

**Holyoke Community Charter School**

**Tiered Focused Monitoring Report**

**Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan**

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

**Tier Level** **2**

**Date of Onsite Visit:** **December 6, 2022**

**Date of Final Report: April 24, 2023**

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

**Marc Oldenburg, Chairperson**



Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT**

**Holyoke Community Charter School**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

# **TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT INTRODUCTION**

During the 2022-2023 school year, Holyoke Community Charter School 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 effective March 1, 2007.

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 and 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 Holyoke Community Charter School**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review in Holyoke Community Charter School during the week of December 5, 2022, 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 charter school.

In preparing this report, the team reviewed extensive written documentation regarding the operation of the charter school’s programs, together with information gathered by means of the following Department program review methods:

**Self-Assessment Phase:**

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

**On-site Verification Phase:**

* Interviews of administrative, instructional, and support staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification.
* Interview of a parent advisory council (PAC) representative.
* 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 solicits information regarding their experiences with the school’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 charter school and the Department to focus their efforts on those areas requiring corrective action. Charter schools are expected to incorporate the corrective actions into their 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. |

**Holyoke Community Charter School**

# **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 54, SE 55, SE 56 | CR 7, CR 7A, CR 7B, CR 8, CR 10A, CR 12A, CR 17A,  CR 20, CR 21, CR 22, CR 23, CR 24, CR 25 |
| **PARTIALLY**  **IMPLEMENTED** |  | CR 3, CR 10B, CR 10C |
| **NOT**  **IMPLEMENTED** | None |  |
| **NOT**  **APPLICABLE** | SE 52A | CR 7C, CR 16 |

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** |
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| **Improvement Area** **1** |
| **Criterion:** CR 3 - Access to a full range of education programs |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** Analysis of data and staff interviews indicated all students do not have equal access to a full range of general education programs. Specifically, IEP Teams do not consistently consider the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities; data demonstrated that approximately 31.9% of students are in full inclusion placements, a rate far lower than the state rate of approximately 67.2%. |
| **LEA Outcome:** Holyoke Community Charter School (HCCS) will ensure that all students have equal access to a full range of special education programs. IEP Teams will consistently consider the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities and the school will ensure that appropriate supports and interventions are available in general education programs to support increased participation of eligible students in inclusion settings. |
| **Action Plan:** By June 30, 2023, HCCS will establish a cross-functional inclusion team that includes charter administrators, teachers, and parents who will analyze data, conduct a root cause analysis, and develop an action plan. Evidence will include the names and titles of the members of the cross-functional inclusion team.  By October 13, 2023, HCCS will submit the results of a root-cause analysis conducted by the cross-functional inclusion team, along with a corresponding action plan. The root-cause analysis will identify reasons for low inclusion rates and the action plan will outline clear steps the school will take to increase full inclusion placements.  By January 3, 2024, the HCCS cross-functional inclusion team will monitor progress through the review of student placement data to determine the effectiveness of the action plan. Subsequent progress reports may be required based on results of the progress monitoring. |
| **Success Metric:** By the 2023-2024 school year and beyond, HCCS will implement action steps to resolve the low rates of inclusion and conduct ongoing progress monitoring.  Evidence:   * List of the names and titles of members on cross-functional inclusion team * Data analysis results * Root cause analysis and prioritization * Action plan * Documentation of ongoing progress monitoring |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Bi-annually, the Director of Special Education and principal will review the school's special education placement data to ensure continued progress in increasing full inclusion rates. Additionally, the school will provide annual professional development to all relevant staff on LRE requirements and strategies for ensuring appropriate supports and services in inclusion settings. Other initiatives will be implemented based on the root cause analysis, action plan, and results from ongoing progress monitoring. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 01/12/2024 |
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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 and staff interviews indicated that the charter school's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (Plan) does not include the following requirements:   * A statement indicating that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; sex; socioeconomic status; homelessness; academic status; gender identity or expression; physical appearance; pregnant or parenting status; sexual orientation; mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability; or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics; and * Definitions of aggressor or bullying that include a member of the staff. |
| **LEA Outcome:** HCCS will update the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan so that it includes the following requirements:   * A statement indicating that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; sex; socioeconomic status; homelessness; academic status; gender identity or expression; physical appearance; pregnant or parenting status; sexual orientation; mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability; or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics; and * Definitions of aggressor or bullying that include a member of the staff. |
| **Action Plan:** By June 30, 2023, HCCS will revise and submit the updated Plan.  By October 13, 2023, HCCS will submit evidence of staff training on the updated Plan. Additionally, the school will provide a link to the updated Plan on the school's website and evidence of notification to families. |
| **Success Metric:** By October 2023 and beyond, the Plan will contain all required sections and all school staff will receive annual training.  Evidence:   * Updated Plan * Training agenda, attendance sheets, and materials * Link to the updated Plan on website * Notification to families |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Annually, the Civil Rights Coordinator will review the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan to ensure consistency with the regulations. Additionally, the school will provide parents, guardians, and staff annual written notice of the Plan and provide training to all school staff. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 10/13/2023 |
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| **Improvement Area 3** |
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| **Criterion:** CR 10C - Student Discipline |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documents and staff interviews indicated that the charter school's notice of suspension and hearing does not offer the right for interpretation and includes a statement indicating that "the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) (or student if he or she is eighteen (18) years or older) receive timely written notice." However, regulation requires the principal to provide both the parent/guardian and the student oral and written notice of the proposed suspension and hearing, regardless of age. |
| **LEA Outcome:** HCCS will update the notice of suspension and hearing so that it includes the right for interpretation. The principal will provide both the parent/guardian and the student oral and written notice of the proposed suspension and hearing, regardless of the student's age. |
| **Action Plan:** By June 30, 2023, HCCS will submit the updated notice of suspension and hearing that includes all requirements. The school will also submit evidence of training on the updates for appropriate staff.  By October 13, 2023, HCCS will submit copies of any notices of suspension and hearing sent to parents/guardians and students. |
| **Success Metric:** By the start of the 2023-2024 school year and beyond, the notice of suspension and hearing will contain all required elements and will be provided to both the parent/guardian and the student.  Evidence:   * Updated notice of suspension and hearing * Training agenda, attendance sheets, and materials * Copies of notices sent |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** On an annual basis, the Civil Rights Coordinator will review the school's notice of suspension and hearing to ensure it contains all required elements. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 10/13/2023 |
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