



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education

350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023

Telephone: (781) 338-3000

April 2, 2002

William Contreras, Superintendent
Athol-Royalston Regional School District
250 Main St.
Athol, MA 01331

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

Dear Superintendent Contreras:

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 January 27, 1999.

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 April 15, 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 Follow-up Chairperson at 781-338-3754.

Sincerely,

Thelma J. Hunt, 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
School Committee Chairperson
Guy Silvester, District Program Review Follow-up Coordinator

Encl.: Follow-up Monitoring Report

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COORDINATED PROGRAM REVIEW**

ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

**Action Plan Submitted on July 1, 1999
Progress Reports Submitted on Nov 29, 1999, Aug 4, 2000, Apr 17, 2001
Onsite Visit Conducted on January 17-18, 2002
Date of this Report April 2, 2002**

| Criterion Number and Topic from CPR Final Report | Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Substantially Implemented</u> | Method(s) of Verification | Comments Regarding Corrective Action Plan Implementation | CAP Determined to be <u>Not Fully Implemented</u> or <u>Additional Issues Identified</u> | Findings Regarding Incomplete Implementation of Approved Corrective Action Plan or Identification of Additional Issues of Noncompliance | Further Corrective Action Ordered by the Department of Education and Timelines for Implementation |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| SE 1 Assessment IDs Disability | √ | | The district currently has one full-time and two part-time Psychologists who assess students, and who are trying to expeditiously reduce the backlog of pending assessments, which existed prior to this Administration. | √ | | |
| SE 2 Parent Assessment Consult | √ | | The district provides consultation with parents in selecting the assessments to be completed and the evaluators to be used. | | | |
| SE 6 Student Attendance at age 14 | √ | | Students in the district are consistently invited to IEP Team meetings at the MS and HS level. | | | |

| Criterion Number and Topic from CPR Final Report | Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Substantially Implemented</u> | Method(s) of Verification | Comments Regarding Corrective Action Plan Implementation | CAP Determined to be <u>Not Fully Implemented</u> or <u>Additional Issues Identified</u> | Findings Regarding Incomplete Implementation of Approved Corrective Action Plan or Identification of Additional Issues of Noncompliance | Further Corrective Action Ordered by the Department of Education and Timelines for Implementation |
|--|--|--------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| SE 7 Rights Transfer at age 18 | √ | Interviews and Records Reviews | The district provides the appropriate notice to students regarding their rights at age 18. | √ | | |
| SE 8 Reg. Ed. Teachers at Team | √ | Interviews and Record Review | Regular education teachers consistently attend IEP Team meetings. | | | |
| SE 9 IEP to 504 | | | | √ | The district must ensure that all staff understands Section 504 and the student rights /district responsibilities under it. | Submit professional development plans, which include training on Section 504 implementation, by May 1, 2002. |
| SE 10 Year End Evals. | √ | | No problems were identified in meeting the timelines required under these criteria. | | | |
| SE 11 IEE | √ | | None under the current administration. | | | |
| SE 12 Re-Eval. Timelines | | | | √ | The district does not consistently re-evaluate students every three years. | Provide a plan, by May 1, 2002, for tracking and completing re-evaluations every three years. |

| Criterion Number and Topic from CPR Final Report | Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Substantially Implemented</u> | Method(s) of Verification | Comments Regarding Corrective Action Plan Implementation | CAP Determined to be <u>Not Fully Implemented</u> or <u>Additional Issues Identified</u> | Findings Regarding Incomplete Implementation of Approved Corrective Action Plan or Identification of Additional Issues of Noncompliance | Further Corrective Action Ordered by the Department of Education and Timelines for Implementation |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| SE 13 Progress Reports | √ | | | √ | The documents reviewed were of inconsistent quality and did not always address student progress toward the stated goals. | Team chairs must be trained, by May 1, 2002 , to consistently write measurable goals, and to write progress reports that address each goal, and if progress is sufficient to expect the student to reach the goals. Submit samples of progress reports, three from each level (ES, MS, HS), by June 5, 2002 . |
| SE 18 IEP Develop and Timeline | | Record Review | | √ | The district must ensure that IEP goals and benchmarks are consistently written in clear, measurable terms at all schools in the district. IEPs are not consistently sent to parents within three to five days after the meeting. | Submit a Log by June 5, 2002 , of Team meeting dates and dates the IEP was sent to the parents. |
| SE 18 A IEP Change After Meeting | √ | Record Review & Interviews | | | | |

| Criterion Number and Topic from CPR Final Report | Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Substantially Implemented</u> | Method(s) of Verification | Comments Regarding Corrective Action Plan Implementation | CAP Determined to be <u>Not Fully Implemented</u> or <u>Additional Issues Identified</u> | Findings Regarding Incomplete Implementation of Approved Corrective Action Plan or Identification of Additional Issues of Noncompliance | Further Corrective Action Ordered by the Department of Education and Timelines for Implementation |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| SE 20 LRE at Alternative Programs | √ | Record Review & Interviews & Observations | | √ | This criterion is partially implemented. This is especially noticed at the elementary and middle school levels when special education students are pulled from their general education classrooms for services. | Review ES and MS students receiving services outside of the regular classrooms to determine if any might be served within the regular classroom. Submit a list of eligible students receiving pull-out services at the ES and MS levels and dates of review, by June 5, 2002. |
| SE 21 Team Consider ESY | √ | Record Review | The district appropriately considers the need for students to have an extended school year program. | | | |
| SE 22 Immediate IEP Implementation | √ | Record Review & Interviews | The district has made substantial progress in implementing IEPs immediately after accepted by the parent The district is commended. | | | |
| SE 25 Multiple Attempts for Consent | √ | Record Review & Interviews | The district is reminded to always <u>document efforts</u> at the school building level as well as the administrative level. | | | |

| Criterion Number and Topic from CPR Final Report | Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Substantially Implemented</u> | Method(s) of Verification | Comments Regarding Corrective Action Plan Implementation | CAP Determined to be <u>Not Fully Implemented</u> or <u>Additional Issues Identified</u> | Findings Regarding Incomplete Implementation of Approved Corrective Action Plan or Identification of Additional Issues of Noncompliance | Further Corrective Action Ordered by the Department of Education and Timelines for Implementation |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| SE 26 Multiple Attempts for Attend | √ | Record Review & Interviews | The district is reminded to always <u>document efforts</u> at the school building level as well as the administrative level. | √ | | |
| SE 28 Provide IEP Immediately | | Record Reviews & Interviews | | √ | Inconsistencies were noted in providing the full IEP within 3-5 days of the meeting. | Submit a plan by May 1, 2002 , for consistently providing full IEPs to parents within 3-5 days of IEP Team meetings. |
| SE 29 2nd Language Communication | √ | Record Review & Interviews | The district continues to use an enrollment form which asks what language is spoken in the home and whether the student and/or family is in need of language assistance. | | | |
| SE 30 Rights Brochure | √ | Record Review , Documentation & Interviews | The most current Parent's Rights Brochure is being used throughout the district. | | | |
| SE 32 PAC | | Interviews | | √ | This criterion is partially implemented in the district. The district is organizing the required Parent Advisory Committee | Provide a copy of the names and officers of the newly formed PAC, by May 1, 2002 . |

| Criterion Number and Topic from CPR Final Report | Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Substantially Implemented</u> | Method(s) of Verification | Comments Regarding Corrective Action Plan Implementation | CAP Determined to be <u>Not Fully Implemented</u> or <u>Additional Issues Identified</u> | Findings Regarding Incomplete Implementation of Approved Corrective Action Plan or Identification of Additional Issues of Noncompliance | Further Corrective Action Ordered by the Department of Education and Timelines for Implementation |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| SE 33 Participate in General Curric. for Separate Programs | √ | Interviews | Special education students are in inclusive classes whenever possible. They are afforded equal access to participate in the general curriculum as much as possible. | √ | | |
| SE 34 Voc. Ed. Alternative | √ | Interviews & Observation | The district provides alternative vocational opportunities for special education students who do not gain entry into the area Voc-Tech. | | | |
| SE 35 Assistive Devices | √ | Record Review & Interviews | Where required and specified in the IEP, the district provides assistive technology devices for its students. It should also be noted that OT and PT are also provided, utilizing contracted service providers when specified in the student's IEP. | | | |
| SE 37 Out-of-Dist. Procedures | √ | Record Review, Problem Resolution System & Interviews | The district has made substantial progress at compliance with special education regulations, appropriate assessment/evaluation, TEAM meetings, and obtaining parental consent for students in out of district programs. | | | |

| Criterion Number and Topic from CPR Final Report | Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Substantially Implemented</u> | Method(s) of Verification | Comments Regarding Corrective Action Plan Implementation | CAP Determined to be <u>Not Fully Implemented</u> or <u>Additional Issues Identified</u> | Findings Regarding Incomplete Implementation of Approved Corrective Action Plan or Identification of Additional Issues of Noncompliance | Further Corrective Action Ordered by the Department of Education and Timelines for Implementation |
|--|--|----------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| SE 40 Ratios | √ | Interviews & Observations | | √ | Throughout the district there are still special education classes that exceed the approved teacher/student ratios [i.e. Study Skills Program at Athol High School]. | The district must submit a plan, by May 1, 2002 , by which the required special education services can be provided within approved guidelines and in appropriate spaces, or copies of approved waivers. |
| SE 48 FAPE | √ | Interviews & Record Review | | | | |
| SE 49 Counseling Services | √ | Interviews | The district is providing guidance, counseling and adjustment counseling throughout the district. In the last two years the district has secured the assistance of University of Massachusetts students to assist in this area. | | | |
| SE 50 DCAP | | | | √ | Administrators in the district are knowledgeable of DCAPs intent; however, have not developed and adopted a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan or building based DCAPs. | The district must develop a DCAP, District Curriculum Accommodation Plan, and develop a schedule, by June 5, 2002 , for training all staff. |

| Criterion Number and Topic from CPR Final Report | Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Substantially Implemented</u> | Method(s) of Verification | Comments Regarding Corrective Action Plan Implementation | CAP Determined to be <u>Not Fully Implemented</u> or <u>Additional Issues Identified</u> | Findings Regarding Incomplete Implementation of Approved Corrective Action Plan or Identification of Additional Issues of Noncompliance | Further Corrective Action Ordered by the Department of Education and Timelines for Implementation |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| SE 51 Teacher Certif. at Alternative Program/ and District wide | √ | Documenta tion & DOE Certification Status Report Validation | | √ | <p>A copy of the appropriate special education teacher certification for the high school alternative program was obtained during the onsite visit.</p> <p>DOE validation of nine (9) staff employed in the district indicates -- two (2) have valid waivers from DOE. --three (3) were appropriately certified in special education. --One (1) is certified as an elementary teacher (Gr. 1-6) without waiver. --Three (3) of the names listed were '<u>not found</u>' in the DOE certification data bank.</p> | Provide evidence of appropriate certification or waiver for all teachers, by June 5, 2002. |
| SE 53 Aide Training | √ | Interviews | | | | |

| Criterion Number and Topic from CPR Final Report | Corrective Action Plan Determined to be <u>Substantially Implemented</u> | Method(s) of Verification | Comments Regarding Corrective Action Plan Implementation | CAP Determined to be <u>Not Fully Implemented</u> or <u>Additional Issues Identified</u> | Findings Regarding Incomplete Implementation of Approved Corrective Action Plan or Identification of Additional Issues of Noncompliance | Further Corrective Action Ordered by the Department of Education and Timelines for Implementation |
|--|--|---------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| SE 54 Spec. Ed. Training for All Staff | √ | | The district has provided professional development on co-teaching and the inclusion model of instruction. | √ | There was no evidence that all of the annual professional development required under this criterion take place. | Submit, by May 1, 2002 , dates for required training for all staff on special education regulations, analyzing and accommodating diverse learners, confidentiality of student records, supporting students under regular education (DCAP), and with the PAC a training on parent rights. |
| SE 55 Facilities | √ | Interviews & Observations | A new middle school has been constructed and opened in the district. The district is commended. | | | |
| MOA 11 Published Non-Discrim. Statement | √ | Documenta tion | The district continues to use and publish an appropriate statement of non-discrimination. | | | |
| MOA 17 A Restraint | | | | √ | Some administrators have attended restraint training; however, this criterion is partially implemented in the district. | The district must develop by June 5, 2002 , a Restraint Policy, Procedures and schedule for appropriate staff training, as required by state regulations. |