

1.8 Start-up and Operations

14 Del. C. §§ 512(1), (8)-(10), and (12)-(13)

1. **Start-Up Plan. Provide, as Attachment 16, a detailed start-up plan for the school, specifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals, which is aligned with a sound Start-Up Budget. The plan must include such milestones as:**
 - Identifying and hiring key personnel;
 - Creating and/or finalizing curriculum, including purchasing assessment and materials;
 - Creating discipline, attendance, promotion, and grading policies approved by your school's Board of Directors and the Department;
 - Hiring instructional staff;
 - Having in place the major contracts necessary for the school to open on schedule. Major contracts shall include, without limitation, the school's contracts for equipment, services (including bus and food services, and related services for special education), leases of real and personal property, the purchase of real property, the construction or renovation of improvements to real property, and insurance. **(Note! Contracts for bus and food services must be in place no later than August 1st of the year in which the school proposes to open and August 1st of each year thereafter.)**
 - Engaging the community and recruiting students; and
 - Other planning activities.

The start-up plan for the Sussex Montessori School is included in Attachment 16, which identifies specific tasks, timelines and individuals responsible for the start-up operations of the school. Accompanying budget information is provided in Attachment 16.

2. **Describe what you anticipate will be the challenges of starting a new school and how you expect to address these challenges.**

The Sussex Montessori School anticipates that its challenges will occur surrounding two areas:

- a) **Financing/Funding:** Financing a facility and a head of school in the planning year is a challenge faced by all charter schools in Delaware.

Montessori Works, whose mission is to expand Montessori education in Delaware has created a solid foundation for the Sussex Montessori Board to build on. Montessori Works has:

- over the past 4 years, raised \$253,000 used to support community engagement activities and to provide for consulting expertise in the development of the charter application.

- has secured letters of support for the planning year from the Longwood and Welfare Foundations for potential funding upon approval of the charter application.
 - begun conversations with local banks and NCALL (letter of interest included in attachments) to address potential financing for the facility.
 - begun development of a plan with Horizon Philanthropic to raise funding in Sussex County for the school. Horizon Philanthropic will be available to the board of SMS to continue the fundraising campaign for Sussex Montessori School upon approval.
 - Has engaged Mark Chura, of Chura Associates to manage the acquisition of or leasing of property, financing, and renovations or construction.
 - Will support the school to engage a consultant knowledgeable in the writing of Non-SEA grants or other national foundation grants. National grantees such as the Kellogg Foundation have supported Montessori schools serving communities such as those in Western Sussex County.
- b) Facilities: Facilities are always a challenge for Delaware charter schools. Sussex Montessori school has identified three potential sites which are described in section 9. The board anticipates a final decision on property at the time of or shortly after approval in April 2018 for the school to open in September 2019. Execution of leases and capital funding will be identified prior to December 2018, while renovation and occupancy will occur by June 2019. Sussex Montessori school will benefit from the relationship established by Montessori Works with Mark Chura, who is handling the project management for the initial identification of a site during the prior to and during the application process and will be available to the board of SMS to continue in the role of project manager for Sussex Montessori School upon approval.
- c) Transportation: Due to the rural nature of the county, transportation distances and times will require additional buses to ensure that students will arrive in time for school within spending inordinate travel time. Finding bus providers in this area will be more difficult than in other parts of the state and contracts with local school districts may be necessary. Sussex Montessori's site choices positions the school to establish partnerships with local school districts.

3. Complete the Start-Up (Year 0) Budget in the Budget Sheets. Complete all pages in the Budget Sheets, and provide as Attachment 17 (see link in Section 1.10 Budget and Finance).

Please see attachment 17 for the Planning Year budget for 2017-2018. The planning year budget accounts for the following:

- Marketing for and hiring a Head of School upon approval of the charter application
- Salary and OEC for the Head of School
- Salary and OEC for administrative support beginning in January 2019

- Professional development for the head of school and board
- Marketing for and hiring teachers
- Montessori training for teachers
- Montessori materials for the first operating year
- Financing costs for facility
- Repurposing facility or purchasing modular units depending on site.

4. Transportation. Describe how students will be transported to the school pursuant to 14 Del. C. § 508, including any provisions that the school will provide; how students who reside outside the district in which the school will be located will be transported to the school; and how students with special needs will be transported if specialized transportation is required by the student’s IEP.

SMS will contract bus transportation services to get students to and from school. Such services will be secured using a highly reputable and insured firm that specializes in the student transportation business. Based on the enrollment reported each April to the DDOE, the School Leader and Business Manager will open the bus routes to a public bidding process monitored by a subcommittee of the Operating Board. Bus routes will be established for those students who live within the district in which SMS is located.

SMS will make every effort to accommodate transportation to and from the school beyond any single school district by establishing central hub points outside of the district for student pickup and drop-off. The School Leader, along with support staff, (starting in 2018-19) will work with the transportation company planners to identify and establish convenient spoke and hub configurations that maximize student access and minimize ride times while seeking the most efficient and cost-effective means of getting students to and from the school campus location. Parents or guardians of students living outside of the district the school is located on will be responsible for transporting their child to and from the bus stop.

Appropriate accommodations, as defined in the students’ Individual Education Plans (IEP), will be provided to meet the needs of all special needs students requiring transportation. As special transportation needs are identified, the school will work with the students’ parents and the transportation services company to ensure compliance with specialized transportation needs. As field trips and other such events are planned, arrangements will be made through the school’s contracted transportation services provider.

Describe the plan for oversight of transportation operations (e.g., whether the school will provide its own transportation, contract out for transportation, request that a district provide transportation, or a combination thereof) and who on the school staff will provide this daily oversight.

In addition to the bidding and route development process outlined above, the SMS Business Manager with support from the school leader will oversee the routine student transportation services. This includes:

- keeping open lines of communications with the bus drivers and occasionally riding along on the morning route to ensure the integrity of the transportation system and attain firsthand knowledge of the bus environment. Additionally, SMS will strive to have quarterly meetings with drivers and the Business Manager will work to establish regular, informal rapport with the bus drivers.
- overseeing bus routing and transportation operations, and scheduling and supervising bus safety drills.
- putting into place by April 2019 a transportation contingency plan to address transportation emergencies. This plan will be created in concert with the procedures put in place by the busing company. It will include:
 - training for all staff and drivers in the contingency plan,
 - a list of contact names and phone numbers at the school, beginning with the school leader and then down the chain of command that has been established,
 - a plan for providing support at the site of an accident, (School Leader, back-up in the event that School Leader is not available)
 - plans for providing support at the school, (Education Director, back-up in the event that the Education Director is not available)
 - communication plans for parents, DDOE, and the general public, identifying the main person responsible for communications, messaging, and training in emergency communications,
 - and, plans for further support at the site or at the school to ensure the safety of all students.

The school leader will ensure:

- that they monitor and approve all plans developed,
- that the above plans are communicated annually to the operating board for feedback and approval of contracts,
- that there is appropriate staff coverage to supervise busses at arrival and dismissal,
- that appropriate time is set aside to train all staff in the emergency plan,
- and that practice drills are carried out according to the plan.

5. **Safety and Security.**

- a. **Describe your plan for safety and security for students, staff, guests, and property.**
- b. **Explain the types of safety and security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ to provide a safe and healthy environment in accordance with 14 Del. C. § 512(12) and the safety provisions included in the Compliance Certification Statement.**
- c. **Explain your process to create and maintain the required emergency preparedness plan that is in compliance with the Emergency Preparedness Guidelines established by 29 Del. C. § 8237 and 14 DE Admin. Code § 621, [and approved by the](#) Department of**

Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS). Identify which position will have primary responsibility for this plan.

- a. General Safety Plans**
- b. Safety and Security personnel, technology, equipment and policies**

Ensuring the health and safety of Sussex Montessori School students, guests, staff and parents will be the responsibility of all staff members. The school will make every effort to employ best practices in managing the health and safety of students, staff and guests.

The school leader will maintain primary responsibility for oversight and management of health, safety, and security policies and practices. SMS will implement a comprehensive set of health, safety, and risk management policies and practices, which will be communicated to parents, students and staff as part of enrollment procedures and various orientation programs. The school leader, in consultation with the operating board, will establish a School Safety Committee to serve as a clearing house for the discussion of issues, policies and practices related to the safety of students, parents and staff. Committee representation will include, but may not be limited to, the school leadership team, teachers, the school nurse, the custodian and a parent.

By June 2019 a Health and Safety Manual will be completed addressing but not limited to the following:

- general safety precautions,
- guest sign-in and sign-out procedures,
- procedures for fire drills, lock-downs, and other emergencies,
- emergency plans, drop-off and dismissal routines,
- medication administration guidelines,
- first aid, infectious disease,
- playground rules

Building Access/ Safety

In the interest of safety for students, staff, and visitors, “controlled access” to the school facility will be maintained at all times. A security system will provide visual live feeds of all building entrance locations, as well as other key spaces inside and outside the building. All outside doors will remain locked from the outside, except during student arrival and dismissal times. Visitor access will be restricted to the main entrance – all guests must present proper identification and comply with all ‘guest pass’ procedures before being allowed to pass beyond the main entrance. All staff will be required to wear photo ID badges while on school premises. Guest sign-in procedures will be established.

While SMS has not yet determined a final site, the Board is keeping the following safety and access features in choosing an appropriate site:

- Entrances that have double doors, which open out and operate with panic bar latches
- Doors that lock automatically upon closing
- A security camera at the front and back entrances
- A closed-circuit TV access door with coded alarm system
- A fully inspected, functioning fire alarm system that is linked in with the alarm system
- Fire escapes on every floor of the building, extinguishers in appropriate places
- Properly functioning sprinkler system

Phone/Texting Notification System

SMS will use an automated school notification system or similar to improve communications between the school and home and to provide important safety notifications to parents and guardians. This system for communication will provide notifications about school closings, delays, early dismissals, emergency notifications, attendance calls, bus route notifications, lockdown communications, activity reminders, lunch balance reminders, and parent polls and surveys.

Background Checks

All employees, contracted service providers, and volunteers (as required by law) will be required to complete a criminal background check (CBC). In addition, the Child Abuse Registry (CAR) will be checked through Department of Services for Children, Youth and Families (DSCYF). Both the CAR and CBC will be required of all new board members and submitted to the DDOE Charter Office within 45 days of election to the board. The school leader, with support from the Business Manager, will maintain due diligence in following the regulations for CBC's and CAR's for volunteers. Results will be maintained in a secure file, separate from personnel files; and, available for authorized inspection. The School Leader will be directly responsible for ensuring that criminal background and child abuse registry checks are initiated, completed and appropriately documented prior to an individual staff member's employment or board member's appointment.

c. Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP)

Following the hiring of the school leader, the leader will reach out to DSHS to begin the Plan's development. In accordance with the Omnibus School Safety Act, the school leader will establish a School Safety Committee to work with the Department of Safety and Homeland Security (DSHS) to develop and maintain a comprehensive site-specific safety and emergency preparedness plan in compliance with the national Incident Management System (NIMS). The plan will address the situations with the potential to cause injury, loss of life damage to or destruction of property, or major disruptions of activities including weather events, crime or terrorism related events.

In addition, the school will work with the Department to conduct at least 1 critical incident or emergency event exercise each year and at least 1 tabletop exercise every 2 years. The

performance of these exercises will be reviewed by the SMS Safety Committee and the DSHS representatives and any necessary adjustments will be made to the plan.

6. **Lunch/Breakfast.** Describe the plan for providing meals to students, including homeless students and others students eligible for free or reduced-price meals. If the school plans to contract for meals, identify the contractor, if known, and describe the services to be provided.

(Note! Passed In 2013, 14 Del. C. §506(f) states that if a child would qualify for a no- or low-cost breakfast or lunch under a federal national school breakfast or lunch program, then the charter school shall provide breakfast and lunch to the child at no or low cost to the child's family, beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. Charter schools shall not consider whether a child would qualify for no- or low-cost breakfast or lunch under a federal national school breakfast or lunch program when making enrollment decisions.)

SMS plans to participate in the National School Breakfast/ Lunch Program, and will contract for meals from a qualified food service vendor. This contract will be established and monitored by the business manager. Because we intend to market for enrollment to families in Western Sussex County, we can expect that we will have the required percentage to participate in the universal free and reduced lunch program. This decision will be made when enrollment has been established each year.

Meals will be provided to all students, including those eligible for free/reduced easily and students who are homeless. Eligibility for free/reduced meals will be determined annually during the first week of school and in accordance with established state and federal procedures. This process will be managed by the business manager.

Montessori children often eat in the classroom community rather than in a common cafeteria. If our final site does not allow for a cafeteria; the teachers and children will have breakfast and lunch delivered to the classrooms.

While there are many components to be addressed, SMS will adhere to the following:

- The school nurse will work with the food service vendor to ensure that all meals are consistent with state and federal guidelines and compliant with USDA regulations.
- The contractor will have experience and knowledge to comply with the Federal requirements outlined in the Federal nutrition guidelines including, but not limited to providing food that is sodium and cholesterol reduced, limiting the percent of calories from total fat to 30 percent of the actual number of calories offered; limiting the percent of calories from saturated fat to less than 10 percent of the actual number of calories offered; and increasing the levels of dietary fiber.
- The School Leader will ensure that any contracts with food service providers contain a statement to the effect that the "School Food Authority and participating schools under its jurisdiction, shall comply with all provisions of 7 CFR parts 210 and 245."
- Lunches will be priced as a unit.

- All children who are determined to be eligible for such meals will be served lunches free or at a reduced price.
- SMS will claim reimbursement at the assigned rates only for reimbursable free, reduced price and paid lunches served to eligible children.
- The cafeteria manager or any contracted meal provider shall be responsible for reviewing and analyzing meal counts to ensure accuracy as specified in §210.8 governing claims for reimbursement.
- The number of free, reduced price and paid reimbursable meals served to eligible children will be counted at the point of service.
- SMS will make no discrimination against any child because of his or her eligibility for free or reduced-price meals in accordance with the approved Free and Reduced-Price Policy Statement.
- Proper sanitation and health standards will be followed in the storage, preparation and service of food.

7. Student Health Services. Describe the plan to ensure the health of students. Describe how the school will provide health services to all students, including the plan to hire a School Nurse and a description of his/her role in the school. The response must include how the school will promote student health and well-being. The response must also include who at the school will supervise the School Nurse and his/her role in ensuring compliance with health regulations.

Describe the plan to ensure the health of students.

General promotion of student health and well-being.

Assuring a safe and healthy environment for students and staff will be of the highest importance. The basic premises of Montessori Schools include respect for self, others, and the environment. The curriculum outlined in section 1.3 focuses on these three basic areas of respect teaching students to understand that there are healthy choices for themselves and others. This understanding is the foundation for every day conversations about student physical and emotional health and well-being in Montessori schools.

In addition to the creation of the Health and Safety Manual referred to earlier, SMS recognizes that there are basic procedures that need to be followed to maintain a healthy school community. Specifically, vigilant hand washing will be a primary focus as SMS is aware that hand-washing is the best-known tactic for preventing illness and stopping the spread of germs. Students are asked and continually reminded to wash hands, the list below outlines the time/frequency of hand-washing:

- After using the restroom
- In the morning before school starts (part of morning drop-off)
- Before and after eating (snack and lunch)
- After recess

Additionally, children who are sick will be required to stay home from school. Children must be fever free (without the use of a fever-reducer) for twenty-four hours before returning to school. Any child who becomes ill at school (with a fever) will be sent home.

SMS Board of Directors recognizes that medical issues, best practices and recommendations change as technology and diseases progress. When new health issues arise, SMS's policy will be to seek the current recommendations from the Center for Disease Control as well as the Delaware DOE and implement procedures accordingly.

SMS staff will be required to have first aid and CPR training. A mandatory review course will be offered during the in-service week prior to school opening in September. Staff will be trained in procedures to ensure children's safety should the school nurse not be available when there is a health-related issue.

Describe how the school will provide health services to all students, including the plan to hire a School Nurse and a description of his/her role in the school.

SMS will hire a registered nurse, preferably with experience in pediatric nursing, in July prior to the school opening who will be responsible for operating under the requirements issued by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE). The nurse will report to the school leader. will maintain diligence in communications to parents, staff and students about urgent health issues, and will be responsible for complying with the policies and procedures in the Nursing Technical Assistance manual.

Specific responsibilities for the nurse will include enforcing policies established by the board. These policies will at a minimum address:

a) Ensuring that students and staff have physical examinations, immunizations, and TB screenings prior to enrollment or starting work;

Proof of a student's recent physical examination and immunizations will be collected at the time of enrollment. In accordance with state regulations, parents will be notified when immunization and other screening requirements are not met, and the student will be excluded from school until the regulation has been met. Properly documented immunization exemptions will be considered by the school leader in consultation with the school nurse.

b) Monitoring student health and maintaining health records;

The school nurse will monitor and maintain student health records in a secure location and forward the required documentation of services to DDOE.

c) Establishing procedures for administering medications and medical treatments, including first aid at school;

The school nurse will administer medications and medical treatments in accordance with DDOE's *Nursing Technical Assistance Manual and Regulations*, and any other appropriate governmental regulations or professional guidelines when students are onsite at school.

d) Ensuring the school nurse will serve on IEP teams, as required, when medical treatment is necessary;

The nurse will serve as a member of IEP teams when medical issues are discussed. The nurse will also provide medical information during evaluation processes.

e) Screening for health problems (vision, hearing, orthopedic, etc.);

The school nurse will conduct an active screening program for vision, hearing, orthopedic issues, etc. as prescribed in DDOE's *Nursing Technical Assistance Manual and Regulations*.

f) Establishing procedures for containing/controlling the spread of infectious diseases; and, Procedures will be developed to communicate appropriate precautionary steps for containing and preventing the spread of infectious diseases and other medical conditions.

g) Ensuring emergency response procedures and training.

Please see the section above about the Comprehensive School Safety plan.

These Board-approved policies will be incorporated, as appropriate, into the schools' parent, student, and staff handbooks as they are developed and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Appropriate staff training will be held as part of orientation programs.

8. **Insurance Coverage.** Provide, as **Attachment 18**, a list of the types of insurance coverage that the school will secure, including a description of the levels of coverage in accordance with 14 *Del. C. § 512(10)*. Types of insurance should include, without limitation, workers' compensation, liability, property, indemnity, directors and officers, automobile, and other. The Applicant should contact the Insurance Coverage Office at (302) 739-3651 or 877-277-4185 for further information on liability protection for public schools in Delaware.

Please see Attachment 18

9. **Student Records.** Describe the plan for the timely transfer of student and school data and records to the Department of Education, pursuant to 14 *Del. C. § 512(13)*. (**Note!** eSchool is the electronic system the State uses to enter and count students.)

SMS will be part of the state's eSchoolPlus pupil accounting system. The use of this system will ensure the timely transfer of student data and records to other schools and the DDOE. All staff members required to use eSchoolPlus will be fully trained on the system. SMS staff will participate in training prior to the opening of the school and remain current with staff training and data requirements defined by the DDOE.