

**Stoughton Public Schools**

**Tiered Focused Monitoring Report**

**For** **Group B Universal Standards**

**Tier Level** **1**

**Date of Onsite Visit:** **January 29, 2020**

**Date of Final Report:** **September 9, 2020**



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Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

During the 2019-2020 school year, Stoughton Public Schools participated in a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review conducted by the Department’s Office of Public School Monitoring. The purpose of the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review is to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on special education and civil rights.

Districts and charter schools are reviewed every three years through Tiered Focused Monitoring. This review process emphasizes elements most tied to student outcomes, and alternates the focus of each review on either Group A Universal Standards or Group B Universal Standards.

Group A Universal Standards address:

* Student identification
* IEP development
* Programming and support services
* Equal opportunity

Group B Universal Standards address:

* Licensure and professional development
* Parent/student/community engagement
* Facilities and classroom observations
* Oversight
* Time and learning
* Equal access

In addition, the Department has reserved a specific set of criteria, collectively known as Targeted Standards, employed when LEA or school-level risk assessment data indicate that there is a potential issue. Identified Targeted Standards are assessed in addition to the Universal Standards.

Universal Standards and Targeted Standards are aligned with the following regulations:

Special Education (SE)

* selected requirements from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-2004); the federal regulations promulgated under that Act at 34 CFR Part 300; M.G.L. c. 71B, and the Massachusetts Board of Education’s Special Education regulations (603 CMR 28.00), as amended effective March 1, 2007.

Civil Rights Methods of Administration and Other General Education Requirements (CR)

* selected federal civil rights requirements, including requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, together with selected state requirements under M.G.L. c. 76, Section 5 as amended by Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011 and M.G.L. c. 269 §§ 17 through 19.
* selected requirements from the Massachusetts Board of Education’s Physical Restraint regulations (603 CMR 46.00).
* selected requirements from the Massachusetts Board of Education’s Student Learning Time regulations (603 CMR 27.00).
* various requirements under other federal and state laws.

Tiered Focused Monitoring allows for differentiated monitoring based on a district/charter school’s level of need, the Tiers are defined as follows:

LEAs in Tiers 1 and 2 have been determined to have no or low risk:

* Tier 1/Self-Directed Improvement: Data points indicate no concern on compliance and performance outcomes – meets requirements.
* Tier 2/Directed Improvement: No demonstrated risk in areas with close link to student

outcomes – low risk.

LEAs in Tiers 3 and 4 have demonstrated greater risk:

* Tier 3/Corrective Action: Areas of concern include both compliance and student

outcomes – moderate risk.

* Tier 4/Cross-unit Support and Corrective Action: Areas of concern have profound effect on student outcomes and ongoing compliance – high risk.

The phases of Tiered Focused Monitoring for Stoughton Public Schools included:

Self-Assessment Phase:

* District reviewed special education and civil rights documentation for required elements including document uploads.
* Upon completion of this internal review, the district’s self-assessment was submitted to the Department for review.

On-site Verification Phase:

* Review of additional documents for special education or civil rights.
* Surveys of parents of students with disabilities: Parents of students with disabilities were sent a survey to solicit information regarding their experiences with the district’s implementation of special education programs, related services, and procedural requirements.
* Interviews of staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification.
* Interview of a parent advisory council (PAC) representative and other telephone interviews, as requested by other parents or members of the general public.
* Observations of classrooms and other facilities: The onsite team visited a sample of classrooms and school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements.

**Report: For Tier 1 & 2 Tiered Focused Monitoring Reviews**

Following the onsite visit, the onsite team holds an informal exit meeting to summarize its comments for the superintendent or charter school leader. Within approximately 20 business days of the onsite visit, the onsite chairperson forwards to the superintendent or charter school leader the findings from the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review. All districts/charter schools in Tiers 1 and 2, as part of the reporting process, then develop a Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan (CIMP) for any criteria receiving a rating of "Partially Implemented," "Not Implemented," and “Implementation in Progress.” The CIMP outlines an action plan, identifies the success metric, describes the measurement mechanism and provides a completion timeframe to bring those areas into compliance with the controlling statute or regulation. Districts and charter schools are expected to incorporate the CIMP actions into their district and school improvement plans, including their professional development plans.

# **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 and means that 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. |

**Stoughton Public Schools**

**SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS**

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|  | **Universal Standards** **Special Education** | **Universal Standards** **Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements** |
| **IMPLEMENTED** | SE 32, SE 35 SE 36, SE 50, SE 51, SE 52, SE 52A, SE 55 | CR 3, CR 7, CR 7A, CR 7B, CR 7C, CR 10A, CR 10B, CR 10C, CR 12A, CR 16, CR 17A, CR 20, CR 21, CR 22, CR 24 |
| **PARTIALLY****IMPLEMENTED** | SE 15, SE 54 | CR 23, CR 25 |
| **NOT IMPLEMENTED** | SE 56 |  |

The review instruments, that include the regulatory requirements specific to the special education and civil rights criteria referenced in the table above, can be found at [www.doe.mass.edu/psm/resources/default.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/resources/default.html).

| **Improvement Area** **1** |
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| **Criterion:** SE 15 - Outreach by the School District (Student Find) |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** Although the district conducts child find activities for preschool children, a review of documents and staff interviews indicated that the district does not consistently conduct child find activities to identify students in need of special education in grades K-12. These activities would include annual or more frequent outreach and ongoing contact with professionals in the community; group homes; parent organizations; clinical and health care agencies; private and parochial schools; other agencies and organizations; the schools that are part of the district, including charter schools; and agencies serving migrant and/or homeless persons. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The district will develop a child find process to identify and evaluate students who may need services from birth through age 21. In addition to current preschool outreach, the district will ensure annual or more frequent outreach and ongoing contact with professionals in the community; group homes; parent organizations; clinical and health care agencies; private and parochial schools; other agencies and organizations; the schools that are part of the district, including charter schools; and agencies serving migrant and/or homeless persons. |
| **Action Plan:** By September 30, 2020, the district will update the Child Find process to include outreach and ongoing contact with professionals in the community; group homes; parent organizations; clinical and health care agencies; private and parochial schools; other agencies and organizations; the schools that are part of the district, including charter schools; and agencies serving migrant and/or homeless persons. By November 20, 2020, the district will reach out through local media campaigns, publicly posted notices, and direct Child Find notices to identified professionals in the community; group homes; parent organizations; clinical and health care agencies; private and parochial schools; other agencies and organizations; the schools that are part of the district, including charter schools; and agencies serving migrant and/or homeless persons. |
| **Success Metric:** By November 20, 2020, the district will have annual or more frequent outreach and continuous liaison with those groups from which promotion or transfer of students in need of special education may be expected, or which would include students in need of special education. These groups include professionals in the community; private nursery schools; day care facilities; group homes; parent organizations; clinical /health care agencies; early intervention programs; private/parochial schools; other agencies/organizations; the schools that are part of the district, including Horace Mann charter schools; and agencies serving migrant and/or homeless persons pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Education Act for Homeless Students. The district will document any students that are identified through the Child Find Process. Evidence: -Copy of district Child Find notice -Evidence of local media campaigns/public postings -List of organizations receiving notices |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** The district will continue to reach out through Child Find during the beginning, middle and end of the school year. The Administrator of Special Education will review and update the outreach process annually. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 11/20/2020 |
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| **Improvement Area 2** |
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| **Criterion:** SE 54 - Professional development |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** Although the district provides in-service training for all locally hired and contracted transportation providers of special education students receiving special transportation, a review of documents and interviews with staff indicated that the district does not provide written information on the nature of any needs or problems that may cause difficulties for any such students, along with information on appropriate emergency measures. Transportation providers include drivers of general and special education vehicles and any attendants or aides identified by a Team for either type of vehicle. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The district will provide in-service training for all locally hired and contracted transportation providers, before they begin transporting any special education student receiving special transportation, on the student's needs and appropriate methods of meeting those needs. For any such student, the district will also provide written information on the nature of any needs or problems that may cause difficulties, along with information on appropriate emergency measures. |
| **Action Plan:** By September 30, 2020, the district will develop a handbook for the transportation vendors that are hired to transport Stoughton students. By November 20, 2020, the district will reach out to transportation providers of students receiving specialized transportation to provide written information on the nature of each student's needs and appropriate methods of meeting those needs, along with information on appropriate emergency measures, as determined by the IEP Team. |
| **Success Metric:** By November 20, 2020, 100% of special transportation providers will have received in-service training and written information on the needs of the students they transport, appropriate methods for meeting those needs, the nature of any needs or problems that may cause difficulties, and information on appropriate emergency measures. Evidence: -District handbook for transportation providers -Evidence of written information provided to special education transportation providers |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** The district will monitor records, including transportation incident reports, of students with specialized transportation services to ensure transportation providers have written information on the nature of any needs or problems that may cause difficulties for any such students, along with information on appropriate emergency measures. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 11/20/2020 |
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| **Improvement Area 3** |
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| **Criterion:** SE 56 - Special education programs and services are evaluated |
| **Rating:** Not Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documents and staff interviews indicated that special education programs and services are not regularly evaluated. Previous special education program evaluations took place in 2015. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The district will regularly evaluate special education programs and services with participation from the district Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). |
| **Action Plan:** The district reviewed various agencies and providers that conduct program evaluations. The district identified ACCEPT Collaborative as the agency that would meet the needs of the district for an evaluation. The district discussed a proposal with the representative of ACCEPT collaborative. A proposal was written by ACCEPT Collaborative. By November 20, 2020, the district will complete an evaluation of the ALC (Alternative Learning Classrooms) with the two elementary programs at the Hansen Elementary School. The program evaluation will consist of observations, interviews and data collection over a minimum of four days. The district will share the results of the evaluation with the SEPAC and seek SEPAC input and participation. |
| **Success Metric:** By November 20, 2020, the district will review the data and report by the ACCEPT Collaborative with the district SEPAC. The district will meet with the ALC staff to review the evaluation and SEPAC input, and will make a plan to implement recommendations. Evidence: -Summary of evaluation and recommendations -Summary of SEPAC participation -Action Plan for implementing recommendations |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** The Special Education Administrator will ensure that special education programs are regularly evaluated. The Special Education Administrator will work with the district SEPAC to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the district's special education programs. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 11/20/2020 |
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| **Improvement Area 4** |
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| **Criterion:** CR 23 - Comparability of facilities |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** Facilities observation and staff interviews indicated that a school adjustment counselor office at O'Donnell Middle School is used to provide individual and small group counseling to special education and general education students, but is not suitable for providing student services. To access this room, students and staff must walk past a large vertical rack of exposed network cables and hardware located just inside the door of the counseling space. The exposed wiring and equipment pose a safety concern, and noises from the equipment create auditory distractions. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The district will ensure that facilities for students who see adjustment counselors are comparable to facilities offered other students in the district and are free of safety concerns and auditory distractions. |
| **Action Plan:** By November 20, 2020, the district will have converted the district's print shop, currently located in the O'Donnell Middle School, into a counseling suite. The space will provide a total of 800 square feet, including two offices of approximately 200 square feet each, in addition to a dedicated meeting and reception area of approximately 400 square feet. The renovation will include removing several walls, putting up new walls, and rewiring the space. |
| **Success Metric:** By November 20, 2020, School Adjustment Counselors at the O'Donnell Middle School will have a dedicated counseling suite in which to safely provide counseling services to students, free of distraction. Evidence to be submitted to the Department: -construction records and floor plan; invoices -physical inspection of the site |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Each year, district administrators will review counseling offices and other facilities for specific groups of students to ensure they are safe, free of distraction, and comparable to other district facilities. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 11/20/2020 |
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| **Improvement Area 5** |
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| **Criterion:** CR 25 - Institutional self-evaluation |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** Although building principals analyze school-based academic and demographic data annually and create school improvement plans, a review of documents and staff interviews indicated that the district does not evaluate all aspects of its K-12 program annually to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The district will evaluate all aspects of its K-12 program annually to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities. The district will make such changes as are indicated by the evaluation. |
| **Action Plan:** Stoughton Public Schools has revised its District and School Improvement, Intervention, and RTI Planning Document to explicitly include the following activities to its annual self-evaluation process requirements: 1. At the district level, as part of the development of the District's Annual Action Plan, the following section has been added to the institutional self-evaluation: The evaluation process must include, at a minimum, the following components: a. Equity Walks conducted by the district's Civil Rights Coordinator, facilities director, and the Administrator of Special Education; and b. A Data Equity Walk conducted by the district's Civil Rights Coordinator and the Administrator of Special Education. 2. At the building level, as part of the development of each principal's school improvement plan, the following section has been added to the Institutional self-evaluation: Principals must ensure that the evaluation process includes, at a minimum, the following components: a. an Equity Walk(s) conducted by the principal, a curriculum specialist, and the building Civil Rights representative; b. a Data Equity Walk conducted by the principal and the district's data specialist; and c. an open discussion at a public meeting which should include parents, students, teachers, and community members. At the conclusion of the evaluation, each principal will then be responsible for completing an Institutional Self-Evaluation Summary. The summary must be submitted to the Deputy Superintendent by June 30th. These revisions went into effect on March 2, 2020 and will be utilized in the development of 2020-21 SY School Improvement Plans and the district's corresponding Annual Action Plan. By September 30, 2020, the district will evaluate all aspects of its K-12 program to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities. By November 20, 2020, the district will have made such changes as indicated by the evaluation. |
| **Success Metric:** By November 20, 2020, the district will have evaluated all aspects of its K-12 program to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities. The district will also have made such changes as are indicated by the evaluation. Evidence: -The updated District and School Improvement, Intervention, and RTI Planning Document -District evaluation summary-Summary of action(s) taken to ensure equal access |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** The district will continue to implement the Institutional Self-Evaluation annually. If upon review, the district determines additional elements must be added to the process to increase effectiveness or ensure the fidelity of implementation, those components will be developed and integrated into the planning document. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 11/20/2020 |
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