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|  |  | **TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School District**  **TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING**  **REPORT**  **Dates of Onsite Visit:** **April 22-26, 2019**  **Date of Draft Report:** **May 20, 2019**  **Date of Final Report: June 5, 2019**  **Action Plan Due: July 5, 2019**  **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Onsite Team Members:**  **Melanie Manares** |
|  |  | **Jeffrey C. Riley****Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education** |
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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT**

**TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School District**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TIERED FOCUS MONITORING REPORT**

**TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School District**

**SCOPE OF TIER FOCUSED MONITORING REVIEWS**

As one part of its accountability system, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education oversees local compliance with education requirements through Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM). All reviews cover selected requirements in the following areas:

**Federal:**

(**Note**: “*U.S.C.” refers to the United States Code)*

**Title VI: *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964***

Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on race, color or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Title VI is codified at 42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.*; regulations have been promulgated in the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) at 34 C.F.R. Part 100.

**EEOA: *the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974***

Prohibits the denial of equal educational opportunity to English learners in public schools on account of national origin, by the failure “to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation …in its instructional programs.” See 20 U.S.C. 1703(f)*.* (The EEOA also prohibits the denial of equal educational opportunity based on race, color, or sex.)

**ESEA: *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965***

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) was reauthorized through the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). ESEA governs elementary and secondary education. It is codified at 20 USC 6301 *et seq.*

**Massachusetts:**

(**Note:** *Most Massachusetts education statutes are available at* [*http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/statelaws.html*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/statelaws.html). *Legislation that has been filed may be found at* [*https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/Search*](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/Search) *. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations are available at* [*http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/stateregs.html*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/stateregs.html)*.)*

**G.L. c. 69: *Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 69***

Establishes the powers and duties of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**G.L. c. 71A: *Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71A***

Governs the education of ELs. Regulations have been promulgated under it at 603 CMR 14.00.

**G.L. c. 71B: *Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71B***

Governs the education of students with disabilities. State special education regulations are at 603 CMR 28.00.

**G.L. c. 76: *Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76***

Governs school attendance and various other school-related matters. Section 5 prohibits discrimination in all public schools on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. See also Access to Equal Educational Opportunities Regulations: 603 CMR 26.00.

**St. 2002, c. 218: *Chapter 218 of the Massachusetts Acts of 2002***

Section 24 requires each school district to have at least one teacher licensed in ESL, TBE, or ELL. (See Implementation Guidance under ELE14.) In districts of 200 or more ELs, any person appointed as director of an ELE program must be licensed in ESL or bilingual education, or hold such other license required by law for such other ELE program.

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING ELEMENTS**

**Team:** Depending upon the size of a school district and the number of programs to be reviewed, a team of one to eight Department staff members conducts onsite activities over one to five days in a school district or charter school (district).

**Timing:** Each school district in the Commonwealth is scheduled to receive a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review every six years except the districts and charter schools that repeat as Tier 4 for three consecutive years. These districts’ ELE programs are reviewed every 3 years until such time they are no longer Tier 4. . The statewide Tiered Focused Monitoring cycle is posted at <<<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/6yrcycle.html?district=all>>>.

**Tier Level:** Each district is assigned to one of four tier levels: Tier 1/Self-Directed Improvement; Tier 2/Directed Self-Improvement; Tier 3/Corrective Action; and Tier 4/Cross-unit Support and Corrective Action. The Tiered Focused Monitoring process and subsequent technical assistance varies by monitoring tier. Each district is assigned to a monitoring tier based on a risk assessment. The risk assessment will identify the potential for which districts may need support in improving outcomes for English learners (ELs). The risk assessment is based on the districts’ results on the ESE Accountability measure of progress towards achieving English language proficiency and other relevant data. Districts in Tiers 1 and 2 have been determined to have no or low risk. Districts in Tiers 3 and 4 have demonstrated greater risk. Agency intervention, additional onsite monitoring, and provision of technical assistance varies based on districts’ tier level, allowing the Department to direct resources to those districts requiring the most support.

1. Tier 1/Self-Directed Improvement: Data points indicate no concern on compliance and performance outcomes – meets requirements.
2. Tier 2/Directed Self-Improvement: No demonstrated risk in areas with close link to student outcomes – low risk.
3. Tier 3/Corrective Action: Areas of concern include both compliance and student outcomes – moderate risk.
4. Tier 4/Cross-unit Support and Corrective Action: Areas of concern have a profound effect on student outcomes and ongoing compliance – high risk.

**Process:** The monitoring process differs depending on the tier assigned to the district as well as the district’s previous tier assignment.

There are 13 ELE criteria that target implementation of the requirements related to ELE programs under state and federal law and regulations:

ELE 1: Annual English Language Proficiency Assessment

ELE 2: State Accountability Assessment

ELE 3: Initial Identification of ELs and FELs

ELE 5: ELE Program and Services

ELE 6: Program Exit and Readiness

ELE 7: Parent Involvement

ELE 8: Declining Entry to a Program

ELE 10: Parental Notification

ELE 13: Follow-up Support

ELE 14: Licensure Requirements

ELE 15: Professional Development Requirements

ELE 17: Program Evaluation

ELE 18: Records of ELs

The review process includes the following:

1. Self-Assessment

* District reviews English Learner Education documentation for required elements including document uploads.
* District reviews a sample of English learner (EL) student records selected across grade levels and EL focus areas such as opt-out students, former ELs and students and/or parents who need translation and/or interpretation.
* Upon completion of these two internal reviews, the district’s self-assessment is submitted to the Department for review.

1. Verification

* Review of EL student records: The Department may select a sample of student records and request certain documentation to be uploaded to the WBMS as evidence of implementation of the ELE criteria.
* Review of additional documents for English Learner Education
* Surveys of parents of ELs: Parents of ELs are sent a survey that solicits information regarding their experiences with the district’s implementation of English Learner Education program(s), related services, and procedural requirements.
* Interviews of staff, parents and community members as applicable

**Report:** **For Tier 3 & 4 Tiered Focused Monitoring Reviews**

At the end of the onsite visit, the onsite team holds an informal exit meeting to summarize its comments for the superintendent or charter school leader and anyone else he or she chooses. Within approximately 45 business days of the onsite visit, the onsite chairperson forwards to the superintendent or charter school leader a Draft Report containing comments from the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review. The Draft Report comments for English Learner Education program are provided to the district/school on-line through the Web-based Monitoring System (WBMS). Within10 business days of receipt of the Draft Report, the district/charter school reviews and comments on the report for factual accuracy before the publication of a Final Report with ratings and findings (see below). The Tiered Focused Monitoring Final Report will be issued within approximately 60 business days of the conclusion of the onsite visit and posted on the Department’s website at <<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/reports/>>.

**Content of Final Report:**

*Ratings.* In the Final Report, the onsite team gives a rating for each compliance criterion it has reviewed; those ratings are “Commendable,” “Implemented,” “Implementation in Progress,” “Partially Implemented,” “Not Implemented,” and “Not Applicable”.

*Findings.* The onsite team includes a finding in the Final Report for each criterion that it rates “Commendable,” “Partially Implemented,” “Not Implemented,” or “Implementation in Progress,” explaining the basis for the rating.

**Response:** Where criteria are found “Partially Implemented” or “Not Implemented,” the district or charter school must propose corrective action to bring those areas into compliance with the relevant statutes and regulations. This corrective action plan (CAP) will be due to the Department within 20 business days after the issuance of the Final Report and is subject to the Department’s review and approval. Department staff will offer districts and charter schools technical assistance on the content and requirements for developing an approvable CAP.

Department staff will also provide ongoing technical assistance as the school or district is implementing the approved corrective action plan. **Districts and must demonstrate effective resolution of noncompliance identified by the Department as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from the issuance of the Department’s Final Tiered Focused Monitoring Report.**

# **INTRODUCTION TO THE FINAL REPORT**

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The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review in TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School District during the week of April 22, 2019 to evaluate the implementation of English Learner Education and other related general education requirements. The team appreciated the opportunity to interview staff and parents, to observe classroom facilities and to review the programs underway in the district.

The Department is submitting the following Tiered Focused Monitoring Report containing findings made pursuant to this onsite visit. In preparing this report, the team reviewed student records, extensive written documentation regarding the operation of the district's programs, together with information gathered by means of the following Department program review methods:

Interviews of:

* Administrative staff
* Teaching and support services staff (as applicable)
* English Learner Education parent advisory council representative(s) (as applicable)
* Persons from the general public (as applicable)

Surveys:

* Parents of English learners

The report includes findings in the program areas reviewed based on the ELE criteria below:

**ELE 1: Annual English Language Proficiency Assessment**

**ELE 2: State Accountability Assessment**

**ELE 3: Initial Identification of ELs and FELs**

**ELE 5: ELE Program and Services**

**ELE 6: Program Exit and Readiness**

**ELE 7: Parent Involvement**

**ELE 8: Declining Entry to a Program**

**ELE 10: Parental Notification**

**ELE 13: Fallow-up Support**

**ELE 14: Licensure Requirements**

**ELE 15: Professional Development Requirements**

**ELE 17: Program Evaluation**

**ELE 18: Records of ELs**

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| The Tiered Focused Monitoring Report includes those criteria that were found by the team to be implemented in a “Commendable” manner, as well as criteria receiving a rating of "Partially Implemented," "Not Implemented," and “Implementation in Progress.” (Refer to the “Definition of Compliance Ratings” section of the report.) The Tiered Focused Monitoring Reports do not include criteria receiving a rating of “Implemented” or “Not Applicable.” This will allow the district/school and the Department to focus their efforts on those areas requiring corrective action. Districts are expected to incorporate the corrective actions into their district and school improvement plans, including their professional development plans. |

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| **DEFINITION OF COMPLIANCE RATINGS** | |
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| **Commendable** | Any requirement or aspect of a requirement implemented in an exemplary manner significantly beyond the requirements of law or regulation. |
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| **Implemented** | The requirement is substantially met in all important aspects. |
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| **Implementation in Progress** | This rating is used for criteria containing new or updated legal requirements; the district has implemented any old requirements contained in the criterion and is training staff or beginning to implement the new requirements in such a way that the onsite team anticipates that the new requirements will be implemented by the end of the school year. |
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| **Partially Implemented** | The requirement, in one or several important aspects, is not entirely met. |
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| **Not Implemented** | The requirement is totally or substantially not met. |
|  | |
| **Not Applicable** | The requirement does not apply to the school district or charter school. |

**TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School District**

**SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT**

The Department reviewed extensive written documentation regarding the operation of the district's ELE program(s), together with information gathered by staff interviews, a review of documentation from student records and parent surveys. This report includes those criteria that were found by the team to be implemented in a “Commendable” manner, as well as criteria receiving a rating of "Partially Implemented," "Not Implemented," or “Implementation in Progress.” (Refer to the “Definition of Compliance Ratings” section of the report.)

**SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS**

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|  | **English Learner Education Requirements** |
| **IMPLEMENTED** | ELE 1, ELE 2, ELE 6, ELE 7, ELE 8, ELE 9, ELE 10, ELE 13, ELE 15, ELE 17, ELE 18 |
| **PARTIALLY**  **IMPLEMENTED** | ELE 3, ELE 5, ELE 14 |

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| |  | | --- | | **ENGLISH LEARNER EDUCATION**  **LEGAL STANDARDS,**  **COMPLIANCE RATINGS AND**  **FINDINGS** | |

| **CRITERION**  **NUMBER** | **II. STUDENT IDENTIFICATION AND PROGRAM PLACEMENT** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Legal Standard** | | | |
| ELE 3Initial Identification of ELs and FELs | 1. The district uses qualified staff, appropriate procedures, and state-required assessments to identify students who are ELs and to assess their level of English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as appropriate for their grade. 2. Each school district shall establish procedures, in accordance with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines, to identify students who may be ELs and assess their level of English proficiency upon their enrollment in the school district. 3. Each school district shall establish written procedures, in accordance with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines, to identify students who are Former English Learners (FELs) to be able to design and implement a process for routinely monitoring those students' academic progress for four years following their reclassification. | | | |
|  | **State Requirements** | | **Federal Requirements** | |
|  | G.L. c. 71A, §§ 4, 5; 603 CMR 14.02; G.L c. 76, § 5; 603 CMR 26.03 | | ESEA; Title VI; EEOA | |
|  | **Rating:** | **Partially Implemented** | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *Submitted documentation indicated that not every student had completed all four domains of the language screener, and interviews indicated that the district considers additional information, such as MCAS scores, to identify a student as a potential English learner. Although the district states that they follow DESE guidelines, these practices indicate that they do not consistently apply them for all potential ELs. The Department concludes that the district does not properly identify students who need English language support and that the current initial identification practices and procedures are not in compliance with 603 CMR 14.02(1) that requires districts and charter schools to establish procedures in accordance with the Department guidelines.* |

| **CRITERION**  **NUMBER** | **II. STUDENT IDENTIFICATION AND PROGRAM PLACEMENT** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Legal Standard** | | | |
| ELE 5ELE Programs and Services | 1. The district uses assessment data to plan and implement educational programs for students at different instructional levels. 2. Children who are English learners shall be educated through sheltered English immersion or an alternative instructional program that meets the requirements of federal and state law, during a temporary transition period not normally intended to exceed the timelines established by the Department in benchmarks established pursuant to G.L. c. 71A, § 11. Alternative instructional programs include, but are not limited to, transitional bilingual education and dual language education or two-way immersion programs. 3. ELE programs shall be research-based and include subject matter content and an English language acquisition component. 4. The district only groups ELs of different ages together in instructional settings if their levels of English proficiency are similar. 5. The district’s grouping of students ensures that ELs receive effective content instruction at appropriate academic levels and that ESL instruction is provided at the appropriate proficiency level. ESL instruction should be aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and must integrate components of the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards. 6. The evaluation of ELE programs (by the Department) shall include, but shall not be limited to: (i) a review of individual student records of English learners; (ii) a review of the programs and services provided to English learners; (iii) a review of the dropout, graduation, discipline and special education incidence rates of the English learner population in the district; (iv) using the best available data, a review of the dropout, graduation, discipline and special education rates of English learners who exited the English learner education program within the 3 school years preceding the on-site visit for that 3-year period; (v) a description of the processes by which school-based teams, consisting of educators, administrators and support staff, monitor the progress of English learners and former English learners; (vi) a review of the amount, frequency and effectiveness of English as a second language instruction; and (vii) a review of the administration and coordination of English learner education programs. | | | |
|  | **State Requirements** | | **Federal Requirements** | |
|  | G.L. c. 71A, §§ 4, 7A; 603 CMR 14.04 | | Title VI; EEOA | |
|  | **Rating:** | **Partially Implemented** | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *Interviews and a review of documentation indicate that the district uses a literacy program to provide ESL instruction to ELs. Literacy programs and materials help students improve their some of the students skills and can be used as resources; however, they cannot replace an ESL curriculum that is integral to an effective ELE program in which ELs of all grades and proficiency levels become English proficient at a rapid pace in all four domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Furthermore, documentation submitted indicates that the district does have an ESL curriculum, but rely mostly on the literacy curriculum for ESL instruction. Additionally, the Department conducted an on-site visit to the school district to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs serving English learners as required by G.L. c. 71A, § 7A. A review of data as a part of the evaluation of the district's ELE program indicated that English learners do not demonstrate sufficient growth in English language acquisition and that the ELE program needs improvement to promote and support the rapid acquisition of English language proficiency by ELs.* |

| **CRITERION**  **NUMBER** | **V. FACULTY, STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION** | | | |
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|  | **Legal Standard** | | | |
| ELE 14Licensure Requirements | Licensure requirements for districts where ELs are enrolled:  Every district, including every Commonwealth charter school, has at least one teacher who has an English as a Second Language or Transitional Bilingual Education, or ELL license under G.L. c.71, § 38G and 603 CMR 7.04(3). (This requirement does not apply separately to Horace Mann charter schools.)  Except at Commonwealth charter schools, *every* teacher or other educational staff member who teaches ELs holds an appropriate license or current waiver issued by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.  Core academic teachers[[1]](#footnote-1) who provide sheltered English instruction to English learners in school districts, including charter schools and education collaboratives, must earn an SEI Teacher Endorsement as set forth in 603 CMR 7.00 and 603 CMR 14.00. Principals, assistant principals, and supervisors/directors who supervise or evaluate such teachers must earn an SEI Teacher Endorsement or SEI Administrator Endorsement as set forth in 603 CMR 7.00 and 603 CMR 14.00.  Any core academic teacher who is assigned to provide sheltered English instruction to an EL shall either hold an SEI Teacher Endorsement, or is required to earn such an endorsement within one year from the date of the assignment. Any school district that assigns an EL to a core academic teacher who has a year to obtain an SEI endorsement, shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that such EL is assigned to core academic teachers with an SEI endorsement in subsequent school years.  No principal, assistant principal, or supervisor/director shall supervise or evaluate a core academic teacher who provides sheltered English instruction to an EL unless such principal, assistant principal, or supervisor/director holds an SEI Teacher Endorsement or SEI Administrator Endorsement, or will earn either endorsement within one year of the commencement of such supervision or evaluation.  Starting on July 1, 2021, any career vocational technical teacher who is assigned to provide sheltered English instruction to an English learner shall either hold the SEI Teacher Endorsement, or is required to earn such endorsement within one year from the date of the assignment. Any school district that assigns an English learner to a career vocational technical education teacher who has a year to obtain the SEI Teacher Endorsement, shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that such English learner is assigned to career vocational technical teachers with the SEI Teacher Endorsement in subsequent school years.  Starting on July 1, 2021, no principal, assistant principal, or supervisor/director shall supervise or evaluate a career vocational technical teacher who provides sheltered English instruction to an English learner unless such principal, assistant principal, or supervisor/director holds the SEI Teacher Endorsement or the SEI Administrator Endorsement, or will earn either endorsement within one year of the commencement of such supervision or evaluation.  Except at Commonwealth charter schools, any director of ELE program(s) who is employed in that role for one-half time or more has a Supervisor/Director license and an English as a Second Language (ESL), Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or an ELL license.  A core academic teacher assigned to provide instruction to an English learner in a bilingual education setting, such as dual language education or two-way immersion program, or transitional bilingual education program, must be properly qualified in the field and grade level of the assignment, and hold the appropriate endorsement, as follows:  A core academic teacher responsible for the instructional component provided in a language other than English must hold the Bilingual Education Endorsement or a valid waiver issued by the Commissioner.  A core academic teacher responsible for the instructional component provided in English must hold the Bilingual Education Endorsement or the SEI Endorsement.  A principal, assistant principal, or supervisor/director who supervises or evaluates a core academic teacher assigned to provide instruction to an English learner in a bilingual education setting, such as dual language education or two-way immersion program, or transitional bilingual education program, must hold the Bilingual Education Endorsement or the SEI Endorsement.  A valid Transitional Bilingual Education license or Transitional Bilingual Learning endorsement issued by the Department shall be deemed the equivalent of the Bilingual Education Endorsement.  Prior to the beginning of each school year, districts, including charter schools shall verify that each of the educators in an English learner program is properly endorsed for that program. | | | |
|  | **State Requirements** | | **Federal Requirements** | |
|  | G.L. c. 71, § 38G, §89(ii); G.L. c. 71A §10; St. 2002, c. 218, §§ 24, 25; 603 CMR 7.04(3), 7.09(3); 603 CMR 7.14 (1)-(3); 603 CMR 7.15(9)(b)-(c); 603CMR 7.15(13)(d); 603 CMR 14.07 | | Title VI; EEOA | |
|  | **Rating:** | **Partially Implemented** | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of the relevant SEI Endorsement data indicated that most core academic teachers assigned to provide sheltered English instruction to English learners hold the SEI Teacher Endorsement, but some do not.* |

1. For purposes of Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) and Bilingual Education Endorsements, “core academic teachers” include early childhood and elementary teachers, teachers of students with moderate disabilities, teachers of students with severe disabilities, and teachers of the following academic subjects: English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, civics and government, economics, history, and geography. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)