

**Winchester Public Schools**

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING**

**REPORT**

**For** **Group A Universal Standards**

**Tier Level** **3**

**Dates of Onsite Visit:** **April 5-8, 2022**

**Date of Draft Report:** **June 3, 2022**

**Date of Final Report: August 22, 2022**

**Action Plan Due: September 20, 2022**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT**

**Winchester Public Schools**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TIERED FOCUS MONITORING REPORT**

During the 2021-2022 school year, Winchester Public Schools participated in a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review (TFM) conducted by the Department’s Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM). The purpose of the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review is to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on special education and civil rights.

Each school district, charter school, vocational school, and virtual school undergoes a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review every three years. The statewide Tiered Focused Monitoring cycle is posted at <<https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/6yrcycle.html>>.

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

Group A Universal Standards address:

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

Group B Universal Standards address:

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

The Department has also reserved a specific set of criteria, collectively known as Targeted Standards, employed if LEA or school level risk assessment data indicate there is a potential issue; the identified Targeted Standards are assessed in addition to the Universal Standards.

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

Special Education (SE)

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

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

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

**PSM Team:**

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

**Tier Level:**

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

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

For the 2021-2022 school year, the tier assignments are based on:

* Five-year cohort graduation rate for students with disabilities
* Public School Monitoring compliance data from the previous review
* Problem Resolution System data, specifically findings of noncompliance
* Special education State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Reports (SPP/APR) compliance Indicator data for Indicators 11, 12, and 13 (Group A only)
* Indicator 11: Child Find
* Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition
* Indicator 13: Secondary Transition
* Special education SPP/APR performance Indicator data for Indicators 5 & 6
* Indicator 5: Education Environments (6-21)
* Indicator 6: Preschool Environments
* Significant Disproportionality data 2019-2020 & 2020-2021

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

**Report for Tier 3 & 4 Tiered Focused Monitoring Reviews**

At the end of the onsite visit, the PSM team holds an informal exit meeting with the superintendent or charter school leader to summarize the review. Within approximately 45 business days of the onsite visit, the chairperson forwards a Draft Report containing comments from the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review to the superintendent or charter school leader. The Draft Report comments for special education and civil rights are provided to the district/school on-line through the Web-based Monitoring System (WBMS). Within 10 business days of receipt of the Draft Report, the district/charter school reviews and comments on the report for factual accuracy before the publication of a Final Report with ratings and findings (see below). The Tiered Focused Monitoring Final Report will be issued within approximately 60 business days of the conclusion of the onsite visit and posted on the Department’s website at

< <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/reports/>>.

**Ratings:** In the Tiered Focused Monitoring Final Report, the onsite team gives a rating for each compliance criterion it has reviewed; those ratings are “Commendable,” “Implemented,” “Implementation in Progress,” “Partially Implemented,” “Not Implemented,” and “Not Applicable.”

The onsite team includes a finding or description of the current issue in the Tiered Focused Monitoring Final Report for each criterion that it rates “Commendable,” “Partially Implemented,” “Not Implemented,” or “Implementation in Progress,” explaining the basis for the rating.

**Corrective Action:** Where criteria are found “Partially Implemented” or “Not Implemented,” the district or charter school must propose a corrective action plan (CAP) to bring those areas into compliance with the relevant statutes and regulations. The CAP is due to the Department within 20 business days after the issuance of the Final Report and is subject to the Department’s review and approval. Department staff provide support and assistance to districts and charter schools on the development of an approvable CAP.

Department staff also provide ongoing technical assistance as the school or district is implementing the approved CAP. **School districts and charter schools must demonstrate effective resolution of noncompliance identified by the Department as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from the issuance of the Department’s Final Tiered Focused Monitoring Report.**

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

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING FINAL REPORT**

**for** **Winchester Public Schools**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review in Winchester Public Schools during the week of April 4, 2022, to evaluate the implementation of Group A Universal Standards in the program areas of special education, civil rights, and other related general education requirements. The team appreciated the opportunity to interview staff and parents, to observe classroom facilities, and to review the programs underway in the district.

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

**Self-Assessment Phase:**

* District review of special education and civil rights documentation for required elements including document uploads.
* District review of a sample of special education student records selected across grade levels, disability categories, and levels of need.
* District review of student records related to the Indicator Data Collection for Indicators 11, 12, and 13.
* Upon completion of the self-assessment, the district submitted the data to the Department for review.

**On-site Phase:**

* Interviews of administrative, instructional, and support 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 additional documents for special education and civil rights.
* Surveys of parents of students in special education: Parents of students in special education were sent a survey that solicited information regarding their experiences with the district’s implementation of special education programs, related services, and procedural requirements.
* Review of student records for special education: The Department selected a sample of student records from those the district reviewed as part of its self-assessment, as well as records chosen by the Department from the special education student roster. The onsite team conducted this review, using standard Department procedures, to determine whether procedural and programmatic requirements have been met.
* Observations of classrooms and other facilities.

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| The Tiered Focused Monitoring Report includes those criteria that were found by the team to be implemented in a “Commendable” manner, as well as criteria receiving a rating of "Partially Implemented," "Not Implemented," and “Implementation in Progress.” (Refer to the “Definition of Compliance Ratings” section of the report.) The Tiered Focused Monitoring Reports do not include criteria receiving a rating of “Implemented” or “Not Applicable.” This will allow the district/school and the Department to focus their efforts on those areas requiring corrective action. Districts are expected to incorporate the corrective actions into their district and school improvement plans, including their professional development plans. |

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

**Winchester Public Schools**

# **SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Universal Standards Special Education** | **Universal Standards Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements** |
| **IMPLEMENTED** | SE 1, SE 2, SE 3A, SE 8, SE 9, SE 9A, SE 10, SE 11, SE 12,  SE 14, SE 17, SE 18A, SE 19, SE 20, SE 22, SE 25, SE 26,  SE 29, SE 34, SE 35, SE 37,  SE 38, SE 39, SE 40, SE 41,  SE 42, SE 43, SE 48, SE 49 | CR 13, CR 14, CR 18 |
| **PARTIALLY**  **IMPLEMENTED** | SE 3, SE 6, SE 7, SE 13 |  |
| **NOT**  **IMPLEMENTED** | None |  |
| **NOT**  **APPLICABLE** | None |  |

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

**SUMMARY OF INDICATOR DATA REVIEW**

As part of the self-assessment process for districts or charter schools undergoing a review for Group A Universal Standards, the PSM team reviewed the results of Indicator data submissions for Indicators 11, 12 and 13. The Indicator review is completed prior to the onsite visit and helps inform the scope of the onsite review. For any Indicator data noncompliance found, the district or charter school must develop and implement corrective action that includes correcting noncompliance for the individual students affected by it, addressing the root cause and underlying reasons for the identified noncompliance, and reviewing additional records as evidence that the issues have been corrected and that requirements are being met. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) requires correction of noncompliance within one year of the finding.

The results of the Department’s analysis regarding these Indicators are as follows:

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|  | **Compliant** | **Non-Compliant** | **Not Applicable** |
| **Indicator 11 – Initial**  **Evaluation Timelines** |  | X |  |
| **Indicator 12 – Early**  **Childhood Transition** |  | X |  |
| **Indicator 13 –**  **Secondary Transition** | X |  |  |

All corrective action for Indicator 11 and Indicator 12 was completed by the district and reviewed by the Department. No further action for Indicators 11 and 12 is required at this time.

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| |  | | --- | | **SPECIAL EDUCATION**  **LEGAL STANDARDS,**  **COMPLIANCE RATINGS AND**  **FINDINGS** | |

| **CRITERION**  **NUMBER** |  | | | |
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|  | **Legal Standard** | | | |
| **SE 3** | Special requirements for determination of specific learning disability  When a student suspected of having a specific learning disability is evaluated, the Team creates a written determination as to whether or not he or she has a specific learning disability, which is signed by all members of the Team, or if there is disagreement as to the determination, one or more Team members document their disagreement. | | | |
|  | State Requirements | | Federal Requirements | |
|  |  | | 34 CFR 300.8(c)(10); 300.311 | |
|  | **Rating:** | **Partially Implemented** | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records indicated that when a student suspected of having a specific learning disability is evaluated and a written determination as to whether or not the student has a specific learning disability is created, not all Team members consistently sign the form.* |

| **CRITERION**  **NUMBER** |  | | | |
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|  | **Legal Standard** | | | |
| **SE 6** | Determination of transition services   1. The Team discusses the student's transition needs annually, beginning no later than when the student is 14 years old, and documents its discussion on the Transition Planning Form. 2. The Team reviews the Transition Planning Form annually and updates information on the form and the IEP, as appropriate. 3. Reserved 4. The Team determines whether the student is likely to require continuing services from adult human service agencies. In such circumstances, the administrator of special education makes a referral to the Bureau of Transitional Planning in the Executive Office of Health and Human Services at least two years before the student's graduation or 22nd birthday, whichever occurs first, in accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71B, §§12A-12C (known as Chapter 688). 5. In cases where the IEP included needed transition services and a participating agency other than the school district fails to provide these services, the Team reconvenes to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives. 6. The district ensures that students are invited to and encouraged to attend part or all of Team meetings at which transition services are discussed or proposed. | | | |
|  | State Requirements | | Federal Requirements | |
|  | M.G.L.c.71B, Sections 12A-C  603 CMR 28.05(4)(c) | | 34 CFR 300.320(b); 300.321(b);  300.322(b)(2); 300.324(c) | |
|  | **Rating:** | **Partially Implemented** | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that although IEP Teams discuss the student's transition needs annually, beginning no later than when the student is 14 years old, the Team does not always update the student’s Transition Planning Form on an annual basis.* |

| **CRITERION**  **NUMBER** |  | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Legal Standard** | | | |
| **SE 7** | Transfer of parental rights at age of majority and student participation and consent at the age of majority   1. At least one year prior to the student reaching age 18, the district informs the student and the parent/guardian of the rights that will transfer from the parent/guardian to the student upon the student's 18th birthday. The notification provided to both the student and the parent/guardian must explicitly state that all rights accorded to parents under special education law will transfer to the 18 year old. 2. Upon reaching the age of 18, the school district implements procedures to obtain consent from the student with decision-making authority to continue the student's special education program. 3. The district continues to send the parent written notices and the parent will have the right to inspect the student's records, but the parent will no longer have decision-making authority, except as provided below:    1. If the parent has sought and received guardianship from a court of competent jurisdiction, then the parent retains full decision-making authority. The parent does not have authority to override any decision or lack of decision made by the student who has reached the age of majority unless the parent has sought or received guardianship or other legal authority from a court of competent jurisdiction.    2. The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to share decision-making with his or her parent (or other willing adult), including allowing the parent to co-sign the IEP. Such choice is made in the presence of the Team and is documented in written form. The student's choice prevails at any time that a disagreement occurs between the adult student and the parent or other adult with whom the student has shared decision-making.    3. The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to delegate continued decision-making to his or her parent, or other willing adult. Such choice is made in the presence of at least one representative of the school district and one other witness and is documented in written form and maintained in the student record. | | | |
|  | State Requirements | | Federal Requirements | |
|  | 603 CMR 28.07(5) | | 34 CFR 300. 320(c), 300.520 | |
|  | **Rating:** | **Partially Implemented** | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records indicated that the district does not consistently obtain consent from the adult student with shared or sole decision-making authority to continue her or his special education program.* |

| **CRITERION**  **NUMBER** |  | | | |
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|  | **Legal Standard** | | | |
| **SE 13** | Progress Reports and content   1. Parents receive reports on the student's progress toward reaching the goals set in the IEP at least as often as parents are informed of the progress of non-disabled students. 2. Progress report information sent to parents includes written information on the student's progress toward the annual goals in the IEP. 3. Where a student's eligibility terminates because the student has graduated from secondary school or exceeded the age of eligibility, the school district provides the student with a summary of his or her academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her postsecondary goals. | | | |
|  | State Requirements | | Federal Requirements | |
|  | 603 CMR 28.07(3) | | 34 CFR 300.305(e)(3); 300.320(a)(3) | |
|  | **Rating:** | **Partially Implemented** | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of student records indicated that progress reports do not consistently include written information on the student's progress toward the annual goals in the IEP.* |

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| This Tiered Focused Monitoring Final Report is also available at:  < <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/reports/>>.  Profile information supplied by each charter school and school district, including information for individual schools within districts, is available at  <<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>>. |

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| WBMS Final Report 08.22.22 | |
| File Name: | Winchester |
| Last Revised on: | **08.08.22** |
| Prepared by: |  |