Montessori Works is in the planning stages of developing a Montessori teacher training program in partnership with the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector and a local University. The NCMPS program is successfully in use in Memphis, TN, Washington, DC, and Detroit, MI. This program will involve teachers who do not already have their Montessori training to attend Montessori Training on the following schedule:

##### Summer 2018

- 5 weeks of training on Montessori materials and curriculum prior to the school opening. This training will prepare teachers for the first year in the classroom.

##### School year 2018

- Onsite weekly coaching provided through the training program.
- Two weekend seminars

##### Summer 2019

- 5 weeks of training on Montessori materials and curriculum preparing teachers for the second year in the classroom.

##### School year 2019

- Onsite weekly coaching provided through the training program.
- Two weekend seminars

##### Summer 2020

Final projects and portfolios completed

July 16-20 2018, School year 2018, and Summer 2019 - All Staff will participate in the “surround courses” provided by Montessori Works and developed by the NCMPS training program designed to better prepare teachers for work in a public Montessori setting. This includes a study of neurodevelopment, trauma, family engagement, special education in the

Montessori classroom, literacy and English Language Learning. This series of 15 job embedded modules is focused on delivering a fully implemented Montessori program to high needs children.

August 13-17, 2018 – All staff will participate in a four-day Responsive Classroom I workshop.

**b. School Year PD – 2018-19**

During the school year, there are strategically place Professional Development Days.

August 31, 2018 – For teachers to review the first week of school and prepare ahead strategically to meet children’s needs.

October 5, 2018 – Responsive Classroom/ or continued work with NCMPS courses

November 19, 2018 – Prepare for parent conferences

December 22, 2018 – Review of the fall semester, identification of challenges and planning for next trimester.

February 15, 2019 - Responsive Classroom/ or continued work with NCMPS courses

May 24, 2019 – Review of the year, identification of challenges and planning for next year.

June 10-14, 2019 - Responsive Classroom/ or continued work with NCMPS courses,

The daily plan will be structured to allow for teachers to have a planning period each day. However, this planning period will be structured to allow for children to have large blocks of uninterrupted time to work each day or at least for several days each week. Planning periods will be structured to allow several teachers at each age grouping to work together in a PLC model. In addition, teachers will participate in a weekly after school time using the study group model outlined below.

**c. School Year Embedded PD – 2018-19/ Evaluation of PD**

During the school year, teachers will be involved in ongoing child-centered discussions. From these discussions, they will build a culture of problem-solving to best meet children’s needs, learning from each other, and developing their own professional goals as individuals and small groups. SMS will cultivate a community in which trust and openness allow for the sharing of the challenges that exist in providing students with an innovative environment supporting the individual needs of each child. To accomplish this, the school will first, establish a PLC/Study Group leadership team. Each year the PLC/Study Group leadership team will determine specific areas of focus for the school based on teacher observations, student needs, and assessment data. This will give the SMS staff a method to focus the entire community on a particular topic, which serves the purpose of moving the school forward in an effective, coordinated way. Likewise, teachers will reflect on student learning challenges in their individual classrooms to develop individual professional development goals and plans with the Head of School and Education Director. Second, the school will engage in weekly coaching with the NCMPS/MW Montessori training program. This coaching will include a weekly observation and debriefing focused on the individual teacher and the needs of the children.

The mid-year and end-year review days as outlined in the PD schedule above offer an opportunity for the teachers, Education Director and Head of School to review student

progress, challenges for the school community, and to seek opportunities for embedded professional development to address student needs. In addition to summative and formative academic achievement data, the school will use the [NCMPS Rubric of Essential Elements of Montessori Practice in the Public Sector](#) to evaluate the school's status in implementing the Montessori approach. These routine reviews will keep the school's PD mission focused and targeted to the performance goals outlined in the educational plan. This process of a school wide review of data and the NCMPS rubric will ensure that the teachers and assistant teachers have a voice in the professional development plan.

#### **d. School Leader Development**

The Board President will be an advocate for the school leader to grow professionally. As a part of the routine evaluation process, the head of school and the board president will identify areas for growth. The evaluation process will consist of the DPAS II as well as the NCMPS rubric for Montessori Schools. The research on school leadership demonstrates that there are habits that support the effective functioning of learning communities. As Sally Zepeda (2013) states, "principals create conditions in the workplace that enhance the ability of other individuals to motivate themselves". This is the kind of leadership that will be required in a Montessori school. The principal of SMS will need opportunities to grow their leadership skills to assist them in thinking about the use of time and space in the day, building vertical and horizontal relationships in the school community, and observing and providing feedback in a Montessori classroom. If the School leader is not Montessori certified, they will be encouraged to complete Montessori administrative preparation prior to opening the school or soon after.

#### **References:**

Dagen, A.S. & Bean, R.M. (2014). *High-Quality Research-Based Professional Development: An Essential for Enhancing High-Quality Teaching*. Professional Development in Education.  
Zepeda, S. (2013). *Professional Development: What Works*. Routledge:London.