

# Springfield Public SchoolsTargeted and Focused Monitoring Report

**Onsite Dates: March 24-28, 2025**

**Date of Final Report:** **05/21/2025**



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Interim Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

During the 2024-2025 school year, Springfield Public Schools participated in a Targeted and Focused Monitoring Review conducted by the Department’s Office of Language Acquisition (OLA). The purpose of the Targeted and Focused Monitoring Review is to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on English Learner Education.

District/charter schools are reviewed every six years through Targeted and Focused Monitoring. There are 12 ELE criteria that target implementation of the requirements related to ELE programs under state and federal law and regulations:

ELE 1: Annual English Language Proficiency Assessment

ELE 2: State Accountability Assessment

ELE 3: Initial Identification of ELs and FELs

ELE 5: ELE Program and Services

ELE 6: Program Exit and Readiness

ELE 7: Parent Involvement

ELE 8: Declining Entry to a Program

ELE 10: Parental Notification

ELE 13: Fallow-up Support

ELE 14: Licensure Requirements

ELE 15: Professional Development Requirements

ELE 18: Records of ELs

The monitoring process differs depending on the thorough data analysis the Department conducts.

The review process includes the following:

1. Self-Assessment
* District reviews English Learner Education documentation for required elements including document uploads.
* District reviews a sample of English learner (EL) student records selected across grade levels and EL focus areas such as opt-out students, former ELs and students and/or parents who need translation and/or interpretation.
* Upon completion of these two internal reviews, the district’s self-assessment is submitted to the Department for review.
1. Verification
* Review of EL student records: The Department may select a sample of student records and request certain documentation to be uploaded to the WBMS as evidence of implementation of the ELE criteria.
* Review of additional documents for English Learner Education
* Surveys of parents of ELs: Parents of ELs are sent a survey that solicits information regarding their experiences with the district’s implementation of English Learner Education program(s), related services, and procedural requirements.
* Interviews of staff
* Classroom observations as applicable
* Parent and student focus groups as applicable

**Report:**

Within approximately 20 business days of the onsite visit, the onsite chairperson will forward to the superintendent or charter school leader the findings from the Targeted and Focused Monitoring Review. Within 10 business days of receipt of the findings, the district reviews and comments on the findings for factual accuracy before they are finalized. After the report is finalized, districts develop a Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan (CIMP) for any criteria receiving a rating of "Partially Implemented," "Not Implemented," and “Implementation in Progress.” The CIMP outlines an action plan, identifies the success metric, describes the measurement mechanism and provides a completion timeframe to bring those areas into compliance with the controlling statute or regulation. District and charter schools are expected to incorporate the CIMP actions into their district and school improvement plans, including their professional development plans.

## DEFINITION OF COMPLIANCE RATINGS

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| **Implemented** | The requirement is substantially met in all important aspects. |
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| **Implementation in Progress** | This rating is used for criteria containing new or updated legal requirements and means that the district has implemented any old requirements contained in the criterion and is training staff or beginning to implement the new requirements in such a way that the onsite team anticipates that the new requirements will be implemented by the end of the school year. |
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| **Partially Implemented** | The requirement, in one or several important aspects, is not entirely met. |
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| **Not Implemented** | The requirement is totally or substantially not met. |
| **Not Applicable**  | The requirement does not apply to the school district or charter school. |

For more information on the Targeted and Focused Monitoring approach, please visit the Department’s [website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/cpr/default.html).

Springfield Public Schools

## SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS

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|  | **English Learner Education Requirements** |
| **IMPLEMENTED** | ELE 1, ELE 2, ELE 3, ELE 7, ELE 8, ELE 13, ELE 15, ELE 18 |
| **PARTIALLY****IMPLEMENTED** | ELE 5, ELE 6, ELE 10, ELE 14 |

| **Improvement Area** **1** |
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| **Criterion:** ELE 5 - Program Placement and Structure |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** The Department conducted a review of the district’s ELE programs and services provided to ELs and identified the following issues: ESL: * When students receive ESL instruction through a push-in model, English language development does not consistently occur. In many cases, the ESL teacher supports the content teacher in delivering grade-level content, but explicit instruction in English language development is limited or absent.
* Interviews revealed that English learners are sometimes pulled out of their content classes for ESL instruction, causing them to miss critical instruction in core subjects and limiting their access to grade-level content, which may hinder their overall academic progress and widen the achievement gap between English learners and their peers.
* Interviews and a review of documentation indicated that while the district has adopted ESL curricular materials, they are not consistently used for ESL instruction across all schools. In some schools, ESL teachers are directed to modify and use the general education English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum, which may not adequately address the specific language development needs of English learners.
* Interviews with staff and classroom observations revealed that ESL classes are not consistently rigorous across the district. In some instances, instruction lacked academic challenge and did not align with grade-level or proficiency-level expectations, thereby limiting opportunities for English learners to engage with complex content and develop the skills necessary for success in mainstream academic settings.
* The district places some students in out-of-district placements to meet their unique needs. The district does not ensure that ELs in such out-of-district placements receive ELE services.

Procedures: * Although the district is in the process of developing and revising its policies and procedures pertaining to ELE programming, at the time of the review the district did not have procedures aligned to the Department’s guidance to ensure the district is in compliance with federal and state law and regulations.

Benchmark Requirements * The district has procedures in place to identify English learners who do not meet English proficiency benchmarks, determine areas for improvement, and establish personalized goals for language development. However, these procedures are not implemented consistently across the district, particularly with regard to using benchmark goals to inform instructional planning.

 SLIFE : * Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) are currently placed in fully self-contained instructional settings with limited or no access to English-speaking peers throughout the school day.
* Interviews and observations indicated that there are instances where students remain in the program beyond the criteria, sometimes due to students? personal preference. This practice can lead to more segregated settings and maintains students in self-contained classes longer than necessary, limiting their integration with English-speaking peers. Prolonged separation from mainstream academic environments may hinder their language development, academic progress, and social integration, ultimately reducing their exposure to essential academic and social experiences.

DLBE Program: * While elementary and middle school Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE) programs are implementing bilingual instruction, there is limited evidence of shared program goals, aligned language allocation plans, or coordinated curriculum frameworks to ensure continuity of language and content development across grades. The absence of aligned language allocation plans, curricular frameworks, and shared program goals across grade spans makes it difficult to ensure a coherent biliteracy pathway for students as they transition from elementary to secondary.
* District-level support for the Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE) program is limited, particularly in the areas of professional development, curriculum guidance, and staffing allocations. Educators report a lack of centralized resources, bilingual instructional coaching, and ongoing training specific to the needs of dual language educators. This absence of targeted support has led to inconsistencies in program implementation across schools and places additional burden on individual educators and school leaders to interpret and apply dual language best practices independently.
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| **Improvement Area 2** |
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| **Criterion:** ELE 6 - Program Exit and Readiness |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documentation and data indicated that the district may exit some students from the ELE program before they meet the minimum exit criteria set by the Department. The district's current reclassification practices are not in compliance with 603 CMR 14.02 that requires districts to establish and implement exit criteria in accordance with the Department guidelines. Some students, particularly students at high school level, are placed in ESOL (ESL) classes as EL students even if their English language proficiency levels are 4 or 5 as measured with ACCESS for ELLs test. |

| **Improvement Area 3** |
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| **Criterion:** ELE 10 - Parental Notification |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documentation and student records indicated that the district does not send a notification to the parents of ELs to inform them of their rights to: (i) choose a language acquisition program among those offered by the school district under section 4; (ii) request a new language acquisition program under said section 4; or (iii) withdraw a student from a language acquisition program, nor initial and annual notification letters to inform them of their child's placement in an ELE program and other required information that needs to be communicated to parents annually. A review of documentation and student records also indicated that the district does not provide parents the Benchmark Guidelines, materials describing the benchmarks, and the English Learning Success Template (ELST) at the beginning of each school year or upon enrollment of the child in an ELE program as required by Chapter 71 A §11. The Department concludes that the district does not have clear written procedures for parental notification, including timelines, to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements. While the district submitted a template for the annual parent notification letter and the exit letter provided upon reclassification of students as former English learners, the absence of comprehensive written procedures including who is responsible, how and when the letters are distributed, and how documentation is maintained prevents the district from demonstrating consistent implementation and compliance with the requirements outlined in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as well as Chapter 71 A. |

| **Improvement Area 4** |
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| **Criterion:** ELE 14 - Licensure Requirements |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of the relevant SEI Endorsement data indicated that most core academic and career vocational technical teachers assigned to provide sheltered English instruction to ELs hold the SEI Teacher Endorsement, but some do not. Staff interviews also indicated that some teachers who provide content instruction in a language other than English in the district’s dual language programs do not hold the bilingual endorsement. Documentation, interviews, and a review of ELAR data indicated that not all staff teaching ESL hold a license or current waiver issued by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. |