



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Department of Education

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350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023

Telephone: (781) 338-3700

May 29, 2002

Richard J. Hoffman, Superintendent  
Ashland Public Schools  
90 Concord Street  
Ashland, MA 01721

Re: Onsite Follow-up Monitoring Report:  
Coordinated Program Review Corrective Action Plan  
Verification and Special Education Mid-cycle Review

Dear Superintendent Hoffman:

Enclosed is the Department's Coordinated Program Review Follow-up Monitoring Report together with findings regarding your district's Special Education Mid-cycle Review. This report contains the Department's findings based on the onsite activities conducted in your school district to verify the implementation status and effectiveness of corrective steps taken in response to your Coordinated Program Review Report issued on February 27, 1998.

While the Department of Education found certain noncompliance issues to be resolved, others were partially corrected, not addressed at all and/or new issues were identified by the Department's onsite team. In areas where the district has failed to implement fully its approved Corrective Action Plan, the Department views these findings to be serious. As the Department previously informed you, in cases where a district fails to fully and effectively implement a Corrective Action Plan, which was proposed by your district and approved by the Department, the Department must then prepare a Corrective Action Plan for the district, which must be implemented without further delay. You will find these requirements for corrective action included in the attached report together with any steps that must be taken by the district to fully implement new special education requirements.

Please provide the Department with your written assurance that the Department's requirements for corrective action will be implemented by your school district within the timelines specified. Your statement of assurance must be submitted to the Department's Onsite Chairperson **by June 7, 2002**. Failure to implement the Department's Corrective Action Plan within required timelines may result in the loss of funds to the district and/or other enforcement action by the Department of Education.

Your staff's cooperation throughout these Follow-up Monitoring activities is appreciated. Should you require additional clarification of information included in our report, please do not hesitate to contact the Onsite Team Chairperson at 781-338-3722.

Sincerely,

Susan D. Nichols, Coordinated Program Review Follow-up Chairperson  
Program Quality Assurance Services

John D. Stager, Administrator  
Program Quality Assurance Services

c: David P. Driscoll, Commissioner of Education  
Mr. Harold Henchy, School Committee Chairperson  
Susan Gala, District Program Review Follow-up Coordinator

Encl.: Follow-up Monitoring Report

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
COORDINATED PROGRAM REVIEW**

**ASHLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**ONSITE VERIFICATION OF CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION  
AND/OR IDENTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL FINDINGS REQUIRING CORRECTIVE ACTION**

Action Plan Submitted on March 31, 1998  
Progress Reports Submitted on February 28, 2002  
Onsite Visit Conducted on April 3, 2001  
Date of this Report May 29, 2002

<b>Criterion Number and Topic from CPR Final Report</b>	<b>Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Substantially Implemented</u></b>  √	<b>Method(s) of Verification</b>	<b>Comments Regarding Corrective Action Plan Implementation</b>  <b>Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Not Fully Implemented</u> or <u>Additional Issues Identified</u></b>  √		<b>Findings Regarding Incomplete Implementation of Approved Corrective Action Plan or Identification of Additional Issues of Noncompliance</b>	<b>Further Corrective Action Ordered by the Department of Education and Timelines for Implementation</b>
SE 2 Assessment	√	District Documents, Student Records, Parent and Staff Interviews	<p>The district provides a variety of assessments that are administered and interpreted appropriately. The review of student records indicated that assessments were not always completed, not always age appropriate, or were administered twice by different district staff.</p> <p>Received, 10/1/01, a copy of the tracking system, copies of training agendas, and samples of assessments for three initial evaluations at the preschool and elementary level.</p>			

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SE 6 Transition Services	√	Student records and staff interviews	Students are invited to IEP Team meetings with their parents. The district collaborates with the Department of Mental Retardation and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission for transition purposes.			
SE 7 Age of Majority	√	Student record and staff interviews	Student record and staff interviews indicated that appropriate notification has been sent.			
SE 11 Independent Evaluation	√	Staff and parent interviews	Received, 10/1/01, a copy of the Advisory on Independent Educational Evaluations, the training agendas for team chairs, and a list of students for whom the district funded Independent Educational Evaluations in 2000-2001.			

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SE 18 IEP	√	Student records, staff and parent interviews and district documents	<p>The district is commended for ensuring that a bilingual school psychologist attends some IEP Team meetings. Evidence of a meeting for a bilingual parent was substantiated with a Spanish attendance sheet.</p> <p>Received 10/1/01: (1) samples (elementary, middle and secondary) of IEP notices and attendance sheets; (2) a copy of a memo to staff on procedure to deliver the IEP immediately following the Team meeting (3) an assurance that the district will convene fully comprised IEP Team meetings with representation from regular education and an authority to commit district resources; and (4) evidence of training for staff to consider all evaluation data and parent concerns in developing the IEP (including a sign-in sheet with name, role, and handouts for the training).</p>			
SE 20 Least Restrictive Program	√	Student Records and Staff Interviews	Received, 10/1/01, samples of each level (elementary, middle and secondary) of IEP page six, Nonparticipation Justification, that are individualized for each student.			

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SE 21 Extended School Day/Year	√	Staff and parent interviews	Received, 2/28/02, one sample from each level (elementary, middle and secondary) of specific justifications of schedule modifications from the IEP, with IEP meeting dates between September and February.			
SE 22 IEP Implementation	√	Student Records, Staff and Parent Interviews	Received, 2/28/02: (1) monitoring procedures for service implementation ; (2) a system to track initiation of service for students in substantially separate programs			
SE 25 Parental Consent	√	Student Records and Parent Interviews	Received, 2/28/02: (1) policies and procedures regarding parental consent, and removed the word "draft" from the current procedures; (2) examples of efforts to obtain consent for the IEP at the high school level for three students; (3) three examples of consent for initial evaluations at the preschool and elementary levels.			

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SE 26 Parent Participation IEP	√	Student Records and Staff Interviews	The district has a high rate of parent participation at IEP Team meetings. Staff described several strategies to secure parent participation at the Team meeting.			
SE 27 IEP Team Meeting Notice	√	Student Records and staff Interviews	The Parent Notice contains all the required elements.			
SE 29 Communications in Primary Language of Home	√	Document Review, Student Records and Staff Interviews	Received, 2/28/02, a copy of the Form used to document oral interpretation and understanding by parents.			
SE 30 Notice of Parent Rights	√	District Documents	Received, 10/1/01, a copy of the 2000 Parents' Rights brochure in larger print as a sample of what will be disseminated for the 2001-2002 school year.			

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SE 32 Parent Advisory Council	√	Parent and Staff Interviews	<p>Received, 10/1/01, a copy of the updated PAC by-laws</p> <p>Received, 2/28/02:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Copy of the Request for Proposals from independent agencies for the evaluation of the Ashland Special Education Department.</li> <li>2. Evidence of the PAC's involvement in implementation and analysis of the results of a parent survey of the special education services and programs.</li> <li>3. Evidence of Parent's Rights Workshop presented by ASHPAC.</li> <li>4. Special Education Task Force agenda, membership and attendance.</li> </ol>			<p><b>Submit:</b></p> <p><b>Joint training and planning of future workshops on special education and regulations for the 2002/2003 school year by the ASHPAC and Special Education Department.</b></p> <p><b>Results of independent evaluation by chosen agency.</b></p> <p><b>The Special Education Task Force strategic 3 year plan for enhanced special education services.</b></p> <p><b>Submit by 12/30/02</b></p>
SE 33 General Curriculum	√	Student Records and Parent Interviews	<p>Received, 10/1/01:</p> <p>(1) a tracking and quality control system for accommodations provided during instruction throughout the year and for MCAS testing; (2) samples of three IEP page 7 from each level (elementary, middle and secondary).</p>			

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SE 34 Continuum	√	Student Records and Staff Interviews	<p>The district provides a continuum of alternative services and placements to meet the needs of students.</p> <p>Received, 2/28/02: (1) a copy of an Easter Seals Assistive Technology Consultation, and a copy of the Easter Seals contract to provide assistive technology services; (2) a copy of bills received for ongoing services by Easter Seals; (3) documentation of Ashland as a recipient of the Assistive Technology training grant.</p>			
SE 35 Assistive Technology		Student Records, Staff and Parent Interviews		√	Assistive technology is not always provided when indicated as a need through the assessment process. Assistive technology is not routinely discussed at the IEP meeting.	<p><b>Submit: (1) training agendas and sign-in sheet with name, role and signature for training on discussion of assistive technology at the IEP meeting; (2) a list of devices purchased during 2001-2002; and (3) samples of assessments recommending and the training provided to educators and assistants implementing use of the assistive technology.</b></p> <p><b>Submit by 9-10-02.</b></p>

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SE 37 Out-of-District Placements	√	Student Records and Staff Interviews	The district has been successful in securing approved out-of-district placements. A cooperative agreement is in place with the Accept Collaborative and the district established an alternative high school for regular education students.			
SE 48 FAPE	√	District Documents Student Records and Staff and Parent Interviews	Received, 10/1/01: (1) assurance that all students have access to participate in the general education curriculum (music); (2) two class lists of students enrolled in music at all three levels (secondary, middle and elementary) with an * next to students who have an IEP; (3) policy for counseling services that makes this related service available to any student who needs it regardless of diagnosis; (4) list of students who receive one-to-one counseling and the ED1 sheet.			
SE 49 Related Services	√	District Documents, Student Records and Staff Interviews	Received, 10/1/01, criteria for counseling services.  Received, 2/28/02, an amended criteria for psychological services that match the regulations under IDEA 97.			

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SE 50 Administrative Responsibility	√	District Documentation and Staff Interviews	<p>Received, 10/1/01, three samples of documentation of evaluation information from the Child Study Team, reviewed by the IEP Team to determine eligibility for special education.</p> <p>Received, 3/7/02, Ashland Public Schools' District Curriculum Accommodation Plan, DCAP.</p>			
SE 51 Teacher certification	√	District Documents	All special education staff and related services staff are certified and/or licensed.			
SE 54 Professional Development	√	District Documents and Staff and Parent Interviews	<p>Received, 10/1/01: (1) 2001-2002 calendar of mandatory training for regular and special educators; (2) agendas and sign-in sheets with name, role and signature for each training content area required.</p> <p>Received, 2/28/02, a copy of the mandatory professional day Agenda for January 2002, with sign-in sheets with names, roles and signatures.</p>			

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SE 56 Annual Evaluation of Special Education Programs and Services		District Documents and Parent and Staff Interviews		√		<b>See SE 32            Submit by 12/30/02</b>