

**Swansea Public Schools**

**Tiered Focused Monitoring Report**

**Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan**

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

**Tier Level** **2**

**Dates of Onsite Visit:** **March 1-2, 2023**

**Date of Final Report:** **June 30, 2023**

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

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT**

**Swansea Public Schools**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

# **TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT INTRODUCTION**

During the 2022-2023 school year, Swansea Public Schools participated in a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review (TFM) conducted by the Department’s Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM). The purpose of the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review is to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on special education and civil rights.

Each school district, charter school, vocational school, and virtual school undergoes a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review every three years. The statewide Tiered Focused Monitoring cycle is posted at <<https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/3yrcycle.html>>.

Regularly monitored standards are divided into two groups, known as Group A Universal Standards and Group B Universal Standards. Districts and schools are monitored on an alternate set of Universal Standards every three years.

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

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.

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 September 20, 2022.

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

* Selected federal civil rights requirements, including requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); 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.

**PSM Team:**

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

**Tier Level:**

The level of monitoring varies based on tier designation, aligning supports to the level of need and ensuring that districts and schools with greater needs receive appropriate supports to make sustained improvements.

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| Tier | Title | Description |
| 1 | Self-Directed Improvement | Data points indicate no concern on compliance and student outcomes. |
| 2 | Directed Improvement | No demonstrated risk in areas with close link to student outcomes. |
| 3 | Corrective Action | Areas of concern include both compliance and student outcomes. |
| 4 | Cross-unit Support and Corrective Action | Areas of concern have a profound effect on student outcomes and ongoing compliance. |

For the 2022-2023 school year, the tier assignments are based on:

* Annual drop-out rate for students with disabilities
* Five-year cohort graduation rate for students with disabilities
* Public School Monitoring compliance data from the previous review
* Problem Resolution System data, specifically findings of noncompliance
* Special education SPP/APR compliance Indicator data for Indicators 4B, 9 & 10
	+ Indicator 4B: Significant discrepancy by race or ethnicity in removal of students with

 IEPs greater than 10 days

* + Indicator 9: Overall disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups identified

 as eligible for special education

* + Indicator 10: Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups within specific

 disability categories

* Special education SPP/APR performance Indicator data for Indicators 5 & 6
	+ Indicator 5: Education Environments (6-21)
	+ Indicator 6: Preschool Environments
* Significant Disproportionality data 2021-2022 & 2022-2023

Tiering adjustments may be made for districts engaged in work with the Department’s Statewide System of Support and have schools identified as requiring assistance and intervention. Tiering assignments may also be adjusted for schools and districts unable to remedy noncompliance within one year of the previous TFM review, as well as for charter schools requiring additional oversight based on conditions of their charter.

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

Following the onsite visit, the PSM team holds an informal exit meeting to summarize the review for the superintendent or charter school leader. Within approximately 20 business days of the onsite visit, the chairperson forwards the TFM Feedback Summary that includes findings from the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review to the superintendent or charter school leader.

As part of the reporting process, all districts/charter schools in Tiers 1 and 2 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 is due to the Department within 20 business days after the issuance of the Feedback Summary and is subject to the Department’s review and approval. 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. Department staff provide support and assistance to districts and charter schools on the development of a CIMP.

Once the CIMP is approved, it is issued as the Final Report.

Department staff also provide ongoing technical assistance as the school or district is implementing the approved CIMP. **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 Feedback Summary.**

For more information regarding the TFM Review Process, including district and parent resources, please visit < <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/default.html>>.

# **TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING FINAL REPORT**

**for Swansea Public Schools**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review in Swansea Public Schools during the week of February 27, 2023, to evaluate the implementation of Group B 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.

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:

**Self-Assessment Phase:**

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

**On-site Verification Phase:**

* Interviews of administrative staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification.
* Interview of a parent advisory council (PAC) representative and other telephone interviews, as requested by parents or members of the general public.
* Review of additional documents for special education and civil rights.
* Surveys of parents of students in special education: Parents of students in special education were sent a survey that solicited 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 visited 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.

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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.) Tiered Focused Monitoring Reports do not include criteria receiving a rating of “Implemented” or “Not Applicable.” This will allow the district/school 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. |

**Swansea Public Schools**

# **SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS**

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|  | **Universal Standards** **Special Education** | **Universal Standards** **Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements** | **Targeted Standards** |
| **IMPLEMENTED** | SE 15, SE 32, SE 35, SE 36, SE 50, SE 51, SE 52, SE 52A, SE 54, SE 56 | CR 3, CR 7, CR 7A, CR 7B, CR 7C, CR 8, CR 10A, CR 10C, CR 12A, CR 16, CR 17A, CR 20, CR 21, CR 22, CR 23, CR 24 | SE 44, SE 45,SE 46, SE 47 |
| **PARTIALLY****IMPLEMENTED** | SE 55 | CR 10B, CR 25 |  |
| **NOT** **IMPLEMENTED** | None |  |  |
| **NOT** **APPLICABLE** | None |  |  |

The full list of criteria and information regarding the requirements can be found in Appendix B of the Tiered Focused Monitoring Toolkit available at < <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/resources/tfm-toolkit.docx>>.

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# **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN**

| **Improvement Area** **1** |
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| **Criterion:** SE 55 - Special education facilities and classrooms |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** Facility observations, a review of documents, and staff interviews indicated that the location of the Case Alternative Center for Education (CACE), which serves students with disabilities at the Joseph Case High School, does not minimize the separation of these students or maximize the inclusion of students into the life of the school. Specifically, the CACE classroom is located on the second floor that does not include general education classrooms. |
| **LEA Outcome:** Swansea Public Schools will ensure that the location for the Case Alternative Center for Education (CACE), which serves students with disabilities at the Joseph Case High School, minimizes the separation of these students and maximizes the inclusion of students into the life of the school. Specifically, the CACE classroom will be located amongst general education classrooms. |
| **Action Plan:** By July 30, 2023, the district will provide a floor plan indicating the proposed CACE classroom location for the 2023-2024 school year.By September 11, 2023, a representative of the Department will conduct an onsite visit of the Joseph Case High School to verify the new location of the CACE program. |
| **Success Metric:** By September 2023 and beyond, Swansea Public Schools will ensure that the location of the CACE program at the Joseph Case High School minimizes the separation of students and maximizes the inclusion of students into the life of the school.Evidence:* Updated 2023-2024 floor plan
* Onsite verification visit
 |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** The Special Education Administrator and building principals will review locations of special education classrooms in each school annually to ensure that the classrooms minimize the separation of students with disabilities and maximize the inclusion of the students into the life of the school. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 09/11/2023 |
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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:** Document review and interviews indicated that the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (Plan) does not make clear that the district must notify parents and guardians of targets of bullying of the availability of the Department's Problem Resolution System and assist in understanding the problem resolution process.The district's Plan includes a statement indicating that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including sexual orientation, disability, and homelessness. However, the Plan does not also address characteristics including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.Furthermore, while the Plan outlines the specific steps the district will take to create a safe and supportive environment for students with disabilities, the Plan does not include specific steps for other vulnerable student populations. |
| **LEA Outcome:** Swansea Public Schools' leadership team will update the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (Plan) to ensure the Plan includes the following requirements:* The district must notify parents must notify parents and guardians of targets of bullying of the availability of the Department's Problem Resolution System and assist in understanding the problem resolution process;
* A statement indicating that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics that includes all required actual or perceived characteristics;
* The specific steps the district will take to create a safe and supportive environment for all vulnerable student populations.
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| **Action Plan:** By July 30, 2023, the district will submit the updated Plan. The Plan will be posted on the district's website and the school community will receive written notice of the updates.By August 30, 2023, the district will submit evidence of training provided to all staff on the updated Plan. |
| **Success Metric:** By October 2023 and beyond, the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will include all requirements. Evidence:* Updated Plan
* Link to Plan on district website
* Training materials, agenda, attendance
 |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** At least biennially, Swansea Public Schools' leadership team will review and update the Plan as well as the district website. In addition, staff will be trained annually on the Plan and written notice of the Plan will be provided to parents, guardians, and staff. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 08/30/2023 |
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| **Improvement Area 3** |
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| **Criterion:** CR 25 - Institutional self-evaluation |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** Document review and interviews indicated that the district does not annually evaluate all aspects of its K-12 programs 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:** Swansea Public Schools will annually evaluate all aspects of its K-12 program, including academic, athletic, and extracurricular, 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. The district will make changes as indicated by the evaluation. |
| **Action Plan:** By October 10, 2023, the district will submit evaluation protocols, procedures and tools that include data review and the team responsible for implementation; root cause analysis and prioritization; input from families, staff, and students; action planning; and progress monitoring. In addition, the district will train relevant staff responsible for conducting the self-evaluation.By January 10, 2024, the district will submit the completed self-evaluation that includes:* Results of the data analysis with any discrepancies identified;
* Results of the root cause analysis and prioritization;
* Action plan to address discrepancies; and
* Progress monitoring timelines.

The superintendent will notify the school community of the results of the self-evaluation. |
| **Success Metric:** By January 2024 and beyond, Swansea Public Schools will evaluate all aspects of its K-12 programs 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 changes as are indicated by the evaluation.Evidence: * Protocols, procedures, and tools for annual self-evaluation
* Training agendas, materials, and attendance
* Completed self-evaluation
* School committee agenda
 |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Annually, the superintendent and assistant superintendent will evaluate the data collection instruments to ensure the inclusion of student, parent, staff and administrator input. Based on this review, the district will update procedures, protocols, and tools, as necessary. The superintendent will ensure that the self-evaluation occurs annually and notifies the school community of the results of the self-evaluation. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 01/10/2024 |
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