



March 18, 2013

Allison Brown, Board Chair  
Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS  
1328 Florida Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Ms. Brown:

The Public Charter School Board (PCSB) conducts Qualitative Site Reviews to gather and document authentic evidence to support the oversight of PCSB schools. According to the School Reform Act § 38-1802.11, PCSB shall monitor the progress of each school in meeting student academic achievement expectations specified in the charter granted to such school. Your school was selected to undergo a Qualitative Site Review during the 2012-13 school year for the following reason(s):

- School met less than 30% of targets in Accountability Plan during the 2011-12 school year

**Qualitative Site Review Report**

On February 19 and 22, 2013, a Qualitative Site Review team conducted on-site reviews of Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS. The purpose of the site review is for PCSB to gauge the extent to which the school's goals and student academic achievement expectations were evident in the everyday operations of the public charter school. To ascertain this, PCSB staff and consultants evaluated your classroom teaching by using an abridged version of the Charlotte Danielson *Framework for Teaching* observation rubric. We also visited a board meeting, a parent event, and conducted focus groups with a random selection of students, a group of teachers, and your administrators.

Enclosed is the team's report. You will find that the Qualitative Site Review Report is focused primarily on the following areas: mission/goals of the school's charter, classroom environments, instructional delivery, meeting the needs of all learners, professional development, and school climate.

We appreciate the assistance and hospitality that you and your staff gave the monitoring team in conducting the Qualitative Site Review at Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS. Thank you for your continued cooperation as the PCSB makes every effort to ensure that Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS is in compliance with its charter.

Sincerely,

Scott Pearson  
Executive Director



Enclosures  
cc: School Leader

## CHARTER GOALS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATIONS

This table summarizes Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS’s goals and academic achievement expectations as detailed in its charter and subsequent Accountability Plans, and the evidence that the Qualitative Site Review (“QSR”) team observed of Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS (“Shining Stars PCS”) meeting the goal during the Qualitative Site Visit.

Goal	Evidence
Stimulate the growth of the whole child by following the natural developmental cycles of human beings.	During the administrator focus group, the principal explained the multi-age classrooms are designed to be a self-paced, student-initiated environment, to allow students to follow their natural development as they learn topics presented by the teachers one on one. Teachers individually plan presentations (lessons) to meet the needs of each student where they are developmentally. During classroom observations, the review team saw students reach for materials they were interested in to play with and explore. Many of the materials the students selected seemed to be designed for the younger students. The review team was unable to determine if the materials they chose stimulated the student’s growth. Some materials seemed to be too easy for the observed age of the child.
Encourage the child to follow their own individual interests as they learn at their own pace.	In keeping with the Montessori method, students at the school are allowed to initiate their own learning activities. The review team observed students choosing the materials they wanted to work with, use them for a period of time, and place them back on shelves when finished. Students chose all of the work based on their individual interests and completed the activity at their own pace.
Providing multi-age classrooms to facilitate and encourage individualized learning.	Both classrooms in operation at the school are multi-age, containing three to six-year-olds. The teachers said that they plan based on individual student needs and the students of all ages interact with the materials offered in the room. Materials seemed to be appropriate for pre-kindergarten age groups but possibly not as challenging for older students.
Provide an uninterrupted work cycle in which learning can occur.	The daily schedule allows for two three-hour work cycles that are uninterrupted periods of time to learn. During these work cycles, children focus on various materials in the room. Both classrooms have a teacher and support staff to guide student engagement. The review team observed staff and students coming in and out of both rooms. This did not seem to interrupt the students who were focused on materials.
Encourage collaboration between the teacher and the child.	The QSR team observed teachers giving presentations to individual students or to groups of two or three. In the lessons observed, the teacher seemed to present a topic, help the student learn how to understand the new material, and then make sure the student was comfortable using the materials on his or her own. The review team did not observe teacher and student collaboration to create or complete a project or task.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Organize the child's activities and learning according to their social development.	The teacher in the focus group stated that she plans all of her presentations for each child based on their social development and academic progress.
Encourage the child to be motivated and rewarded by his own individual achievement.	The review team observed many students motivated to choose their own activities during the work cycle. Students displayed their work products to review team members with pride.
Promote the child's ability to find out and do things for him/herself through manipulation of the materials (auto-education), leading to his/her functional independence.	Students at the school self-initiate every activity throughout the day. Students chose which materials they wanted to work with, all materials observed were manipulable. Students were independent in their choosing of activities and other decisions during learning time.
Encourage the development of positive self-image through specialized integrated culture-based learning activities and materials.	The QSR team did not observe any evidence related to this goal.
Promote and encourage parental development and involvement.	According to school leaders, Shining Stars PCS is working hard to promote and encourage parental involvement. During an observed PTO meeting, parents were discussing the different committees they are involved with to assist the school and how to raise money to help the school. They voted on the next parent representative to present to the Board. Parents also brainstormed way to assist other parents with on-time drop offs and through educational workshops. As the school is trying to increase student enrollment, a few parents offered their homes for open house events to interested families.
Provide a loving, secure, and ordered place for every child.	The interactions between staff and children observed were kind, nurturing and respectful. Staff use hushed voices and soft tones to talk with students and when redirecting them. The review team observed children guided through the rooms while staff held their hands and addressed them as "friends." The classrooms were spacious and students put materials away as soon as they were finished with them. Children walk around the room, in most cases, in a safe and orderly manner. The building itself is secure with a locked front door and surveillance camera that is constantly monitored.
Provide adequately trained and responsive staff.	The teachers observed were Montessori trained. The administration stated they also provide trainings to all the staff in Montessori techniques so they are aware of the implementation of the mission of the school. In the classroom observations, the teachers in the room were responsive in redirection and assistance to children. The staff in the room did not always seem aware of the behavior of all children and were not responsive in all instances.
Promote and encourage self-discipline and conflict resolution strategies.	The QSR team did not observe any evidence related to this goal; staff redirected students who were misbehaving. The review team did not observe conflict resolution strategies because no conflicts were observed.

Goal	Evidence
<p>Provide the opportunities for and encourage purposeful movement, leading to the refining of fine and gross motor skills.</p>	<p>During the classroom observations, the review team noted a wide variety of materials that helped students in developing fine motor skills. Students were sewing, stringing beads, and trimming a plant with scissors. The unrestrictive classroom environment allowed students to choose their own materials and the administration said that observers should see purposeful movement. The review team noted students who did not seem purposeful in their movement; observers noted some goofing around with other students and individuals wandering around the room. In both classrooms multiple students were unfocused on learning activities.</p>

## SCHOOL MISSION

*This rubric summarizes the school's performance on aligning its operations with the mission and goals of its charter.*

School Mission	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>The school's mission and educational goals as articulated in the charter application and subsequent amendments are implemented in the day to day operations of the school.</b>	Limited observations of day to day observations as aligned with mission and educational goals by any school stakeholders.	Day to day operations and activities as aligned with mission and educational goals are demonstrated by some staff members.	Day to day operations and activities as aligned with mission and educational goals are demonstrated by nearly all staff members.	Day to day operations and activities as aligned with the mission and educational goals are demonstrated by students throughout the school building.
<b>The Board and school administrators govern and manage in a manner consistent with the school's design and mission.</b>	Administrators and Board members demonstrate a limited understanding of the school's design. Evidence of its use in the management and governance of the school is substantially lacking.	Administrators and Board members demonstrate an adequate understanding of the school's design. There is evidence that understanding of the design is sometimes used to effectively manage and govern the school.	Administrators and Board members demonstrate a good understanding of the school's design. There is evidence that understanding of the design is used to effectively manage and govern the school.	All key administrators and Board members demonstrate an excellent understanding of the school's design. There is significant evidence that understanding of the design is used to effectively manage and govern the school.
<b>The school's curriculum and instruction are aligned with the school's mission and educational goals.</b>	School curriculum and instruction are not aligned with the mission and educational goals and/or are utilized in limited/no classrooms.	School curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized in some classrooms.	School curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized in most classrooms.	School curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission and educational goals and are utilized in all classrooms.
<b>The school has met or is making progress toward meeting the educational goals of its charter.</b>	The school demonstrates limited evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards few of the goals of its charter.	The school demonstrates adequate evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards some of the goals of its charter.	The school demonstrates proficient evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards most of the goals of its charter.	The school demonstrates exemplary evidence of progress towards monitoring and making progress towards all of the goals of its charter.

### School Mission Summary

According to the charter application, the mission of Shining Stars Montessori Academy PCS is to offer a quality Montessori education infused with culturally inclusive principles to guide children to develop to their fullest potential. This is what PCSB staff and consultants looked for when visiting the classrooms, attending a parent meeting and board meeting, and conducting the focus groups.

Observers noted the school offers students a Montessori education, consistent with the mission. Students have learned how to use all of the materials in the room and how to initiate activities and clean up when they are finished. Students were inquisitive and proud of their work. The additional staff in the rooms guided student activities through prompts and demonstrations. The school's culture encourages mutual respect between all staff and students and clear communication regarding expectations. Students are free to express themselves through their activities and with staff and other students. The review team observed a safe, inclusive environment.

The members of the Board have a wide variety of backgrounds and experience. One Board member is a retired public school Montessori teacher who, according to the school leadership, assists in the school quite often through classroom demonstrations, professional development and informal observations. At the board meeting attended by a PCSB staff member, the board focused on hiring quality teachers and expanding student enrollment. They also interviewed two candidates interested in assisting the school with fund development. The Board will soon be adding two new members, one who is a local neuroscientist who specializes in child development.

The school's curriculum and instruction are aligned with the mission of the school. Each classroom has a wide variety of authentic Montessori materials for the students to interact with. The review team observed students eating breakfast with real plates, silverware, and glasses, pruning a real tree, and stringing wooden beads. The self-paced, student-initiated Montessori model is consistent with the school's goals and mission. Currently, the two classrooms in operation at the school both have pre-kindergarten-three students through first grade. Next year, with the addition of second graders, a third multi-age classroom will open.

## CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS

*This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Classroom Environments elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled visits.*

Class Environment	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport</b>	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among member of the class.
<b>Establishing a Culture for Learning</b>	The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.	The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to "get by."	The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of both teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.	Students assumes much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates as passionate commitment to the subject.
<b>Managing Classroom Procedures</b>	Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.
<b>Managing Student Behavior</b>	Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.	Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.	Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.	Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations and monitoring behavior. Teacher's monitoring of student behavior is subtle and preventive, and teachers' response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

<b>Class Environment</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<b>Organizing Physical Space</b>	Teacher makes poor use of the physical environment, resulting in unsafe or inaccessible conditions for some students or a serious mismatch between the furniture arrangement and the lesson activities.	Teacher's classroom is safe, and essential learning is accessible to all students, but the furniture arrangement only partially supports the learning activities.	Teacher's classroom is safe, and learning is accessible to all students; teacher uses physical resources well and ensures that the arrangement of furniture supports the learning activities.	Teacher's classroom is safe, and students contribute to ensuring that the physical environment supports the learning of all students.

### **Classroom Environments Summary**

The domain for Classroom Environment encompasses five elements of the rubric, including Environment of Respect, Culture of Learning, Managing Classroom Procedures, Managing Student Behavior, and Organization of Physical Space.

Classroom interactions among the teacher and individual students were highly respectful, reflecting warmth, caring, and sensitivity to students as individuals. Teachers regularly got down to the student's level to talk with them and guided students around the room by holding their hands. Teachers used soft quiet tones to interact with students. Observers noticed teachers calling students "friends" while directing them to activities.

Students were easily engaged in the Montessori materials and understood their roles as learners. Students would engage in an activity and clean it up when finished. Students understood their roles as learners and were proud of the work they completed. Teachers are committed to student learning. The QSR team observed the frequent use of one-on-one presentations; between presentations, teachers would sit with a child to assist with their current chosen activity. Teachers celebrated success when students understood a concept during one-on-one presentations. At times, there appeared to be inconsistent attention to students who were not focused on an activity or who seemed to be wandering without purpose. Observers noted that the additional staff in the room did not usually redirect students who were not engaged. There was not a universal expectation that all students to participate in activities.

Students clearly understood how to handle and access the classroom materials. Teachers monitored the removal and cleanup of materials around the room. Transitions between small group and individual activities seemed to be prolonged for certain students, resulting in significant lost instructional time.

Student behavior was generally appropriate for their age. Teachers' responses to student misbehavior were also developmentally appropriate. Teachers effectively redirected seen student misbehavior; however, observers noted multiple instances of behaviors that went unnoticed and uncorrected by the staff in the room. At times, students were goofing around or trying to kiss students and staff did not appear to see these actions.



Each classroom was rich in authentic Montessori materials. Students had the opportunity to prune real plants, eat with glass and ceramic dishware, work with wooden beads, and interact with a wide variety of other materials. Bookshelves contained numerous activities for the students to engage in. Rooms were spacious and small tables were grouped together for small group work. The review team observed only a few books available to students and did not observe any evidence of technology available or in use.

## INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

*This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Instructional Delivery elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled visits.*

<b>Instructional Delivery</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<b>Communicating with Students</b>	Teacher's oral and written communication contains errors or is unclear or inappropriate to students. Teacher's purpose in a lesson or unit is unclear to students. Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear or confusing or uses inappropriate language.	Teacher's oral and written communication contains no errors, but may not be completely appropriate or may require further explanations to avoid confusion. Teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success. Teacher's explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but other portions are difficult to follow.	Teacher communicates clearly and accurately to students both orally and in writing. Teacher's purpose for the lesson or unit is clear, including where it is situated within broader learning. Teacher's explanation of content is appropriate and connects with students' knowledge and experience.	Teacher's oral and written communication is clear and expressive, anticipating possible student misconceptions. Makes the purpose of the lesson or unit clear, including where it is situated within broader learning, linking purpose to student interests. Explanation of content is imaginative, and connects with students' knowledge and experience. Students contribute to explaining concepts to their peers.
<b>Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques</b>	Teacher makes poor use of questioning and discussion techniques, with low-level questions, limited student participation, and little true discussion.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques is uneven with some high-level question; attempts at true discussion; moderate student participation.	Teacher's use of questioning and discussion techniques reflects high-level questions, true discussion, and full participation by all students.	Students formulate many of the high-level questions and assume responsibility for the participation of all students in the discussion.
<b>Engaging Students in Learning</b>	Students are not at all intellectually engaged in significant learning, as a result of inappropriate activities or materials, poor representations of content, or lack of lesson structure.	Students are intellectually engaged only partially, resulting from activities or materials or uneven quality, inconsistent representation of content or uneven structure of pacing.	Students are intellectually engaged throughout the lesson, with appropriate activities and materials, instructive representations of content, and suitable structure and pacing of the lesson.	Students are highly engaged throughout the lesson and make material contribution to the representation of content, the activities, and the materials. The structure and pacing of the lesson allow for student reflection and closure.

<b>Instructional Delivery</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
<b>Using Assessment in Instruction</b>	Students are unaware of criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and do not engage in self-assessment or monitoring. Teacher does not monitor student learning in the curriculum, and feedback to students is of poor quality and in an untimely manner.	Students know some of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and occasionally assess the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of the class as a whole but elicits no diagnostic information; feedback to students is uneven and inconsistent in its timeliness.	Students are fully aware of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated, and frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards. Teacher monitors the progress of groups of students in the curriculum, making limited use of diagnostic prompts to elicit information; feedback is timely, consistent, and of high quality.	Students are fully aware of the criteria and standards by which their work will be evaluated, have contributed to the development of the criteria, frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards, and make active use of that information in their learning. Teacher actively and systematically elicits diagnostic information from individual students regarding understanding and monitors progress of individual students; feedback is timely, high quality, and students use feedback in their learning.
<b>Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness</b>	Teacher adheres to the instruction plan in spite of evidence of poor student understanding or of students' lack of interest, and fails to respond to students' questions; teacher assumes no responsibility for students' failure.	Teacher demonstrates moderate flexibility and responsiveness to students' needs and interests, and seeks to ensure success of all students.	Teacher seeks ways to ensure successful learning for all students, making adjustments as needed to instruction plans and responding to student interest and questions.	Teacher is highly responsive to students' interests and questions, making major lesson adjustments if necessary, and persists in ensuring the success of all students.

### **Instructional Delivery Summary**

The domain for Instructional Delivery includes the following five elements: Communicating with Students, Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, Engaging Students in Learning, Using Assessment in Instruction, and Demonstrating Flexibility.

Teachers' voices were soft and hard for the observers to hear. Support staff seemed to spend a significant amount of time redirecting the misbehavior of certain students rather than guiding students' learning. Teachers' explanations during one-on-one student interactions were scaffolded and connected learning with students' prior knowledge and experience. Observers could not hear if the teacher orally communicated the purpose of the presentation or the content at hand.

The observers had a difficult time ascertaining the level of questioning between the teachers and students as the teachers spoke in whisper-like tones in the ear of the students. The few questions overheard were simple, low-level yes/no questions. Other staff in the room did not engage students in questions about their activities. Teachers and staff seemed to prompt or demonstrate how to correctly use material with students who were misusing it or confused; verbalizations were limited.

Most students guided their learning during the observations by choosing their own activities and moving onto another activity as they saw fit. The materials and resources appeared to promote learning exploration; however, there was limited evidence of differentiated products for the multi-age group within the classroom. As stated in the focus groups with the administrators and a teacher, materials are chosen to align with a Montessori purpose of a lesson to be learned. It was not always evident to the observers what the learning goal was from each material or activity. At times, for the older students in the rooms, the materials did not appear to be challenging or to engage high-level student thinking.

The teacher used assessment regularly during one on one student presentations. Some staff members were observed holding clipboards or notebooks, which observers assumed were for informal assessments; they occasionally took notes. Teachers assessed understanding during the one-on-one lessons through student demonstration of the material or activity. Staff did not work with many of the students engaged in various activities around the classroom to assess their understanding. The students, in many cases, completed several activities before a staff member had checked in on completed work from the first activity.

Since the time in the room flows around what the students choose to do, the environment is very flexible. Students work on materials that are interesting to them individually. With the increased wandering around, a few students not engaged in the materials at their tables, and additional staff in the room not engaging students in questions about their activity, it did not appear that the flexible environment led to increased learning for all students.

## MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS

*This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the elements of the rubric related to meeting the needs of all learners.*

All Learners' Needs	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>The school has strategies in place to meet the needs of students at risk of academic failure.</b>	The school has implemented a limited number of programs to help students who are struggling academically to meet school goals. Resources for such programs are marginal; or the programs experience low participation given the students' needs.	The school has implemented programs and provided adequate resources to help students who are struggling academically to meet school goals. Based on individual needs, student participation is moderate.	The school has implemented special programs and provided significant resources to help students who are struggling academically to meet school goals. Based on individual needs, student participation is moderate to high.	The school has implemented research-based and/or special programs and provided a full complement of resources to help students who are struggling academically to meet school goals. Based on individual needs, student participation is high.
<b>The school has strategies in place to meet the needs of English Language Learners ("ELLs").</b>	The school has a program in place to meet the needs of English Language Learners who enroll at the school. In order to comply with federal regulations, however, the program could benefit from increased staffing, improved staff qualifications and/or additional resources.	The school has a program in place to meet the needs of English Language Learners who enroll at the school. The services are in keeping with federal regulations, which include sufficient staffing with requisite training and resources.	The school has a successful program in place to meet the needs of English Language Learners who enroll at the school. The services are in keeping with federal standards for sufficient staffing with requisite training, qualifications and resources.	The school has a successful program(s) in place to meet the needs of any English Language Learners who enroll at the school. The services are in keeping with, and in some ways, exceed federal standards for staffing with requisite training, qualifications and resources.

### Meeting the Needs of All Learners Summary

The mission of the school is to teach children through an authentic Montessori experience. In the administrator focus group, this experience was described as child initiation learning activities, taking materials off shelves and putting them back when finished. Teachers and administrators stated they plan their presentations based on the individual needs of each student. In this way, they explained, each student is learning at their own pace and in the way that will help them achieve success. Presentations were observed and the lessons being taught were pre-determined by the teacher. One teacher showed the review team her daily lesson plan, which has three to four different presentations planned for each student. Teachers are able to assess during the presentations and teachers stated that they track student data on the Montessori Records Express (MRX) website. Since lesson planning is individual per child, the teachers said they feel able to meet the needs of all learners in their class. A part-time special education coordinator works with the teachers and the students in the classroom to further support the students with special needs. The classroom assistants in each class also provide support to all students.

The school has identified several ELLs based on assessments given. The teacher indicated that she has received support from the school to help her work with the ELLs in her classroom. She plans language-based (conversation, vocab, sound games, etc.) presentations to these students to help them.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the Professional Development elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations and as discussed during the focus groups with administrators, faculty, and staff.*

Professional Development	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>Time is made available throughout the year.</b>	The school offers very few professional development days throughout the school year, and teachers indicate that they do not have enough time for ongoing professional development and planning.	The school offers several professional development activities throughout the school year, although teachers indicate they could use more time for planning.	The school day and the annual calendar reflect a strong focus on professional development and planning. Most teachers agree that they are given sufficient time for professional development and planning.	The school day and the annual calendar reflect a high priority given to professional development and planning. All teachers agree that they are given sufficient time for a variety of professional development opportunities and planning.
<b>Extra support is in place for novice teachers.</b>	The school offers limited formal or informal support and guidance for novice teachers. These teachers do not think that the support is adequate.	The school offers formal or informal support and guidance to novice teachers. These teachers think that the support is adequate.	The school has implemented a support system that is effective in meeting the needs of novice teachers.	The school has implemented a highly structured support system that is highly effective in meeting the needs of novice teachers.

### Professional Development Summary

The school currently has two teachers, so professional development has been individualized to support both teachers' needs. According to the teachers and administrators, teachers take advantage of various Montessori trainings locally and nationally. Both teachers were able to attend the American Montessori Institute conference in Florida in February and the newer, novice teacher will be observing a Charter Montessori school in Minnesota in a few weeks. Teachers also take advantage of the North American Montessori Association's conference in Maryland annually. In addition to conferences, the administration holds regular professional development trainings on a variety of topics (cultural competency, special education, ELL supports, etc). One of the school's Board members is also a retired Montessori teacher who regularly works with the teachers and students in the school on teaching the true Montessori method. The teachers had a focused training at the beginning of the year to learn the school's assessments and how to interpret the data.

To support the novice teacher, both teachers check-in daily and meet every Friday to work on lesson plans and other professional development.

## SCHOOL CLIMATE

*This rubric summarizes the school's performance on the School Climate elements of the rubric during the scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations and as discussed during the focus groups with students, faculty, and staff.*

School Climate	Limited	Satisfactory	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>The school is a safe and orderly learning environment.</b>	The school's discipline policies and practices are not well-articulated or understood by most of the staff, students and parents. Such policies and practices are partially implemented due to the lack of clarity or understanding and, as a result, the learning environment provides limited safety and order.	The school's discipline policies and practices are adequately articulated and understood by the administration and by most of the staff, students and parents. Such policies and practices may not be fully implemented, due to a lack of clarity or understanding. The learning environment, however, is relatively safe and orderly.	The school's discipline policies and practices are clearly articulated and understood by the administration, staff, students and parents. Such policies and practices are consistently implemented, providing for a safe and orderly learning environment.	The school's discipline policies and practices are clearly articulated and understood by the administration, staff, students and parents. Such policies and practices are fully implemented by students and staff, providing for a consistently safe and orderly learning environment.

### School Climate Summary

The school environment appears safe and orderly. The front door is kept locked and closed during school hours and a receptionist is stationed at the desk to let visitors in and monitor the surveillance camera. During observations, the review team noted that teachers, support staff, and students are free to go in and out of the classroom at will. The bathrooms are outside of the classroom and students were able to use them as needed. The administration stated the school does have a school discipline policy that the parents are made aware of at the start of the year. Observers in the classroom did not see specific evidence of the discipline program in place.