

Massachusetts Department of Education

Special Education

Continuous Improvement Plan

Introduction

During the 1998-1999 school year the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) conducted a monitoring visit in Massachusetts. Prior to the OSEP monitoring visit the Massachusetts Steering Committee, made up of parents, teachers, administrators, part B and Part C staff, and other stakeholders conducted a self-assessment of Massachusetts special education programs. The purpose was to identify strengths and deficiencies related to certain programs and services for children with disabilities in Massachusetts. The results of the self-assessment were shared with OSEP, and OSEP additionally met with the Steering Committee.

When Massachusetts received its monitoring report from OSEP, the information was disseminated to Massachusetts Steering Committee members, and the Steering Committee was re-convened on October 3, 2000 to address the areas of concerns and non-compliance cited in the OSEP report:

- Parent Involvement
- Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment
- Secondary Transition
- General Supervision

Committee members were provided all the documents received from OSEP, as well as a chart outlining specific requirements and Massachusetts' findings. They were requested to do some pre-thinking around issues and activities related to these requirements. Facilitation and technical assistance was provided by the Northeast Regional Resource Center. A chart consisting of activities responsive to areas of concerns and suggestions discussed at the meeting was sent to all participants, along with a request for continued input. A draft was then developed, additional input was solicited and this final plan was developed.

General Information

Prior to receipt of the monitoring report, Massachusetts had already identified a need to look systemically at many of the very issues identified in the report and had initiated activities in two areas related to systemic change: (1) a revision of the Special Education Regulations, and (2) the development of a revised mandated Individualized Educational Program (IEP) which emphasizes strong parental and student involvement (including vision statements), the development of the IEP at the meeting, planning for transition needs, decisions of service needs before placement, and stresses participation in the general education environment and state and district-wide assessment.

Accompanying the new IEP is a detailed IEP Process Guide, which includes a discussion of the three steps that make up the IEP process- Eligibility Determination, IEP Development, Placement and determination of placement. Examples, and suggested practices are provided. There is also an Annotated IEP Checklist that walks through important concepts (parental input, transition, other educational needs such as assistive technology, communications needs...) as they link to IDEA '97 Regulations and the Regulation Citation. In addition, there has been massive training around eligibility determination, writing effective goals and objectives, and the revised IEP process.

Massachusetts is presently rolling out (through Regional Spring Conferences) a technical assistance document entitled "Is Special Education the Right Service?". Along with statutory requirements and state regulations, the document offers guidance on how to ensure a responsive general education environment and guidelines to assist practitioners and parents in identifying students with disabilities. It remains a working draft- inviting continued input and refining.

Massachusetts statutory amendments enacted during the summer of 2000 now require monitoring of Special Education in every district on a 3 year cycle. Massachusetts is currently developing and staffing this schedule. Through its Program Quality Assurance cluster, Massachusetts has developed a revised

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monitoring document, which corresponds to the IDEA requirements, and serves as oversight for the revised Massachusetts Special Education Regulations. Monitoring activities fully address OSEP's monitoring findings. Evaluation of effective implementation is planned generally through analysis of the documentation/findings through the Coordinated Program Review process. Details are provided in each section of this plan.

Section 1. Parent Involvement

Parental involvement and input has been a major theme and thrust of activities in the Massachusetts Department of Education, aimed at systemically including parents in all aspects of the special education process, and has included the education of parents on special education topics. The following are examples of systemic changes/shifts meant to reflect the fundamentals of IDEA regarding parent involvement.

Systems Change

1. The revised Special Education Regulations include language that decidedly includes parents in the entire process. For example regulatory language 28.07(8)(b) states that "Communications shall be made in both English and the primary language of the home, when such primary language is other than English. Any interpreter used to implement this provision shall be fluent in the primary language of the home...", and regarding consent, 28.07(1)(b) states that "the school district shall make and document multiple efforts to contact parents. Such efforts may include letters, written notices sent by certified mail, e-mail, telephone call, or if appropriate, TTY communications to the home and home visits at such time as the parent is likely to be home...".
2. The IEP Process emphasizes parental participation and contribution. On the revised IEP forms parent involvement is highlighted on the first page: *Parent and/or Student Concerns*- "What concern(s) does the parent and/or student want to see addressed to enhance the student's education?". It sets a tone for respectful, inclusive discussions. Suggested practice in the IEP Process Guide includes 1) sending evaluation material home in advance of asking parents to develop a list of questions and/or concerns, 2) providing parents a seating plan for the meeting or using name tags, 3) recruiting parents who have children eligible for special education services to serve on school-wide parent groups...
3. Training has been extensive in the area of parental participation and has emphasized not only the findings of the OSEP report in this area, but the building of strong partnerships with parents. Training has included (1) the Eligibility process, winter 2000, (2) the IEP Process, Regional Spring Conferences, 2000, (3) Area Meetings on special education regulatory and monitoring issue (covering an overview of the OSEP monitoring report, and a discussion on promoting parental involvement), fall, 2000, (4) Eligibility Technical Assistant Document, spring 2001.
4. Best practice suggestions for parental involvement in our IEP Training Module (to be found on our web page) and available for training through Massachusetts Department of Education Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD) Trainers include parent questionnaires addressing concerns, vision, parent surveys, advanced contact with parents... The technical assistance document "Is Special Education the Right Service?" consistently refers to parent as partners in the eligibility determination process, and regards parental reporting as essential to the process.
5. In the eligibility determination phase of the IEP process, parental reporting around developmental history and present level of performance at home, in the community, in school is considered every bit as important as other assessment data. School districts are required to consult with parents around

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evaluators and evaluations for their children. In the placement phase of the IEP Process parents remain a member of the IEP Team that decides type of placement.

Section 1. Parent Involvement

1.1 Parent Participation in Meetings Regarding Educational Decisions for Their Child

Requirement:

The 1997 IDEA amendments at 20 U.S.C. 1415(b)(1) require that the parents of a child with disability must be afforded an opportunity to participate in meetings with respect to the identification, evaluation, educational placement and provisions of a free appropriate public education to the child.

Each public agency is required to take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of a child with a disability are present at each IEP meeting or demonstrate its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed-on time and place to convene IEP meetings. [34 CFR §300.345(a) and (d).]

Parental Involvement- Activities to Achieve Results	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
1.1.1 MASSDE has contracted with the Federation for Children with Special Needs to present 50 parent training sessions across the State to inform parents of the revised Special Education Regulations, and to educate them about their rights.		Began Fall 2000	
1.1.2 To model the need for 'parent involvement in their native language', MASSDE has translated all of the IEP forms and notices, as well as the Parent's Rights Brochure, into sixteen languages, available to all districts on the Special Education Web Site.	Fall 2000		
1.1.3 MASSDE is providing curriculum for parent training, to be used by school districts to annually train parents about their rights and responsibilities. An initial Parent Advisory Committee planning meeting was held January 2001, to include representative from the Federation for Children with Special Needs, the Massachusetts Association of Parent Advisory Councils, the Parent Professional Advocacy League, the Disability Law Center, the Massachusetts Advocacy Center, the Association of Administrators of Special Education, and the Massachusetts Urban Project.		Development Began 1/2001	
1.1.4 MASSDE has hired consultants to train school personnel in special education activities related to state and federal regulations through Project FOCUS, Massachusetts' State Personnel Improvement Grant. MASSDE is developing training modules for the consultants' use. Modules being developed include "The IEP Process", "Regular Educators and Special Education" and "The Principal's Role in Special Education".		3/2001	
1.1.5 The Special Education Advisories: (1) Advisory 2001-1 Changes to Massachusetts Special Education Law outlines recent changes in Massachusetts's law and regulation. For example, Section 28.04: Referral and Evaluation "Consultation on evaluators used. School districts are now required to provide the student's parent an opportunity to consult with the Special Education Administrator or his/her designee regarding the evaluators who will be used by the school district to conduct any individual evaluation, including the initial evaluation to determine eligibility and any subsequent reevaluations"	9/1/00		

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<p>1.1.6 Advisory 2001-2 Compliance Activities Required by the U.S. Office of Special Education programs includes an extensive discussion on parent participation in the development of the IEP, and parent involvement.</p>	9/1/00		
<p>1.1.7 Ongoing analysis of data collected from the Department of Youth Services (DYS) will be used to inform the Department of Education of strengths and weaknesses in the system as it relates to eligible students who are in the care or custody of DHS. DHS has agreed to provide quarterly reports on data related to Team meetings held promptly for students with disability(ies) in DHS care or custody.</p>			9/01

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance (PQA)/Coordinated Program Review (CPR): The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to parental involvement. CPRs will be used to identify school district's compliance in this area, and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Topics covered related to parental involvement include IEP Development- draft issues, committing resources, no changes at a higher administrative level, parent involvement- Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicators(s): III. Parent and Community Involvement, **SE 26 (1-5) (Parent Participation In Meetings)**. These topics were presented during Special Education Area Meetings in the fall of 2000, with Special Education Administrators from all districts invited to participate in small forums for dialogue/training around special education regulatory and monitoring issues.

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System (PRS) related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Monitoring Criterion: SE 26 (1-5): Baseline Year 2001-2002 Documentation will be obtained through required submissions and/or interview questions.

Prior to any CPR or mid-cycle special education review, Program Quality Assurance Services (PQA) will require each district or charter school to provide the onsite team with the following data for a three month period during the school year during which they would count the following:

- # of Team Meetings held;
- # of those meetings that had parent, guardian, or adult student present;
- # of those meetings in which the parent, guardian, or adult student were not present but were actively involved with the Team in alternative ways; and
- # of those meetings with no parent, guardian or adult student participation.

This data will be entered into a database for the state to show year to year progress.

CPR interviews with IEP Chairpersons will include questions regarding the specific methods the district
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employs to reach out to parent before and after Team meetings where parents choose not to attend.

Specific CPR findings related to pertinent sub-sections of Criterion **SE 26** will be tracked and their frequency reported separately during the CPR cycle.

The POA Problem Resolution System (complaint management) tracking software will be modified to include a data field to quantify compliance/noncompliance findings pertinent to this issue.

Section 2. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Through regulation, advisories, training, and evaluation procedures, Massachusetts has been underscoring the importance of the provision of a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Addressed in the OSEP monitoring report are issues around (1) IEP Development, (2) Psychological Counseling Provision When Needed to Benefit Special Education, (3) Availability of Extended School Year, (4) Lack of Integration Opportunities for Children with Disabilities Placed in Separate Classrooms, (5) Opportunity for Children to be Involved in the General Curriculum, and (6) Lack of Opportunity for Involvement of Children with Disabilities in Regular Vocational Education Programs with Appropriate Supports as Determined by the IEP Team. The following are examples of systemic changes/shifts meant to reflect the fundamentals of IDEA requirements in this area.

Systems Change

1. The revised Special Education Regulations emphasize involvement in the general curriculum and development of the IEP at the Team meeting along with a revised timeline requirement that the parent receive a copy immediately following the development of the IEP. 603 CMR 28.05(7).

The revised regulations emphasize the district's continuing responsibility for students placed in out-of-district programs and require regular monitoring of the appropriateness and adequacy of the program. Revised regulations emphasize LRE requirements and address specific situations where problems have arisen in the past. (For example, charter schools are required to provide special education services if those services would be available in the original district of residence rather than placing the student in an out-of-district placement. 603 CMR 28.03(4)(i)(1)) Additionally, the revised regulations allow the district to convene a separate placement Team meeting up to fifteen days after the IEP Team meeting. 603 CMR 28.06(2)(c) This additional time allows the district to explore in-district capacity and prevents automatic out-of-district placement for students with complex needs.

Revisions of state special education regulations removed the long-standing practice of characterizing placements by "prototype" - use of prototypes had resulted in acceptance of a "prototype" determination as sufficient to determine amount of inclusion that a student received and limited consideration of individual needs and individual abilities of students. The Department has provided training, and will continue to do so, to emphasize that each student's program and placement must be individually determined and not force-fitted to a particular placement description.

2. The IEP Process and new IEP form have incorporated all required components, including transition requirements. (Transition issues are addressed on IEP pages 1-5, 8). IEP Page 3 is dedicated to the identification of "Other Educational Needs"- which is meant to trigger a discussion on topics such as psychological counseling. Statewide training occurred in Spring 2000 emphasizing a full discussion of the students needs including needs not considered academic in nature. On IEP 6 there is a *Nonparticipation Justification* requirement that asks "Is the student removed from the general education classroom at any time? If yes, why is the removal considered critical to the student's

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program?" On IEP 6 there is also a prompt to discuss the extended school year. All began using this form in September 2000. Training emphasized that all elements of the IEP **must** be completed by the Team at the IEP meeting.

The new IEP form does not include placement information. The revised process emphasizes that the placement decision is based on the student's IEP, and provides a separate form for consideration of placement needs based on the IEP services that have been identified by the Team. Additionally, within the IEP, the requirements of the law are restated, and the Team is required to explain specifically any removal of the student from the general education program.

3. Training has been extensive in the area of IEP Development including 1) the IEP Process, Regional Spring Conferences, 2000; 2) Area Meetings on special education regulatory and monitoring issues, fall, 2000 (covering 'immediately' and 'draft document', extended school year, training on the requirement for the provision of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), the rights of children with disabilities in collaboratives to be in classroom spaces, in regular school buildings, and the rights of students, when in separate settings, to inclusive opportunities); 3) Eligibility Technical Assistance Document, spring 2001.

Section 2. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

2.1 Special Education and Related Services are Provided in Accordance with Identified Needs: IEP Development

Requirement:

MASSDE must ensure that the public agency initiates and conducts meetings at least annually to develop, review, and revise IEPs for a child with disability. [20U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(b)] [34 CFR §300.343]

IEP Development- Activities to Achieve Results	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
<p>2.1.1 Grant opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>IEP Preparatory Grant</u> provided financial support to school districts, collaboratives, and Chapter 766 Approved Private Schools in preparation for the mandated use of IEP 2000 (the revised IEP form and process). • <u>Professional Development and Training Grant</u> to school districts, collaboratives, and Chapter 766 Approved Private Schools for support of professional development and training activities for educators and parents in understanding and using the new IEP form and process. Required Needs Assessment and Activity Sheets/Budget Justification. • <u>Special Education Program Improvement Grant</u> to school districts, collaboratives, and Chapter 766 Approved Private Schools to advance the skills of individuals who work with students with disabilities through professional development and training activities, and by providing opportunities for instructional development. Priorities include disability awareness and the eligibility process, IEP Development, and Curriculum alignment and development in English Language Arts and/or Mathematics. 	Winter 2000	Began July 2000	Begins July 2001
<p>2.1.2 A training videotape introducing the IEP and emphasizing the elements of the IEP and partnership with the parent and the student was produced in 1999-2000 and widely disseminated across the Commonwealth.</p>	Spring 2000		

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<p>2.1.3 MASSDE has contracted with the Federation for Children with Special Needs to present 50 parent training sessions across the state to inform parents of the revised Special Education Regulations, and to educate them about their rights. (1.1.1)</p>		<p>Began Fall 2000</p>	
<p>2.1.4 MASSDE has hired consultants to train school personnel in special education activities related to state and federal regulation through Project FOCUS, Massachusetts State Personnel Improvement Grant. MASSDE is developing training modules for the consultants' use. Modules being developed include "The IEP Process", "Regular Educators and Special Education" and "The Principal's Role in Special Education". (1.1.4)</p>		<p>3/2001</p>	
<p>2.1.5 Ongoing analysis of data collected from the Department of Youth Services (DYS) will be used to inform the Department of Education of strengths and weaknesses in the system as it relates to eligible students who are in the care or custody of DYS. DYS has agreed to provide quarterly reports on data related to IEP meetings occurring as required for annual reviews and three year re-evaluation and related to Team meetings convened for initial evaluations in a timely way.</p>			<p>9/01</p>

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to IEP development. CPRs will be used to identify school districts' compliance in this area, and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Additionally covered related to IEP Development is the annual Team meeting (including the major service providers and the parent) held to consider the student's progress and to review, revise, or develop a new IEP or refer the student for a re-evaluation, as appropriate. Mass. Monitoring standard - Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicator(s): II. Student Identification and Program Placement, **SE 18 (1 & 6)** (IEP development and content; determination of placement; provision of IEP to parent), and **SE 22** (IEP implementation and availability)

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Monitoring Criterion: SE 18 and SE 22: Baseline Year 2000-2001

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System (PRS) related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance

Specific CPR findings related to pertinent sub-sections of Criterion **SE 18** and **SE 22** will be tracked and their frequency reported separately during the CPR cycle.

The PQA Problem Resolution System (complaint management) tracking software will be modified to include a data field to quantify compliance/noncompliance findings pertinent to this issue.

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Section 2. Free Appropriate Public Education

2.2 Psychological Counseling Provided When Needed to Benefit From Special Education

Requirement:

MASSDE is responsible to ensure that a free appropriate public education is provided to all students with a disability. This right includes the provision of necessary related services such as psychological counseling, are provided to all children with disabilities who require such services. [34 CFR §300.300]

Psychological Counseling Provided When Needed to Benefit From Special Education - Activities to Achieve results	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
2.2.3 Interagency collaboration with Department of Mental Health to work toward more effective means of access to and oversight of counseling services.		X	
2.2.4 Funding of pilot program in Cambridge and Somerville exploring access via wrap-around services.		Began Fall 2000	
2.2.5 Statewide forum on multi-agency wrap-around services planned for 2001-2002.			2001-2002
2.2.6 MASSDE participates in an interagency project with the Department of Social Services to fund (with state funds) behavioral support services, family counseling services, teacher training in awareness of emotional needs of students and other services in 17 sites in Massachusetts with high numbers of children in DSS care and custody since such students are at high risk for needing special education and counseling services.		Since 1998	
2.2.7 Fall training with district special education administrators to ensure full understanding of responsibilities in relation to this requirement and to highlight the need for counseling services to be an available program in all school so that students with disabilities who require such services have access to them.	Fall 2000		

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to providing psychological counseling when needed. CPRs will be used to identify school district's compliance in this area, and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Topics covered in this area include monitoring for counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling. Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicator(s): V. Student Support Services, **SE 48 (4) (FAPE), 49 (7 & 12) (Related Service).**

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths

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and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

**Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Monitoring Criterion: SE 48 (4), SE 49 (7 & 12):
Baseline Year 2001-2002**

Documentation will be obtained through required submissions and/or interview questions.

Specific CPR findings related to pertinent sub-sections of Criterion **SE 48** and **SE 49** will be tracked and their frequency reported separately during the CPR cycle.

Data collected in the baseline year 2001-2002 as follows:

1. I estimate that _____% of our eligible students probably need counseling or mental health services.
2. I estimate that _____% of eligible students have counseling services provided as part of IEP by the LEA.
3. I estimate that _____% of eligible students receive counseling services provided by other agency/provider (not through LEA)

Follow up questions:

Your estimate of students who may need counseling or mental health services is higher than those that you believe are receiving such services through the LEA.

- Why do you think that occurs?
- Why do you believe that those services are delivered through other providers rather than through the IEP?

The PQA Problem Resolution System (complaint management) tracking software will be modified to include a data field to quantify compliance/noncompliance findings pertinent to this issue.

Section 2. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

2.3 Availability of Extended School Year

Requirement:

MASSDE is responsible under 34 CFR §300.300 for ensuring that all public agencies consider the need for extended school year (ESY) services and make those services available as a component of a free appropriate public education necessary to meet the unique needs of an individual child with a disability.

Availability of Extended School Year - Activities to Achieve Results	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
2.3.1 MASSDE is considering the possibility of including the information from the IEP on use of extended day or year as part of a statewide database so that it is available for examining patterns and trends.			As individual student database is available.
2.3.2 Fall training with district special education administrators to ensure full understanding of responsibilities in relation to this requirement and to highlight the need for extended school year services to be an available program in all school so that students with disabilities who require such services have access to them.			

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Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to Availability of Extended School Year Services. The Department will use the CPRs to identify school district compliance in this area and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Topics covered in this area include monitoring for the extended day or year program. An extended day or year program is identified if the student has demonstrated or is likely to demonstrate substantial regression in his or her learning skills and/or substantial difficulty in relearning such skills if an extended program is not provided. Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicator(s): II. Student Identification and Program Placement, **SE 21 (2 & 5)** (School day and school year requirements).

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Monitoring Criterion: SE 21 (2 & 5): Baseline Year 2000-2001

Specific CPR findings related to pertinent sub-sections of Criterion **SE 21** will be tracked and their frequency reported separately during the CPR cycle.

The PQA Problem Resolution System (complaint management) tracking software will be modified to include a data field to quantify compliance/noncompliance findings pertinent to this issue.

Section 2. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

2.4 Lack of Integration Opportunities for Children with Disabilities Placed in Separate Educational Environments

Requirement:

MASSDE is responsible for ensuring that all public agencies have available and consider placement options to the extent necessary to implement the IEP for each child with a disability. [34 CFR §§300.551(a) and 300.552(b).]

MASSDE must ensure that public agencies remove a student from the regular education environment only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in the regular education environment with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily as required by 34 CFR §300.550(b)(2).

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Lack of Integration Opportunities for Children with Disabilities Placed in Separate Educational Environments- Activities to Achieve Results	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
<p>2.4.1 Massachusetts has had a long-standing funding program providing direct financial assistance for placements made by school districts to separate residential programs. That program (known as the 50/50 program) has been revised by the state Legislature and funding, beginning in FY 2003, will be based on the cost of the overall student program. Reimbursement for programs serving students in less restrictive environments will be somewhat higher than reimbursements for students served out-of-district. This will serve as a strong incentive to districts to develop in-district supports and services and to encourage service to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.</p>			<p>Funding program revision beginning FY 2001, in full effect FY 2002</p>
<p>2.4.2 Development of Application Procedures for the Department of Education Approval of a Massachusetts Public or Private Day or Residential Special Education School Program (addressing LRE/IEP issues). Winter meetings (6) for Collaboratives and Massachusetts Approved Private Schools to review information in January Memo regarding the application procedure.</p>	<p>April, 2001</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>2.4.3 Regulation 603 CMR 38.03(4) ensures access is included in planning any new construction that is submitted for approval to the state. "All facilities in an approved school project shall provide for equality of educational opportunity without discrimination on account of sex, race, color, religion, sexual orientation or national origin, and shall meet the requirements of M.G.L. c. 76, § 5 and regulations made thereunder. Projects shall comply with all applicable provisions of federal, state, and local law relative to the accessibility of programs and facilities to persons with disabilities."</p>		<p>X</p>	
<p>2.4.4 Revision of the IEP form and process emphasized that students must have access to non-academic, extracurricular and ancillary programs, services and activities of the school district, and fall trainings emphasized that such programs and services must be made available to all students, including students receiving out-of- district services.</p>	<p>Fall 2000</p>	<p>X</p>	

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to lack of integration opportunities for children with disabilities placed in separate educational environments. The Department will use the CPRs to identify school district compliance in this area and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Topics related to this area include the monitoring for the integration opportunities for children with disabilities:

- The placement and 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 which he or she needs. The Team states 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.
- Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicator(s): I Assessment of Student Progress, **SE 1 (2c)** (Assessments are appropriately selected and interpreted for students referred for evaluation).

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II. Student Identification and Program Placement, **SE 20 (Least Restrictive Program Selected)**. VIII. Program Plan and Evaluation, **SE 56 (2) (Special education programs and services are evaluated)**.

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Monitoring Criterion: SE 1 (2c), SE 20 (1-3) and SE 56 (2): Baseline Year 2000-2001

Specific CPR findings related to pertinent sub-sections of Criterion **SE 1, SE 20 and SE 56** will be tracked and their frequency reported separately during the CPR cycle.

The POA Problem Resolution System (complaint management) tracking software will be modified to include a data field to quantify compliance/noncompliance findings pertinent to this issue.

The issue of placement of collaborative placement of programs is tracked through documented DOE enforcement actions, the review complaints, the review in 2001 of applications for ALL approved of public special education day school programs and the review of required notices to the Department regarding the proposed establishment of such programs. This data will be summarized in the baseline year.

Section 2. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

2.5 Opportunity for Children with Disabilities to be Involved and Progress in the General Curriculum

Requirement:

The 1997 IDEA amendments at 20 U.S.C. 1414(c)(1)(B)(iv) & (d)(1)(A) require that in evaluating a child with a disability, a public agency determine the child's ability to participate in the general curriculum; and that the IEP includes a statement of the special education and related services including supplementary aids and services to be provided for the child to be involved and progress in the general curriculum.

The 1997 IDEA amendments at 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(3)(c) require that the public agency ensure that the IEP team for each child with a disability who is, or may be in regular education, includes the regular education teacher to the extent appropriate to participate in the development of the IEP for the child.

Opportunity for Children with Disabilities to be Involved and Progress in the General Curriculum – Activities to Achieve Results	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
2.5.1 MASSDE is presently funding a training center for school district teams on assistive technology.		Began 1999	
2.5.2 MASSDE is planning to develop a technical assistance document related to assistive technology and the decision-making process for dissemination 2001-2002.			2001-2002

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<p>2.5.3 MASSDE supported The Education Reform Teacher Fellowship Program a multi-year program, that emphasizes the central role of teachers in advancing local Education Reform efforts. The goals of the Teacher Fellowship Program were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring teachers (regular education, special education, bilingual, Title 1, vocational technical instructors, physical education, art and music) together to support change in classroom practice • Assist Teacher Fellow Teams in building skills and strategies that will be helpful to them in using state curriculum frameworks • Use models of exemplary practices in teaching, assessment, leadership, and the use of innovative technologies. 	1998/99		
<p>2.5.4 The new IEP forms and process prominently emphasize a discussion on access to the general curriculum. Schools were required to use new forms starting September 2000.</p>		X	

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to opportunity for children with disabilities to be involved and progress in the general curriculum. The Department will use the CPRs to identify school district compliance in this area and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Topics related to this area include monitoring for the opportunity for children with disabilities to be involved and progress in the general curriculum:

- The district must align its general curriculum with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and at least one member of all IEP Teams is familiar with the Curriculum Frameworks such that the Team is able to discuss an eligible student's appropriate access to the general curriculum. The district ensures that all students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum that is available to all other students and receive instruction in the content areas of this curriculum.
- Specialized materials and equipment specified in IEPs are provided, are of good quality and are suitable for the role they play in the IEP. The school district provides evidence that assistive technology is considered for each eligible student and, if necessary, described in the IEP and provided by the district.
- Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicator(s): I Assessment of Student Progress, **SE 1 (2d)** (Assessments are appropriately selected and interpreted for students referred for evaluation), **SE 2** (Required and optional assessments), **SE 8** (Evaluation Team composition), **SE 9 (1f)** (Eligibility determination: Timelines for evaluation, provision of IEP and/or identification of other needed instructional programs), **SE 18 (2)** (IEP development and content; determination of placement; provision of IEP to parent); IV. Curriculum and Instruction, **SE 33**, (Involvement in the general curriculum); V. Student Support Services, **SE 49** (Related Services).

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the

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Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Monitoring Criterion: **SE 1 (2d), SE 2, SE 8, SE 9 (1f), SE 18 (2), SE 33 and SE 49: Baseline Year 2000-2001**

Specific CPR findings related to pertinent sub-sections of **SE 1, SE 2, SE 8, SE 9, SE 18, SE 33 and SE 49** will be tracked and their frequency reported separately during the CPR cycle.

The POA Problem Resolution System (complaint management) tracking software will be modified to include a data field to quantify compliance/noncompliance findings pertinent to this issue.

Section 2. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

2.6 Lack of Opportunity for Involvement of Children with Disabilities in Regular Vocational Education Programs with Appropriate Supports as Determined by the IEP Form.

Requirement:

Each public agency must take steps to ensure that its children with disabilities have available to them the variety of educational programs and services available to nondisabled children in the area served by the agency including art, music, industrial arts, consumer and homemaking education, and vocational education. [34 CFR §300.305.]

The IEP must include a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children. [20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(A)(iii).]

Lack of Opportunity for Involvement of Children with Disabilities in Regular Vocational Education Programs with Appropriate Supports as Determined by the IEP Form.	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
2.6.1 MASSDE has assembled an initial meeting with vocational administrators to review admissions standards and support services for students with disabilities at vocational high schools. *Note: Vocational schools typically have enrolled a higher percentage of students with disabilities (up to 40%) than do comprehensive high schools.		Activity began January 2001	
2.6.2 The Education Reform Act in Massachusetts required vocational schools to eliminate the "general track" in order to promote and to ensure high academic standards and course work in vocational schools.		Began 1993	
2.6.3 Administrators from Comprehensive High Schools will be invited to participate in a discussion regarding providing vocational options to students, including students with disabilities.			Fall 2001

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to lack of opportunity for involvement of children with disabilities in regular vocational education programs with appropriate supports as determined by the IEP form. The Department will use the CPRs to identify school district compliance in this area and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

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Through the Coordinated Program Review procedures (Perkins Vocational and Technical Education), vocational schools are monitored on services to "Special population students". Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicator(s): I. Assessment of Student Program P (6) and V. Student Support Services P (15), as well as their adherence to their approved admissions policies as stated in 603 CMR 4.00: Vocational Education 4.12: Conditions of Admission: (1) Each school desiring to obtain approval for a M.G.L. c. 74 vocational technical program shall submit its admissions criteria in writing. No criteria shall discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, national origin or special needs. Provision shall be made to accommodate special needs as required by M.G.L. c. 71B and 603 CMR 28.00. Admissions criteria shall comply with the requirements of St. 1971, c. 622, M.G.L. c. 76, " 5 and 16 and 603 CMR 26.00, and M.G.L. c. 71A and 603 CMR 14.00. Requirements are specified in the Division's "Guidelines for the Admissions Policies for Selective Secondary Schools" and the "Guidelines for the Admissions Policies of Comprehensive High Schools with Five or more M.G.L. c. 74 Programs," and are incorporated into 603 CMR 4.00 by reference.

Mass. Monitoring standards in Special Education related evaluation indicator(s): I. Assessment of Student Program **SE 6 (2) (Determination of transition services)**; **SE 48 (2) (FAPE (Free, appropriate, public education))**: **Equal opportunity to participate in educational, nonacademic, extracurricular and ancillary programs, as well as participation in regular education**).

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Monitoring Criterion: SE 6 (2), SE 48 (2): Baseline Year 2001-2002

Documentation will be obtained through required submissions and/or interview questions.

Specific CPR findings related to pertinent sub-sections of Criterion **SE 6 and SE 48** will be tracked and their frequency reported separately during the CPR cycle.

Data will be collected on the following:

If an eligible student either does not apply for vocational school or does not get into vocational school, how does your district ensure that the student has options for vocational exploration or experience? Through:

- ♦ Vocational options discussed as a course of study,
- ♦ Opportunities to visit job sites,
- ♦ Opportunities to have short term work experiences,
- ♦ Academic courses highlight application to world of work,
- ♦ Other.

The POA Problem Resolution System (complaint management) tracking software will be modified to include a data field to quantify compliance/noncompliance findings pertinent to this issue.

Section 3. Secondary Transition

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Through self-assessment, and a review of activities associated with the Massachusetts Transition Initiative (a five year grant), Massachusetts had previously identified the need for improved practices in the area of transition services, and the necessity for continued training and enforcement activities. Continued training has been provided through contracts with educational collaboratives and the Federation for Children with Special Needs. OSEP's monitoring report revealed continued weaknesses in the area of Secondary Transition. The following are examples of systemic changes/shifts meant to reflect the fundamentals of IDEA.

Systems Change

1. The revised IEP forms and process emphasize the need to address issues associated with Secondary Transition and integrate transition requirements throughout the mandated IEP forms. Teams cannot, therefore, simply ignore a separate statement needed transition services as was previously true with the former Massachusetts IEP forms. The Team is required to write IEPs that prepare students with disabilities for independence, employment, and other post-school activities. Transition planning is integrated into the development of the IEP, on pages IEP 1-5, 8.
 - IEP page 1 includes a vision statement that directs the Team members to "Consider the next 1-5 years when developing this statement. Beginning no later than age 14, the statement should be based on the student's preferences and interests, and should include desired outcomes in adult living, post-secondary and work environments."
 - Page 8 of the IEP requires Teams to "Include the following transition information: the anticipated graduation date; a statement of interagency responsibilities or needed linkages; the discussion of transfer of rights at least one year before age of majority and a recommendation for Chapter 688 Referral."

The IEP Process Guide (introduced at the Spring training) states "Transition planning is required under Federal Law and becomes a major Team focus when a student reaches fourteen years of age ... As a student approaches graduation, the Team must also consider the student's graduation status, the possibility of a referral for Chapter 688 services (services from adult human service agencies) and the involvement of adult human service agencies. ..." In addition, the IEP Process Guide states that "Transition planning is more effective when the planning is an integral part of the student's IEP and the student's program. Transition planning is required under Federal Law and becomes a major Team focus when a student reaches fourteen years of age...."

2. Training has been extensive in the area of transition services, as noted above, and continues to be a focus, including 1) the Regional Spring Conference, 2000 and 2) Area Meetings on special education regulatory and monitoring issues where transition planning was a strong concern.

Section 3. Secondary Transition

3.1 Outcome Oriented Statements of Transition That Include the Required Components

Requirement:

MASSDE must include a statement of transition services in the IEPs of students with disabilities, indicating that students aged 16 or older is receiving appropriate transition planning. [20 U.S.C. 1401(30)]

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Outcome Oriented Statements of Transition That Include the Required Components– Activities to Achieve Results	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
3.1.2 Training by the Federation and by TEC collaborative on transition occurred throughout the Commonwealth in FY99-2000. The Federation continues to provide transition-focused training.	FY 99/2000	X	
3.1.3 A training module on writing appropriate goals and objectives for transition will be developed and disseminated to parents, educators, and adult service agencies.			Fall 2001

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to outcome oriented statements of transition that include the required components. The Department will use the CPRs to identify school district compliance in this area and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Topics include monitoring on:

- transition services for a student who is 16 years of age, or younger if appropriate, the Team includes in the IEP services that promote movement of the student from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicator(s): I. Assessment of Student Services, **SE 6 (Determination of transition services)** - determining that transition services are based upon the student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests and includes specially designed instruction, community experiences, the development of employment or other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Upcoming Appendix on IEP record review checklist includes an updated review of transition planning/services.

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Monitoring Criterion: SE 6: Baseline Year 2000-2001

Specific CPR findings related to pertinent sub-sections of Criterion **SE 6** will be tracked and their frequency reported separately during the CPR cycle.

Student record review procedures have been modified to reflect the requirements of the state's new IEP forms and Process Guide. These procedures determine whether outcome-based statements designed to

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promote movement to post school activities are included in IEPs for students over 16 year years of age.

The POA Problem Resolution System (complaint management) tracking software will be modified to include a data field to quantify compliance/noncompliance findings pertinent to this issue.

Section 3. Secondary Transition

3.2 Method for Ensuring that Outside Agencies Likely to be Providing or Paying for Post-School Activities Are Invited To The IEP Meeting and That There is a Method For Obtaining Their Input If They Do Not Attend

Requirement:

To facilitate the student's movement to post-school activities, a representative of any agency that is likely to be providing or paying for any of the transition services the student will need upon completion of high school is to be invited to the meeting and participate in the planning of transition services, and if the representative does not attend, other steps shall be taken to obtain the participation of the agency in the transition planning process. [34 CFR §300.344(c), now §300.344(b).]

Method for Ensuring that Outside Agencies Likely to be Providing or Paying for Post-School Activities Are Invited To The IEP Meeting and That There is a Method For Obtaining Their Input If They Do Not Attend	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
3.2.1 DOE is working on updating interagency agreements related to other agencies' participation in Team meetings. New Regulations authorize agencies to join the Team.		X	
3.2.2 The Department of Mental Health (DMH) has trained all of its case managers and parent coordinators on the revised State Regulations, and the new IEP Process so they can effectively participate in IEP meetings. In addition, DMH has provided additional funding in each area of the state for consultation and education to schools regarding working with children with serious emotional disturbances.	Summer and Fall 2000	Funding in 1999 to present	
3.2.3 MASSDE conducted training sessions for Department of Social Services administrators, case managers, and workers on Special Education and the roles and responsibilities of agencies.	Fall 2000		
3.2.4 Through Massachusetts Chapter 688 Law (which includes Statement of Needed Transition Services, Linkages to Post School Options, Age of Majority, Interagency Collaboration, Adult Services) MASSDE participates as part of an interagency team reviewing service needs of students transitioning to adult services.		X	
3.2.5 MASSDE sits on multiple interagency and specific interest agency advisory groups, and working groups addressing issues of common concern including a number which represent students transitioning to adult life.		X	
3.2.6 MASSDE and the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) collaborate on a six million dollar statewide project (with state funds) to support wrap-around services for students with disabilities at risk for or in need of residential services, with a primary component related to facilitating the transition of older students to more independent living. DMR participates as part of the Team, and manages all non-educational components of the service.		Since 1997	

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3.2.7 Department of Mental Health Sponsored Training: Special Education Changes and Transition, presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs. Additional training is planned for the spring/summer 2001.	12/15/00		Spring/ Summer 2001
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Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to Method for Ensuring that Outside Agencies Likely to be Providing or Paying for Post-School Activities Are Invited To The IEP Meeting and That There is a Method For Obtaining Their Input If They Do Not Attend. The Department will use the CPRs to identify school district compliance in this area and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Topics monitored in this area include determining if, when one purpose of the Team meeting is to discuss transition services, a representative of any public agency who may be responsible for providing or paying for transition services is invited to the Team meeting. If the representative(s) does not attend the meeting, the school district takes other steps to obtain the participation of these agencies Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicator(s): I Assessment of Student Progress, **SE 6 (4 & 5)** (Determination of transition services).

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Monitoring Criterion: SE 6 (4 & 5): Baseline Year 2000-2001

Specific CPR findings related to pertinent sub-sections of Criterion **SE 6** will be tracked and their frequency reported separately during the CPR cycle.

Student record review procedures have been modified to reflect the requirements of the state's new IEP forms and Process Guide. These procedures determine whether outside agencies are invited to Team meeting when transition planning and services are being considered.

The PQA Problem Resolution System (complaint management) tracking software will be modified to include a data field to quantify compliance/noncompliance findings pertinent to this issue.

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Section 3. Secondary Transition

3.3 Students Invited to Meeting if Transition Planning is a Purpose of the Meeting

Requirement:

If a purpose of the meeting is transition planning, the agency shall invite the student, and if the student does not attend, the public agency shall take other steps to ensure the student's interests and preferences are considered. [34 CFR 300.3(c), now §300.344(b).]

Students Invited to Meeting if Transition Planning is a Purpose of the Meeting – Activities to Achieve Results	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
3.3.1 Training by the Federation and by TEC collaborative occurred on transition throughout the Commonwealth in FY99-2000.	Began 9/26/00	X	

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to Students Invited to Meeting if Transition Planning is a Purpose of the Meeting. The Department will use the CPRs to identify school district compliance in this area and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Topics related to this area include the determination of transition services when one purpose of the Team meeting is to discuss transition services, the student age sixteen, or younger, is a part of the Team process. If the student does not attend the Team meeting, the school district ensures that the Team is informed of the student's interests and preferences. Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicator(s): I. Assessment of Student Progress, **SE 6 (6) (Determination of transition services)**.

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Monitoring Criterion: SE 6 (6); Baseline Year: 2001-2002

Documentation will be obtained through required submissions and/or interview questions.

Specific CPR findings related to pertinent sub-sections of Criterion **SE 6** will be tracked and their frequency reported separately during the CPR cycle.

Student record review procedures have been modified to reflect the requirements of the state's new IEP forms and Process Guide. These procedures determine whether students age 14 or older are invited to Team meeting when transition planning and services are being considered.

Prior to any CPR or mid-cycle special education review, Program Quality Assurance Services (PQA) will require each district or charter school to provide the onsite team with the following data for a three JUNE, 2001

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month period during the school year during which they would count the following:

- ♦ # of Team Meetings held regarding students 14 years of age or older;
- ♦ # of those meetings that had students 14 years of age or older present;
- ♦ # of those meetings in which students were not present but were actively involved with the Team in alternative ways; and
- ♦ # of those meetings with no student participation.

This data will be entered into a database for the state to show year to year progress.

The PQA Problem Resolution System (complaint management) tracking software will be modified to include a data field to quantify compliance/noncompliance findings pertinent to this issue.

Section 3. Secondary Transition

3.4 Statement of Transition Service Course of Study Beginning at Age 14

Requirement:

The IDEA 1997 Amendments require that the IEP of each student beginning at age 14, and updated annually, includes a statement of the transition service needs of the child under that applicable components of the IEP that focuses on the child's course of study. 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(vii)(I).

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to Statement of transition Service Course of Study Beginning at Age 14. The Department will use the CPRs to identify school district compliance in this area and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Topics related to this area include the following: For a student who is 14 years of age, the Team considers the student's course of study in relation to the student's future goals and documents this in the IEP. The transition services are based upon the student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and include specially designed instruction, community experiences, the development of employment or other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. Mass. Monitoring standards related evaluation indicator(s): I. Assessment of Student Progress, **SE 6 (6)**, (**Determination of transition services**).

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to these areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification: Key Indicator(s)

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

SEE Secondary Transition: 3.3

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Section 4. General Supervision

In its efforts to improve educational results for children with disabilities, Massachusetts continues to develop a strong State monitoring process to ensure effective implementation of the IDEA. As well, Massachusetts believes in "effective technical assistance efforts that focus on best practice designed to improve the substantive content and results of special education". To that end, Massachusetts continues to develop sound technical assistance documents and training modules, makes monetary resources available through grants, funds for professional development, and has revamped the monitoring documents to reflect the revised Special Education Regulations. The following are examples of systemic changes/shifts meant to reflect the fundamentals of IDEA.

Systems Change

1. Revised Special Education Regulations reflecting the changes in IDEA '97.
2. Revised Individualized Education Program reflecting the requirements of IDEA '97.
3. Technical Assistance Documents: The IEP Process Guide, IEP Annotated Checklist, "Is Special Education the Right Service?"
4. Technical Assistance Training Modules: "The IEP Process", "Regular Educators and Special Education" and "The Principal's Role in Special Education"
5. Special Education Advisories
6. Professional Development grant opportunities:
 - IEP Preparatory FY 2001
 - Professional Development and Training Grant (Literacy and IEP Training) FY 2001
 - Special Education Program Improvement Grant (PRIORITY: Disability Awareness/Eligibility Determination, and any of the following should the district choose: District Curriculum Accommodation Plan, IEP Development, and Curriculum alignment and development in English Language Arts and/or Mathematics.
7. Revised monitoring documents

Section 4. General Supervision

4.1 Effective Methods for Identifying and Correcting Deficiencies in Programs Providing Services to Children with Disabilities

Requirement:

MASSDE is responsible for ensuring the requirements of Part B are met, that all programs for children with disabilities in the State are under MASSDE's general supervisory authority, and that these programs meet the educational standards of MASSDE. [20 U.S.C. §1412(a)(11).]

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Effective Methods for Identifying and Correcting Deficiencies in Programs Providing Services to Children with Disabilities-Activities to Achieve Results	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
<p>4.1.1 MASSDE disputes this finding since in the majority of agencies where OSEP found problems-MASSDE had also identified those same issues and was in the midst of compliance activities with the district. Notwithstanding this dispute, MASSDE has revised its monitoring standards in all areas found out of compliance by OSEP. MASSDE actively engages with districts found out of compliance until compliance is accomplished. Sanctions are used when necessary.</p>		Use of revised forms began 9/2000	
<p>4.1.2 FY2001 Grant Program for Special Education Entitlement funds required the completion of a "Needs Assessment" by school districts reflecting the level of compliance or understanding of Special Education law around 1) Activities related to students enrolled in private schools at private expense, 2) Activities related to planning for transition services, 3) Team membership, 4) Progress reports, 5) Development of the IEP separate from placement determination, 6) Professional development for educators around special education requirements, 7) Timeline requirements of the IEP process, 8) Eligibility determination, and 9) Team develops an IEP containing all required elements, not changed at higher administrative levels within the school district. Review of the district's FY2001 grant included a review of previous monitoring findings ('98, '99, '00), to ensure that federal or local funds were allocated for required compliance activities.</p>		Began July 2000	
<p>4.1.3 See also 2.1.2 Professional Development and Training Grant to school districts, collaboratives, and Chapter 766 Approved Private Schools for support of professional development and training activities for educators and parents in understanding and using the new IEP form and process. Required Needs Assessment and Activity Sheets/Budget Justification.</p>		Began July 2000	

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened to ensure oversight in all areas related to effective special education programs and services. CPRs will be used to identify charter school compliance in this area and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to areas identified as systemic non-compliance areas will be tracked, and districts will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the district understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.

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Section 4. General Supervision

4.2 Ensuring that all eligible children with disabilities, including those receiving services through charter schools, receive a free appropriate public education

Requirement:

MASSDE has an obligation to ensure that all eligible children residing in the State with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education no later than the child's third birthday. This provision applies to all public agencies within the State. [See 34 CFR §300.121.]

Ensuring that all eligible children with disabilities, including those receiving services through charter schools, receive a free appropriate public education	Completed	Ongoing	Planned
4.2.1 The DOE Charter School Office is aware of the finding. An additional staff member has been added to the office with a focus on ensuring Charter Schools have proper support to understand and comply with responsibilities related to providing Special Education.		July 2000	
4.2.2 Professional Development for Department of Education Staff responsible for Charter Schools was provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Charter School Office sent the Director and two staff members to a national conference on Charter Schools and Special Education. ♦ Director: Charter Schools and Civil Rights Conference ♦ Director: National Charter School Conference, attended workshops on Special Education and the establishment of Special Education Cooperatives, accountability, and Charter School contracting with educational management companies for services. 	9/2000 10/2000 12/2000		
4.2.3 Documents orienting new Charter Schools to their responsibilities have been revised to reflect enhanced emphasis on meeting special education requirements for enrolled students.		July 2000	
4.2.2 Revisions to the state special education regulations have included increased responsibility to provide a full range of in-district services for students in Charter Schools rather than refer such students to out-of-district placements too readily.	9/26/00		

Evaluation Indicators

Program Quality Assurance/Coordinated Program Review: The monitoring cycle for special education has been increased to every three years, and criteria have been strengthened in areas related to charter schools. The Department will use the CPRs to identify school district compliance in this area and to develop corrective action plans as necessary.

Charter Schools are part of the Department's three year monitoring cycle for Special Education. The findings for each program area describe determinations about the implementation status of each criterion reviewed. The findings also note those criteria the implementation of which the Team found to be commendable. For those criteria not found to be fully implemented, the local district or charter school must propose actions to bring those areas into compliance with the appropriate statute or regulation. (See page 4 Coordinated Program Review Elements: Response). There will have been 17 Coordinated Program Reviews of charter schools by the end of FY2001. Over the next three years there are 23 more scheduled.

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Complaints received through the Department's Problem Resolution System related to charter schools will be tracked, and charter schools will be required not only to respond to and resolve the complaint but also to demonstrate that training has been provided to ensure that staff of the charter school understand the requirements and that procedures are in place to maintain compliance.

Verification

Annual and ongoing analysis of the data collected through Coordinated Program Reviews and the Problem Resolution System, reviewed state, regional, and district-wide, will be used to inform the Department of strengths and weaknesses in the system, and will assist in identifying activities, such as training and grants, necessary to address systemic concerns.