

**Northampton-Smith Vocational Agricultural School District**

**Tiered Focused Monitoring Report**

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

**Tier Level** **2**

**Date of TFM Review:** **January 27, 2021**

**Date of Final Report:** **March 23, 2021**



Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

During the 2020-2021 school year, Northampton-Smith Vocational Agricultural School District participated in a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review conducted by the Department’s Office of Public School Monitoring. The purpose of the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review is to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on special education and civil rights.

School districts and charter schools are reviewed every three years through Tiered Focused Monitoring. This review process emphasizes elements most tied to student outcomes, and alternates the focus of each review on either Group A Universal Standards or Group B Universal Standards.

Group A Universal Standards address:

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

Group B Universal Standards address:

* Licensure and professional development
* Parent/student/community engagement
* Facilities and classroom observations
* Oversight
* Time and learning
* Equal access

In addition, the Department has reserved a specific set of criteria, collectively known as Targeted Standards, employed when LEA or school-level risk assessment data indicate that there is a potential issue. Identified Targeted Standards are assessed in addition to the Universal Standards.

Universal Standards and Targeted Standards are aligned with the following regulations:

Special Education (SE)

* selected requirements from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-2004); the federal regulations promulgated under that Act at 34 CFR Part 300; M.G.L. c. 71B, and the Massachusetts Board of Education’s Special Education regulations (603 CMR 28.00), as amended effective March 1, 2007.

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

* selected federal civil rights requirements, including requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, together with selected state requirements under M.G.L. c. 76, Section 5 as amended by Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011 and M.G.L. c. 269 §§ 17 through 19.
* selected requirements from the Massachusetts Board of Education’s Physical Restraint regulations (603 CMR 46.00).
* selected requirements from the Massachusetts Board of Education’s Student Learning Time regulations (603 CMR 27.00).
* various requirements under other federal and state laws.

Tiered Focused Monitoring allows for differentiated monitoring based on a district/charter school’s level of need, the Tiers are defined as follows:

LEAs in Tiers 1 and 2 have been determined to have no or low risk:

* Tier 1/Self-Directed Improvement: Data points indicate no concern on compliance and performance outcomes – meets requirements.
* Tier 2/Directed Improvement: No demonstrated risk in areas with close link to student

outcomes – low risk.

LEAs in Tiers 3 and 4 have demonstrated greater risk:

* Tier 3/Corrective Action: Areas of concern include both compliance and student

outcomes – moderate risk.

* Tier 4/Cross-unit Support and Corrective Action: Areas of concern have profound effect on student outcomes and ongoing compliance – high risk.

The phases of Tiered Focused Monitoring for the Northampton-Smith Vocational Agricultural School District included:

Self-Assessment Phase:

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

Verification Phase:

* Review of additional documents for special education or civil rights.
* Surveys of parents of students with disabilities: Parents of students with disabilities were sent a survey to solicit information regarding their experiences with the district’s implementation of special education programs, related services, and procedural requirements.
* Interviews of staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification.
* Interviews of parent advisory council (PAC) representatives and other telephone interviews, as requested by other parents or members of the general public.
* Review of classrooms and other facilities: The chairperson reviewed floor plans and interviewed staff to confirm the location of classrooms and school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements.

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

Following the interviews, the chairperson holds an informal exit meeting to summarize its comments for the superintendent or charter school leader. Within approximately 20 business days of the review, the chairperson forwards to the superintendent or charter school leader the findings from the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review. All districts/charter schools in Tiers 1 and 2, as part of the reporting process, then develop a Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan (CIMP) for any criteria receiving a rating of "Partially Implemented," "Not Implemented," and “Implementation in Progress.” The CIMP 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. Districts 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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| **Commendable** | Any requirement or aspect of a requirement implemented in an exemplary manner significantly beyond the requirements of law or regulation. |
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| **Implemented** | The requirement is substantially met in all important aspects. |
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| **Implementation in Progress** | This rating is used for criteria containing new or updated legal requirements 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. |

**Northampton-Smith Vocational Agricultural School District**

**SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT**

**RECEIVING A COMMENDABLE RATING**

**FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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| **Universal Standards**  **Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements** |
| CR 16 |

**CR 16** - [Notice to students 16 or over leaving school without a high school diploma, certificate of attainment, or certificate of completion](https://gateway.edu.state.ma.us/webmonitor/tierDeskrvwdtl.doe?sourcePge=DeskRvwSummary&criteriaId=2871&reviewYearId=1869&seltype=PCPR&rvSeltype=DCPR&dkId=79904&crType=CR)

Document review and interviews indicated that the school has made concerted efforts to decrease chronic absenteeism which can lead to credit loss, retention, and increased dropout rates. District administration has created practices that increase family outreach and support and provide opportunities for students who struggle with chronic absenteeism to re-engage with their education.

In reviewing prior attendance data during the interview process, chronic absenteeism (10% or more) was notable for students who are economically disadvantaged, English language learners, and students with disabilities. The principal shared that once students were identified as chronically absent, they did a comprehensive data review and worked with their School Adjustment and Guidance Department, student by student. After a closer look at how economically disadvantaged students and students of color were impacted by the previous policy, the school revised its attendance policy/practices. Notably, the introduction to the new policy states that the intention is to encourage regular student attendance through positive, rather than punitive, means.

As a result, the following interventions have been put in place:

-Development of credit recovery systems

-Development of attendance recovery systems

-Development of attendance plans

-Intake meetings for new and accepted students with a history of attendance issues

-Increased family communication and support

-Step-by-step school outreach plan around attendance in the Student Handbook

-Increased social emotional learning (SEL) to provide supports to students for re-engagement

-April Attendance Recovery Boot Camp (pending funding)

These efforts to address absenteeism have resulted in a decrease in the overall number of student drop outs from 9 students (1.8% drop out rate) in 2017-2018 to 3 students (0.6% drop out rate) in 2018-2019 (most recently reported DESE data).

**SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS**

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|  | **Universal Standards**  **Special Education** | **Universal Standards**  **Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements** |
| **IMPLEMENTED** | SE 15, SE 32 SE 35,  SE 36, SE 50, SE 51,  SE 52A, SE 54, SE 55, SE 56 | CR 3, CR 7, CR 7A, CR 7B, CR 7C, CR 8, CR 10A, CR 10B, CR 10C,  CR 12A, CR 17A, CR 20, CR 21,  CR 22, CR 23, CR 24, CR 25 |
| **PARTIALLY**  **IMPLEMENTED** | SE 52 |  |
| **NOT IMPLEMENTED** |  |  |

The review instruments, that include the regulatory requirements specific to the special education and civil rights criteria referenced in the table above, can be found at [www.doe.mass.edu/psm/resources/default.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/resources/default.html).

| **Improvement Area** **1** |
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| **Criterion:** SE 52 - Appropriate certifications/licenses or other credentials -- related service providers |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documents and staff interviews indicated that not all related service providers are appropriately certified, licensed, board registered or otherwise approved to provide such services by the relevant professional standards board or agency for the profession. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The related service provider identified in the review will be licensed before the end of the 2020-2021 school year. All related service providers will hold the required DESE license by the start of the 2021-2022 school year |
| **Action Plan:** The identified employee and superintendent have already completed a DESE "Verification of Initial-Extension Plan and School Based Employment" form. The employee is already enrolled and currently taking a course to finish the one credit needed for professional licensure. This should be completed by the May progress due date; however, another reporting date may be necessary due to processing time for issuing of the license. The director will check in with the employee each month until the requirements are completed and license attained. |
| **Success Metric:** By May 26, 2021, all requirements for professional licensure will be attained by the unlicensed employee.    By August 24, 2021, the identified staff will be licensed or will obtain a waiver from the Department for the 2021-2022 school year.  Evidence:  Appropriate teacher licensure or Approved license waiver |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** At least annually, the administrative assistant to the superintendent will review the licensure status of all employees and notify the assigned supervisor and building principal if there will be any issues within the year following the review. Any staff impacted will be put on notice by the principal. The superintendent will review this expectation and procedures with the administrative assistant and principal. The administrative assistant has already been trained on how to read DESE issued licenses and understands the timelines involved at each level of licensure. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 08/24/2021 |
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