

**Boston Public Schools**

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING**

**REPORT**

**For** **Group A Universal Standards**

**Tier Level** **3**

**Dates of Review:** **May 3-7, 2021 and May 24-28, 2021**

**Date of Draft Report:** **July 27, 2021**

**Date of Final Report: August 24, 2021**

**Action Plan Due: September 22, 2021**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Onsite Team Members:**

**Samantha Alvarez & Kenzie Chin, Chairpersons**

**Mike McDonald, Team Member**

**Corey Steinman, Team Member**

**Michelle Hennessy-Kowalchek, Team Member**

**Henry Ndakalu, Team Member**

**Julie Evans, Team Member**

**Moses Nduati, Team Member**

**Joan Brinckerhoff, Team Member**

**Alaena Podmore, Team Member**

**Amy Krukonis, Team Member**



Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT**

**Boston Public Schools**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TIERED FOCUS MONITORING REPORT**

**Boston Public Schools**

**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:

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 ELEMENTS**

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

**Timing:** Each school district and charter school in the Commonwealth is scheduled to receive a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review every three years. The statewide Tiered Focused Monitoring cycle is posted at <<https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/6yrcycle.html>>.

**Tier Level:** Each district/charter school 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/school is assigned to a monitoring tier based on the district/school’s designated DESE Accountability Level along with risk factors, such as Problem Resolution System complaint data and Public School Monitoring report data. Districts/schools in Tiers 1 and 2 have been determined to have no or low risk. Districts/schools in Tiers 3 and 4 have demonstrated greater risk. Agency intervention, additional onsite monitoring, and provision of technical assistance varies based on district/school 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:** Each school district and charter school undergoes a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review every three years. Regularly monitored standards are divided into two groups, known as Group A Universal Standards and Group B Universal Standards. Districts and charter schools are monitored on an alternate set of Universal Standards every three years. The Department has also reserved a specific set of criteria, collectively known as Targeted Standards, employed if LEA or school level risk assessment data indicate there is a potential issue; the identified Targeted Standards are assessed in addition to the Universal Standards.

**Self-Assessment Phase**:

* District/school review of special education and civil rights documentation for required elements including document uploads. Upon completion of this portion of the district/school’s self-assessment, it is submitted to the Department for review.
* Depending on which Universal Standard group the district/school is participating in and if there are additional Targeted Standards, the district may review a sample of special education student records selected across grade levels, disability categories and level of need.
* If the district/school is participating in a Group A Universal Standards Tiered Focused Monitoring Review, it will submit a review of student records related to the Indicator Data Collection for Indicators 11, 12 and 13 as part of the self-assessment. This Indicator data collection is also part of the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report.
* Upon completion of the self-assessment, the district/school submits the data to the Department for review.

**On-site Verification Phase (dependent upon Group A or Group B Universal Standards)**:

* Interviews of administrative, instructional, and support staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification.
* Interviews of parent advisory council (PAC) representatives and other telephone interviews, as requested, by other parents or members of the general public.
* Review of student records for special education: The Department may select a sample of student records from those the district reviewed as part of its self-assessment, as well as records chosen by the Department from the special education student roster. The onsite team will conduct this review, using standard Department procedures, to determine whether procedural and programmatic requirements have been met.
* Surveys of parents of students with disabilities: Parents of students with disabilities are sent a survey that solicits information regarding their experiences with the district’s implementation of special education programs, related services, and procedural requirements.
* Observations of classrooms and other facilities: The onsite team may visit a sample of classrooms and other school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements.
* Review of additional documents for special education or civil rights.

**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 special education and civil rights 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 <<https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/default.html>>.

**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.

*Indicator Data.* In the Final Report for a district or charter school undergoing a review for Group A Universal Standards, the onsite team includes the results of the review of Indicator data submissions for Indicators 11, 12 and 13. For any Indicator data noncompliance found, the district or charter school must develop and implement corrective action that includes correcting noncompliance for the individual students affected by it, addressing the root cause and underlying reasons for the identified noncompliance, and reviewing additional records as evidence that the issues have been corrected and that requirements are being met. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires correction of noncompliance within one year of the finding.

**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. **School districts and charter schools 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**

#

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review in Boston Public Schools during the weeks of May 3, 2021 and May 24, 2021, to evaluate the implementation of Group A Universal Standards in the program areas of special education, civil rights 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 extensive written documentation regarding the operation of the district's programs, together with information gathered by means of the following Department program review methods:

* Review of student records for special education
* Surveys of parents of students with disabilities
* Interviews of administrative, teaching, and support staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification
* Interviews of parent advisory council (PAC) representatives
* Telephone interviews, as requested by other parents or members of the general public
* Observations of classrooms and other facilities

The report includes findings in the program areas reviewed based on the assigned Universal Standard group for this review. These **Group A** standards are:

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

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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 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. |

**Boston Public Schools**

**SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Universal Standards Special Education** | **Universal Standards Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements** | **Targeted Standards** |
| **IMPLEMENTED** | SE 1, SE 3, SE 3A, SE 9A, SE 10, SE 11, SE 14, SE 17, SE 19, SE 26, SE 37, SE 38, SE 48, SE 49 | CR 13, CR 14 | SE 5 |
| **PARTIALLY****IMPLEMENTED** | SE 2, SE 6, SE 7, SE 8, SE 9, SE 12, SE 13, SE 18A, SE 20, SE 22, SE 25, SE 29, SE 34, SE 35, SE 39, SE 40, SE 41, SE 42, SE 43 | CR 18 |  |
| **NOTIMPLEMENTED** |  |  |  |
| **NOTAPPLICABLE** |  |  |  |

**SUMMARY OF INDICATOR DATA REVIEW**

As part of Tiered Focused Monitoring for Group A Universal Standards, districts and charter schools submit data for Indicators 11, 12 and 13; the results of the Department’s analysis regarding these Indicators are as follows:

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|  | **Compliant** | **Non-Compliant** |
| **Indicator 11 – Initial** **Evaluation Timelines** |  | X |
| **Indicator 12 – Early** **Childhood Transition** | X |  |
| **Indicator 13 –** **Secondary Transition** | X |  |

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| **SPECIAL EDUCATION** **LEGAL STANDARDS,** **COMPLIANCE RATINGS AND** **FINDINGS** |

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| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 2** | Required and optional assessments1. Required assessments: The following assessments are completed by appropriately credentialed and trained specialists for each referred student:
	1. Assessment(s) in all areas related to the suspected disability(ies) including consideration of any needed assistive technology devices and services and/or instruction in Braille.
	2. Educational assessment by a representative of the school district, including a history of the student’s educational progress in the general curriculum.
	3. Assessment by a teacher(s) with current knowledge of the student’s specific abilities in relation to learning standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the district's general education curriculum, as well as an assessment of the student's attention skills, participation behaviors, communication skills, memory, and social relations with groups, peers, and adults.
	4. For a student being assessed to determine eligibility for services at age three (3), an observation of the student's interactions in the student's natural environment or early intervention program is strongly encouraged together with the use of current assessments from Early Intervention Teams to avoid duplicate testing.
2. Optional assessments: The administrator of special education may recommend or the parent may request one or more of the following:
	1. A comprehensive health assessment by a physician that identifies medical problems or constraints that may affect the student's education. The school nurse may add additional relevant health information from the student's school health records.
	2. A psychological assessment by a licensed school psychologist, certified psychologist, or certified educational psychologist, including an individual psychological examination.
	3. A home assessment that may be conducted by a nurse, psychologist, social worker, guidance or adjustment counselor, or teacher and includes information on pertinent family history and home situation and may include a home visit, with the agreement of the parent.
3. At the re-evaluation of a student, if no additional assessments are needed to determine whether the student continues to be eligible for special education, the school district recommends to the student's parents the following:
	1. that no further assessments are needed and the reasons for this; and
	2. the right of such parents to request an assessment.
 |
|  | **State Requirements** | **Federal Requirements** |
|  | 603 CMR 28.04 (1) and (2) | 34 CFR 300.304; 300.305;300.324(a)(2)(v) |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records indicated that the district does not consistently complete all required assessments, specifically an educational assessment that includes a history of the student's educational progress in the general curriculum.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 6** | Determination of transition services 1. The Team discusses the student's transition needs annually, beginning no later than when the student is 14 years old, and documents its discussion on the Transition Planning Form.
2. The Team reviews the Transition Planning Form annually and updates information on the form and the IEP, as appropriate.
3. Reserved
4. For any student approaching graduation or the age of 22, the Team determines whether the student is likely to require continuing services from adult human service agencies. In such circumstances, the administrator of special education makes a referral to the Bureau of Transitional Planning in the Executive Office of Health and Human Services in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71B, §§12A-12C (known as Chapter 688).
5. In cases where the IEP included needed transition services and a participating agency other than the school district fails to provide these services, the Team reconvenes to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives.
6. The district ensures that students are invited to and encouraged to attend part or all of Team meetings at which transition services are discussed or proposed.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | M.G.L.c.71B, Sections 12A-C603 CMR 28.05(4)(c) | 34 CFR 300.320(b); 300.321(b);300.322(b)(2); 300.324(c) |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that beginning no later than when the student is 14 years old, the Team discusses the student's transition needs annually. However, students are not consistently invited to and encouraged to attend part or all of Team meetings at which transition services are discussed or proposed and IEPs do not consistently include transition services, as appropriate.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 7** | Transfer of parental rights at age of majority and student participation and consent at the age of majority1. At least one year prior to the student reaching age 18, the district informs the student and the parent/guardian of the rights that will transfer from the parent/guardian to the student upon the student's 18th birthday. The notification provided to both the student and the parent/guardian must explicitly state that all rights accorded to parents under special education law will transfer to the 18 year old.
2. Upon reaching the age of 18, the school district implements procedures to obtain consent from the student with decision-making authority to continue the student's special education program.
3. The district continues to send the parent written notices and the parent will have the right to inspect the student's records, but the parent will no longer have decision-making authority, except as provided below:
	1. If the parent has sought and received guardianship from a court of competent jurisdiction, then the parent retains full decision-making authority. The parent does not have authority to override any decision or lack of decision made by the student who has reached the age of majority unless the parent has sought or received guardianship or other legal authority from a court of competent jurisdiction.
	2. The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to share decision-making with his or her parent (or other willing adult), including allowing the parent to co-sign the IEP. Such choice is made in the presence of the Team and is documented in written form. The student's choice prevails at any time that a disagreement occurs between the adult student and the parent or other adult with whom the student has shared decision-making.
	3. The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to delegate continued decision-making to his or her parent, or other willing adult. Such choice is made in the presence of at least one representative of the school district and one other witness and is documented in written form and maintained in the student record.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.07(5) | 34 CFR 300. 320(c), 300.520 |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that at least one year prior to the student reaching age 18, the district does not consistently inform the student and parents of the rights that will transfer from the parents to the student upon the student's 18th birthday. Record review and staff interviews also indicated that, upon reaching the age of majority, the district does not always obtain consent from the student with decision-making authority to continue the student's special education program.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 8** | IEP Team composition and attendanceThe following persons are members of the IEP Team and may serve in multiple roles:1. The student's parents.
2. A representative of the school district who acts as Chairperson and who is (1) qualified to supervise or provide special education; (2) is knowledgeable about the general curriculum; and (3) is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the district.
3. A representative of the school district who has the authority to commit the resources of the district (and who may act as the Chairperson).
	1. If the student *may* be involved in a regular education program, a regular education teacher. If the student *is* involved in a regular education program, a regular education teacher of the student.
	2. If the student is participating in a special education program, a special education teacher of the student or, if appropriate, a special education provider for the student.
4. The student, if one purpose of the meeting is to discuss transition services or if otherwise appropriate and if he/she chooses.
5. Other individuals at the request of the student's parents.
6. An individual who is qualified to interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be any one of the persons identified in parts 2 - 4 above.
7. Other individuals who may be necessary to write an IEP for the child, as determined by the Administrator of Special Education.
8. When one purpose of the Team meeting is to discuss transition services, with the consent of the parent(s) or student who has reached the age of majority, the public agency must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.
9. When one purpose of the Team meeting is to discuss placement, a person knowledgeable about placement options is present at the meeting.
10. Members of the Team attend Team meetings unless:
	1. the parent and district agree to use alternative means, such as a video conference or a conference call, for any Team meeting OR
	2. the district and the parent agree, in writing, that the attendance of the Team member is not necessary because the member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed OR
	3. the district and the parent agree, in writing, to excuse a required Team member's participation and the excused member provides written input into the development of the IEP to the parent and the IEP Team prior to the meeting.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.02(21). Part 1 of this criterion is related to State Performance Plan Indicator 8. Parts 5, 10, are related to Performance Plan Indicators 13 and 14. (See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/maspp.html>) | 34 CFR 300.116(a), 300.321, 300.328.See also, in the IDEA 97 regulations, 34 CFR Part 300, Appendix A, to State Question #22 |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records indicated that the district does not always maintain documentation regarding IEP Team meeting attendees. A review of student records also indicated that the district does not document in writing agreement with the parent to excuse the attendance of a Team member. Furthermore, when the Team member's attendance is required, the district does not ensure that the Team member provides written input into the development of the IEP to the parent and the IEP Team prior to the meeting.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| SE 9 | Timeline for determination of eligibilityWithin 45 school working days after receipt of the parent's written consent to an initial evaluation or a re‑evaluation, the school district determines whether the student is eligible for special education. |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.05(1); 28.06(2)(e) |  |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records indicated that within forty-five school working days after receipt of the parent's written consent to an initial evaluation or re-evaluation, the district does not consistently determine whether the student is eligible for special education and does not provide to the parent either a proposed IEP and proposed placement or a written explanation of the finding of no eligibility.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 12** | Frequency of re-evaluation1. When the student's needs warrant it or a parent or teacher requests it, the school district, with parental consent, conducts a full re-evaluation consistent with the requirements of federal law, provided that:
	1. a re-evaluation is conducted every 3 years unless the parent and district agree that it is unnecessary and
	2. a re-evaluation is conducted no more frequently than once a year unless the parent and district agree otherwise.
2. The district implements re-evaluation procedures in all cases where it is suspected that a student is no longer eligible for special education, except that no re-evaluation is required before the termination of eligibility because a student has graduated with a general high school diploma or exceeded the age of eligibility.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.04(3) | 34 CFR 300.303; 300.305(e) |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records indicated that re-evaluations are not consistently conducted every three years; in such cases, the parent and district did not agree that the re-evaluation was unnecessary.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 13** | Progress Reports and content 1. Parents receive reports on the student's progress toward reaching the goals set in the IEP at least as often as parents are informed of the progress of non-disabled students.
2. Progress report information sent to parents includes written information on the student's progress toward the annual goals in the IEP.
3. Where a student's eligibility terminates because the student has graduated from secondary school or exceeded the age of eligibility, the school district provides the student with a summary of his or her academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her postsecondary goals.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.07(3) | 34 CFR 300.305(e)(3); 300.320(a)(3) |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records indicated that progress reports do not always include written information on the student's progress towards the annual goals in the IEP, and parents do not always receive reports on the student's progress towards reaching the goals set in the IEP at least as often as parents are informed of the progress of non-disabled students.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 18A** | IEP development and content1. Upon determining that the student is eligible for special education, the Team, including the parent(s), develops an IEP at the Team meeting.
2. The IEP is completed addressing all elements of the most current IEP format provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
3. The school district ensures that the IEP will not be changed outside of the Team meeting.
4. For students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum, or whenever the IEP Team evaluation indicates that a student's disability affects social skills development, or when the student's disability makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing, the IEP must address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.05(3); G.L.c. 71 B, section 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 | IDEA-97: 34 CFR Part 300, Appendix A, Question #22 |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records indicated that when an early childhood or elementary special education evaluation sets forth that a student's disability affects social skills development, or when the student's disability makes the student vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing, the IEP does not consistently address the skills and the proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 20** | Least restrictive program selected1. The program selected is the least restrictive environment for students, with consideration given to any potential harmful effect on the student or on the quality of services that he or she needs.
2. If the student is removed from the general education classroom at any time, the Team states why the removal is considered critical to the student's program and the basis for its conclusion that education of the student in a less restrictive environment, with the use of supplementary aids and services, could not be achieved satisfactorily.
3. The district does not remove an eligible student from the general education classroom solely because of needed modification in the curriculum.
4. If a student's IEP necessitates special education services in a day or residential facility or an out-of-district educational collaborative program, the IEP Team considers whether the student requires special education services and support to promote the student's transition to placement in a less restrictive program.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3603 CMR 28.06(2) | 34 CFR 300.114-12034 CFR 300.42 |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *An analysis of data and staff interviews indicated that IEP Teams do not always consider the least restrictive environment for students, with consideration given to any potential harmful effect on the student or on the quality of services that he or she needs. Data demonstrated the following:** *Approximately 63.9% of students are in full inclusion or partial inclusion placements, a rate lower than the state rate at approximately 79.9%.*
* *Approximately 29.6% of eligible students are enrolled in substantially separate placements, a rate more than twice that of the state at approximately 13.5%.*

*An analysis of data also demonstrated high rates of placements of eligible students of color in substantially separate programs:** *African American students: 36.3%*
* *Hispanic students: 27.3%*
* *Asian students: 30.0%*
* *White students: 19.5%*

*A review of student records indicated that if a student is removed from the general education classroom at any time, the Team does not always state in the IEP Nonparticipation Justification statement why the removal is considered critical to the student's program and the basis for its conclusion that education of the student in a less restrictive environment, with the use of supplementary aids and services, could not be achieved satisfactorily.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 22** | IEP implementation and availability1. Where the IEP of the student in need of special education has been accepted in whole or in part by that student's parent, the school district provides the mutually agreed upon services without delay.
2. At the beginning of each school year, the district has an IEP in effect for each eligible student within its jurisdiction.
3. Each teacher and provider described in the IEP is informed of his or her specific responsibilities related to the implementation of the student's IEP and the specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the student under it.
4. The school district does not delay implementation of the IEP due to lack of classroom space or personnel, provides as many of the services on the accepted IEP as possible and immediately informs parents in writing of any delayed services, reasons for delay, actions that the school district is taking to address the lack of space or personnel and offers alternative methods to meet the goals on the accepted IEP. Upon agreement of the parents, the school district implements alternative methods immediately until the lack of space or personnel issues are resolved.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.05(7)(b); 28.06(2)(d)(2) | 34 CFR 300.323 |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *Staff interviews indicated that when the IEP has been accepted in whole or in part by the student's parent, the district does not always provide the mutually agreed upon services without delay. Staff interviews indicated that each teacher and provider described in the IEP is not always informed of his or her specific responsibilities related to the implementation of the student's IEP and the specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided to the student under it.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 25** | Parental consent1. The school district obtains written parental consent before conducting an initial evaluation and before making an initial placement of a student in a special education program. Written parental consent is obtained before conducting a reevaluation and before placing a student in a special education placement subsequent to the initial placement in special education.
2. The school district obtains consent before initiating extended evaluation services.
3. The school district obtains consent to the services proposed on a student's IEP before providing such services.
4. A parent is informed that consent may be revoked at any time. Except for initial evaluation and initial placement, consent may not be required as condition of any benefit to the student.
5. When the participation or consent of the parent is required and the parent fails or refuses to participate, the attempts to secure the consent of the parent are implemented through multiple attempts using a variety of methods which are documented by the district. Such efforts may include letters, written notices sent by certified mail, electronic mail (e-mail), telephone calls, or, if appropriate, TTY communications to the home, and home visits at such time as the parent is likely to be home.  Efforts may include seeking assistance from a community service agency to secure parental participation.
6. If, subsequent to initial evaluation and initial placement and after following the procedures required by the regulations, the school district is unable to obtain parental consent to a re-evaluation or to placement in a special education program subsequent to the initial placement, the school district considers with the parent whether such action will result in the denial of a free appropriate public education to the student.  If, after consideration, the school district determines that the parent's failure or refusal to consent will result in a denial of a free appropriate public education to the student, it seeks resolution of the dispute through the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).
7. If the parent has given consent for special education services and then, at any time following, revokes his/her consent to the student's special education services in writing, the district is obligated to discontinue all special education services and may not use mediation or request a due process hearing to obtain agreement or a ruling requiring the continuation of services, consistent with federal regulation. If a parent revokes consent in writing, the district must act promptly to provide written notice to the parent/guardian of the district´s proposal to discontinue services based on the revocation of consent, as well as information on how the parent can obtain a copy of his/her right to procedural safeguards. The district must provide the notice a reasonable time before the district intends to discontinue the services.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.07(1)This criterion is related to State Performance Plan Indicator 8. (See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/maspp.html>.) | 34 CFR 300.300 |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that when parental consent to the services proposed on a student's IEP is required, and the parent fails or refuses to consent, the district does not routinely secure consent from the parent through multiple attempts using a variety of methods or consistently document its efforts to obtain consent.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 29** | Communications are in English and primary language of home1. Communications with parents are in simple and commonly understood words and are in both English and the primary language of the home if such primary language is other than English. Any interpreter used in fulfilling these requirements is fluent in the primary language of the home and familiar with special education procedures, programs, and services. If the parents or the student are unable to read in any language or are blind or deaf, communications required by these regulations are made orally in English with the use of a foreign language interpreter, in Braille, in sign language, via TTY, or in writing, whichever is appropriate, and all such communications are documented.
2. If the district provides notices orally or in some other mode of communication that is not written language, the district keeps written documentation (a) that it has provided such notice in an alternate manner, (b) of the content of the notice and (c) of the steps taken to ensure that the parent understands the content of the notice.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.07(8) | 34 CFR 300.322(e); 300.503(c) |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that written communications, including IEP summary notes, annual review academic reports, Educational Assessments A and B, psychological reports, and specific learning disability components, are not consistently translated for parents in the primary language of the home.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 34** | Continuum of alternative services and placements The district provides or arranges for the provision of each of the elements of the IEPs of students in need of special education from the ages of three through twenty‑one, ensuring that a continuum of services and alternative placements is available to meet the needs of all students with disabilities, and takes all steps necessary to ensure compliance with all elements of the IEPs, including vocational education. |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.05(7)(b) | 34 CFR 300.109; 300.110; 300.115 |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *See SE 20 regarding the lack of inclusive opportunities for students within the special education continuum of alternative services and placements.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 35** | Assistive technology: specialized materials and equipment *Assistive technology device* means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such device.*Augmentative and alternative communication:* The IEP Team must consider the communication needs of the student. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) is a form of assistive technology that can help students with disabilities that impede their ability to communicate to meet their education goals and participate fully alongside their nondisabled peers in all aspects of their education. AAC should be considered for those students who cannot communicate effectively through oral speech, including students with autism, cerebral palsy, intellectual disabilities, congenital disabilities, selective mutism, muscle disease, sensory impairments, and traumatic brain injury.*Assistive technology service* means any service that directly assists a student with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. The term includes:1. The evaluation of the needs of a student with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the student in the student's customary environment;
2. Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by students with disabilities;
3. Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices;
4. Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;
5. Training or technical assistance for a student with a disability or, if appropriate, that student's family; and
6. Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of that student.

In developing each student’s IEP, the IEP Team must consider whether the student needs assistive technology devices and services. Each public agency must ensure that assistive technology devices and services are made available to a student with a disability if required as a part of the student's special education, related services, and/or supplementary aids and services.* If the Team recommends an assistive technology evaluation, a multidisciplinary team of professionals knowledgeable about assistive technology devices should conduct the assessment with the student and family being included in the evaluation process.
* In instances when assistive technology devices and/or services are determined as required, the Team must further determine and document which settings (classroom, home or other) in which the student needs access to those devices and services in order to assure provision of FAPE.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  |  | 34 CFR 300.105; 300.324(a)(2)(v) |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that the IEP Team does not always consider the communication needs of all students, and for students who cannot communicate effectively through oral speech, the Team does not always consider augmentative and alternative communication.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 39** | Procedures used to provide services to eligible students enrolled in private schools at private expenseFor all students with disabilities attending private school(s) located in the district's geographic boundary whose parents reside in Massachusetts or out of state, the school district:1. Conducts child find activities comparable to those for public school students, for all students enrolled at private expense in private schools located in the geographic boundary of the district.
2. Provides or arranges for the provision of an evaluation for any private school student who is referred for evaluation. The evaluation may take place in the public school, the private school, or an appropriate contracted facility.
3. Provides for ongoing timely and meaningful consultation with private school representatives and representatives of parents of parentally-placed private school children with disabilities prior about:
	1. the child find process for students suspected of having a disability, and how parents, teachers, and private school officials will be informed about the child find process;
	2. what the determination of proportionate share funds is and the calculation of which that determination is based, including the underlying data;
	3. how the consultation process will occur during the school year between the district, private school representatives, and parents;
	4. how, where, and by whom special education and related services will be provided to eligible private school students with disabilities using proportionate share funds, including types of services, how funds will be apportioned if federal funds are insufficient to serve all eligible students, and how and when decisions about proportionate share services will be made; and
	5. how the district will notify private school officials, in writing, if the district does not agree with the view of the private school offices about the provision of services or specific types of services.
4. Obtains signed, written affirmation from participating private school officials that consultation has occurred, and if there is no written affirmation, the district sends ESE documentation about the consultation process.
5. Calculates the proportionate share of federal special education entitlement funds (Fund Code 240 [IDEA Section 611Funds] and Fund Code 262 [IDEA Section 619 Funds]) required to be spent, based on the child count taken between October 1 and December 1 of the *prior* fiscal year that includes the number of all eligible private school students attending school in the district's geographic catchment area including residents, non-residents, and home school students, using the ESE form. (N.B.: A student remains eligible for 3 years following identification. Child count includes all students found eligible attending school in the district, regardless of whether they receive(d) special education services.)
6. Determines equitable services and how they will be provided to one or more students with disabilities attending private schools in the district through
	1. a discussion of student needs and possible types of special education and related services that can be provided either directly or through alternative service delivery mechanisms;
	2. consideration that federal grant funds can be used to provide services on the grounds of private schools, although services provided with state and local funds must be provided at a "public school facility or other public or neutral site";
	3. if the amount of proportionate share grant funds are insufficient to serve every eligible student, a discussion of how the district will apportion the services among eligible students, or may choose to supplement the proportionate share of the grant funds with additional grant funds or with state or local funds; and
	4. if the school district disagrees with the views of the private school officials on the provision or type of services, the district must provide private school officials with a written explanation of the reasons the district chose not to provide services directly or through a contract. The school district has the final decision-making authority.
7. Creates a services plan for each eligible private school student who will receive special education or related services from the district using proportionate share funds.
	1. Initiates and conducts meetings to develop, review, and revise services plans for eligible students.
	2. Ensures a representative of each student's private school attends each meeting or is able to participate through individual or conference calls.
8. If using federal funds only, provides special education services and/or related services to private school children at the private school, and if using state funds, provides services to private school students on the grounds of the public school or another public or neutral site.
9. Collects the following data and information, and reports to ESE as necessary in the Fund Code 240 application:
	1. the number of private school and home school children evaluated in a school year;
	2. the number of private school and home school children determined to be eligible in a school year (may include evaluations conducted, or, for non-residents, evaluations provided by the district of residence and accepted as evidence of eligibility); and
	3. the number of private school and home school children served in a school year regardless of where they attend school.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | M.G.L. c. 71B, section 2603 CMR 28.03(1)(e) | 34 CFR 300.130-144; 300.300(d)(4) |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of documentation indicated that the district has not developed procedures to ensure the provision of services to eligible students enrolled in private schools at private expense.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 40** | Instructional grouping requirements for students aged five and older1. The size and composition of instructional groupings for eligible students receiving services outside the general education classroom are compatible with the methods and goals stated in each student's IEP.
2. Instructional grouping size requirements are maximum sizes and the school district exercises judgment in determining appropriate group size and supports for smaller instructional groups serving students with complex special needs.
3. When eligible students are assigned to instructional groupings outside of the general education classroom for 60% or less of the students' school schedule, group size does not exceed
	1. 8 students with a licensed special educator,
	2. 12 students if the licensed special educator is assisted by 1 aide, and
	3. 16 students if the licensed special educator is assisted by 2 aides
4. For eligible students served in settings that are substantially separate, serving solely students with disabilities for more than 60% of the students' school schedule, the district provides instructional groupings that do not exceed
	1. 8 students to 1 licensed special educator, or
	2. 12 students to 1 licensed special educator and 1 aide.
5. After the school year has begun, if instructional groups have reached maximum size as delineated in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this criterion, the administrator of special education and the licensed special educator(s) providing services in an instructional group may decide to increase the size of an instructional grouping by no more than 2 additional students if the additional students have compatible instructional needs and then can receive services in their neighborhood school.
6. In such cases, the administrator provides written notification to the Department and the parents of all group members of the decision to increase the instructional group size and the reasons for such decision. Such increased instructional group sizes are in effect only for the year in which they are initiated.
7. The district takes all steps necessary to reduce the instructional groups to the sizes outlined in paragraph 3 or 4 of this criterion for subsequent years. Such steps are documented by the district.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.06(6) |  |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings: Findings:** |
| *A review of documents indicated that several classrooms throughout the district exceed the maximum instructional grouping student to staff ratios for eligible students receiving services outside the general education classroom. In such cases, the district did not provide written notification to the Department or parents of all group members of the decision to increase the instructional group size and the reasons for such decision.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 41** | Age span requirementsThe ages of the youngest and oldest student in any instructional grouping do not differ by more than 48 months. A written request for approval of a wider age range is submitted to the commissioner of elementary and secondary education in cases where the district believes it is justified. Such requests are implemented only after approval of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.06(6)(f) |  |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of documents indicated that in many instructional groupings throughout the district, the ages of the youngest and oldest students differ by more than 48 months. In such cases, the district did not submit written requests for approval of a wider age range to the Department.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 42** | Programs for young children three and four years of ageGeneral requirements:1. The school district ensures programs are available for eligible students three and four years of age. Such programs shall be developmentally appropriate and specially designed for students ages three and four years.
2. Where appropriate, the school district elects, consistent with federal requirements, to use the format and services of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), if appropriate, for an additional year as a means of transitioning eligible students to public school services.
3. Where appropriate the Team allows a student to remain in a program designed for three and four year old students for the duration of the school year in which the student turns five years old (including the summer following the date of the student's fifth birthday).

Types of Settings:1. Inclusionary programs for young students are located in a setting that includes students with and without disabilities and meet the following standards:
	1. Services in such programs are provided in the home, the public school, Head Start, or a licensed childcare setting.
	2. For public school programs that integrate students with and without disabilities, the class size does not exceed 20 with 1 teacher and 1 aide and no more than 5 students with disabilities. If the number of students with disabilities is 6 or 7 then the class size does not exceed 15 students with 1 teacher and 1 aide.
2. Substantially separate programs for young students are located in a public school classroom or facility that serves primarily or solely students with disabilities. Substantially separate programs adhere to the following standards:
	1. Substantially separate programs are programs in which more than 50% of the students have disabilities.
	2. Substantially separate programs operated by the district limit class sizes to 9 students with 1 teacher and 1 aide.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.06(7) | 34 CFR 300.101(b);300.124(b); 300.323(b) |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of documents indicated that 17 inclusionary preschool programs and one substantially separate preschool program exceed the maximum instructional grouping student to staff ratios.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** | SPECIAL EDUCATION**V. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES** |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 43** | Behavioral interventionsFor a student whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others, the Team considers the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address that behavior. |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  |  | 34 CFR 300.324(a)(2)(i) |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that for a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or the learning of others, the district does not consistently consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports to address that behavior.* |

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| **CIVIL RIGHTS** **METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION (CR)** **AND** **OTHER RELATED GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS****LEGAL STANDARDS,** **COMPLIANCE RATINGS AND** **FINDINGS** |

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| **CRITERION****NUMBER** | CIVIL RIGHTS METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION (CR)AND OTHER RELATED GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**VI. FACULTY, STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION** |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **CR 18** | Responsibilities of the school principal1. Instructional support. The principal in each of the district's schools promotes instructional practices responsive to student needs and ensures that adequate instructional support is available for students and teachers. Instructional support includes remedial instruction for students, consultative services for teachers, availability of reading instruction at the elementary level, appropriate services for linguistic minority students, and other services consistent with effective educational practices and the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71B, §2. The principal consults with the administrator of special education regarding accommodations and interventions for students. Such efforts and their results are documented and placed in the student record. Additionally, when an individual student is referred for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education, the principal ensures that documentation on the use of instructional support services for the student is provided as part of the evaluation information reviewed by the Team when determining eligibility.
2. Curriculum Accommodation Plan. The principal implements a curriculum accommodation plan developed by the district's general education program to ensure that all efforts have been made to meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education program. The plan assists the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all children in the regular classroom and in providing appropriate services and support within the general education program including, but not limited to, direct and systematic instruction in reading and provision of services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning. The plan includes provisions encouraging teacher mentoring and collaboration and parental involvement. (*The plan may be part of a multi-year strategic plan.)*
3. Coordination with special education. The principal with the assistance of the administrator of special education coordinates the delivery and supervision of special education services within each school building.
4. Educational services in home or hospital. Upon receipt of a physician's written order verifying that any student enrolled in a public school or placed by the public school in a private setting must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of not less than fourteen school days in any school year, the principal arranges for provision of educational services in the home or hospital. Such services are provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue his or her educational program, as long as such services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. The principal coordinates such services with the Administrator for Special Education for eligible students. Such educational services are not considered special education unless the student has been determined eligible for such services, and the services include services on the student's IEP.
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|  | M.G.L. c. 71, § 38Q ½; 603 CMR 28.03(3) |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of documents and staff interviews indicated that although the district developed a curriculum accommodation plan, staff are not familiar with the plan, and it is not consistently implemented across the district. Furthermore, staff interviews indicated that students are not always provided with appropriate services and support within the general education classroom including, but not limited to, direct and systematic instruction in reading and services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning.* |

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| This Tiered Focused Monitoring Final Report is also available at:<https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/reports/>.Profile information supplied by each charter school and school district, including information for individual schools within districts, is available at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>. |

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| Prepared by: | KC/SA/AP |