

**Groton-Dunstable Regional School District**

**Tiered Focused Monitoring Report**

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

**Tier Level** **2**

**Date of Onsite Visit:** **December 4, 2019**

**Date of Final Report: February 10, 2020**



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Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

During the 2019-2020 school year, Groton-Dunstable Regional School District 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 Groton-Dunstable Regional School District 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 and 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.
* Interviews of parent advisory council (PAC) representatives and other telephone interviews as requested.
* 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. |

**Groton-Dunstable Regional School District**

**SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS**

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|  | **Universal Standards**  **Special Education** | **Universal Standards**  **Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements** |
| **IMPLEMENTED** | SE 15, SE 32, SE 35,  SE 36, SE 50, SE 51,  SE 52, SE 52A, SE 54,  SE 55, SE 56 | CR 3, CR 7, CR 7A,  CR 7B, CR 10A, CR 10C, CR 12A, CR 17A,  CR 20, CR 21, CR 22,  CR 23, CR 24, CR 25 |
| **PARTIALLY**  **IMPLEMENTED** |  | CR 7C, CR 10B, CR 16 |

The Tiered Focused Monitoring Toolkit, which includes the regulatory requirements specific to the special education and civil rights criteria referenced in the table above, can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/resources/default.html>.

| **Improvement Area** **1** |
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| **Criterion:** CR 7C - Early release of high school seniors |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documents and staff interviews indicated that the conclusion of the seniors' school year is more than 12 school days before the regularly scheduled closing date of the high school. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The Groton-Dunstable school district will ensure that neither the conclusion of the seniors' school year nor graduation is more than 12 school days before the regularly scheduled closing date of the high school. The school committee will approve a compliant 2020-2021 school calendar and the district will implement procedures that ensure future compliance. |
| **Action Plan:** By March 31, 2020, district leadership will present a 2020-2021 school calendar to the school committee that ensures neither the conclusion of the seniors' school year nor graduation is more than 12 school days before the regularly scheduled closing date of the high school.  By March 31, 2020, the school committee will approve the 2020-2021 school calendar.  By June 5, 2020, the district will disseminate the approved school committee calendar to the school community. |
| **Success Metric:** By the end of the 2019-2020 school year and beyond, the district will ensure that neither the conclusion of the seniors' school year nor graduation is more than 12 school days before the regularly scheduled closing date of the school.  Evidence:  \* Updated school calendar  \* School committee minutes indicating approval  \* Documentation of dissemination to the school community |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** The Assistant Superintendent shall review a proposed school calendar annually in the month of February to ensure compliance. Following this administrative review, the Assistant Superintendent shall submit the calendar to the school committee for approval no later than March of each year. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 06/05/2020 |
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| **Improvement Area 2** |
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| **Criterion:** CR 10B - Bullying Intervention and Prevention |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documents indicated that not all school handbooks are consistent with the Massachusetts anti-bullying law. Specifically, the elementary school and high school handbooks do not make clear that a member of the school staff may be named the "aggressor" or "perpetrator" in a bullying report. As defined in M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37O, a member of the school staff includes, but is not limited to, an "educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional." |
| **LEA Outcome:** The Groton-Dunstable school district will ensure that school handbooks are consistent with the Massachusetts anti-bullying law. Specifically, the district will ensure that elementary and high school handbooks make clear that a member of the school staff may be named the "aggressor" or "perpetrator" in a bullying report. The handbooks will make clear that the definition of school staff includes, but is not limited to, an "educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional." |
| **Action Plan:** By March 31, 2020, district leadership will review and revise the elementary and high school handbooks.  By March 31, 2020, district leadership will present handbooks to the school committee for approval.  By June 5, 2020, the district will disseminate the approved school committee handbooks to the school community. |
| **Success Metric:** By the end of the 2019-2020 school year and beyond, the approved school committee handbooks will meet all requirements and will be disseminated to the school community.  Evidence:  \* Revised elementary school and high school handbooks  \* School committee minutes indicating approval  \* Documentation of dissemination to the school community |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** The Assistant Superintendent and building principals shall review proposed student handbooks annually to ensure compliance. Following this annual administrative review, the Assistant Superintendent shall submit student handbooks to the school committee no later than the end of April. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 06/05/2020 |
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| **Improvement Area 3** |
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| **Criterion:** CR 16 - Notice to students 16 or over leaving school without a high school diploma, certificate of attainment, or certificate of completion |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documents indicated that notices to students 16 or over leaving school without a high school diploma, certificate of attainment, or certificate of completion do not contain all required elements. Specifically, notices sent within five days from the student's tenth consecutive absence are not addressed to both the student and the parent/guardian. In addition, annual written notices to former students who have not yet earned their competency determination and who have not transferred to another school do not adequately inform them of the availability of publicly funded post-high school academic support programs and encourage them to participate in those programs. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The Groton-Dunstable school district will ensure that all notices to students 16 or over leaving school without a high school diploma, certificate of attainment or certificate of completion meet requirements. Specifically, notices sent within five days from the student's tenth consecutive absence will be addressed to both the student and the parent/guardian. In addition, annual written notices to former students who have not yet earned their competency determination and who have not transferred to another school will adequately inform them of the availability of publicly funded post-high school academic support programs and encourage them to participate in those programs. |
| **Action Plan:** By March 31, 2020, the district will revise notices sent to students 16 or over leaving school without a high school diploma, certificate of attainment, or certificate of completion.  By March 31, 2020, district leadership will disseminate the revised notices to appropriate staff members, along with the district's procedures developed to ensure the requirements of notification are met.  By June 5, 2020, the district will conduct an administrative review of notices sent, if any, to ensure compliance. The district will provide an explanation of the root cause(s) for any continued non-compliance and a description of additional corrective actions taken to address any identified non-compliance. |
| **Success Metric:** By the end of the 2019-2020 school year and beyond, the district will meet all the requirements related to notices to students 16 or over leaving school without a high school diploma, certificate of attainment, or certificate of completion.    Evidence:  \* Revised notice templates that meet the requirements of initial notice and annual notices to students 16 or over leaving school without a high school diploma, certificate of attainment, or certificate of completion  \* Evidence of dissemination of notices and procedures to relevant staff  \* Evidence of an annual administrative review for notices sent to students  \* Description of root cause and corrective action for any non-compliance found in administrative review |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** The district's leadership team shall conduct an annual review of notices sent to students 16 or over leaving school without a high school diploma, certificate of attainment, or certificate of completion. This review will ensure that the notices are compliant with regulations and that information related to availability of publicly funded post-high school academic support is current and accurate. Following this annual review, the leadership team will disseminate the approved notices, along with relevant protocols and procedures, to appropriate staff. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 06/05/2020 |
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