

**Alma del Mar Charter School**

**Tiered Focused Monitoring Report**

**Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan**

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

**Tier Level** **1**

**Dates of Onsite Visit:** **January 12-14, 2022**

**Date of Final Report:** **April 07, 2022**



Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT**

**Alma del Mar Charter School**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

# **TIERED FOCUS MONITORING REPORT INTRODUCTION**

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

Each school district, charter school, vocational school, and virtual school undergoes a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review every three years. The statewide Tiered Focused Monitoring cycle is posted at <<https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/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 1 & 2 Tiered Focused Monitoring Reviews**

Following the onsite visit, the PSM team holds an informal exit meeting to summarize the review for the superintendent or charter school leader. Within approximately 20 business days of the onsite visit, the chairperson forwards the TFM Feedback Summary that includes findings from the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review to the superintendent or charter school leader.

As part of the reporting process, all districts/charter schools in Tiers 1 and 2, then develop a Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan (CIMP) for any criteria receiving a rating of "Partially Implemented," "Not Implemented," and “Implementation in Progress.” The CIMP is due to the Department within 20 business days after the issuance of the Feedback Summary and is subject to the Department’s review and approval.

The CIMP outlines an action plan, identifies the success metric, describes the measurement mechanism and provides a completion timeframe to bring those areas into compliance with the controlling statute or regulation. Department staff provide support and assistance to districts and charter schools on the development of a CIMP.

Once the CIMP is approved, it is issued as the Final Report.

Department staff also provide ongoing technical assistance as the school or district is implementing the approved CIMP or 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 Feedback Summary.**

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

# **TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING FINAL REPORT**

**Alma del Mar Charter School**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review at Alma del Mar Charter School during the week of January 10, 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 school's programs, together with information gathered by means of the following Department program review methods:

**Self-Assessment Phase:**

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

**On-site Verification Phase (dependent upon Group A or Group B Universal Standards):**

* Interviews of administrative staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification.
* Interview of a parent advisory council (PAC) representative.
* Review of additional documents for special education and civil rights.
* Surveys of parents of students in special education: Parents of students in special education were sent a survey that solicited information regarding their experiences with the school’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 school 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.

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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. |
| **Not Applicable** | The requirement does not apply to the school district or charter school. |

**Alma del Mar Charter School**

# **SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS**

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|  | **Universal Standards**  **Special Education** | **Universal Standards**  **Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements** | **Targeted Standards** |
| **IMPLEMENTED** | SE 1, SE 3, SE 3A, SE 6, SE 9A, SE 10, SE 11, SE 12, SE 13, SE 14, SE 18A, SE 19, SE 20, SE 22, SE 25, SE 26, SE 29, SE 34, SE 35, SE 40, SE 41, SE 43, SE 48, SE 49 | CR 13, CR 14, CR 18 | SE 44, SE 45, SE 46, SE 47 |
| **PARTIALLY**  **IMPLEMENTED** | SE 2, SE 8, SE 9 |  |  |
| **NOT**  **IMPLEMENTED** | None |  |  |
| **NOT**  **APPLICABLE** | SE 7, SE 17, SE 37, SE 38, SE 39, SE 42 |  |  |

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 |  |  |

| **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN** |
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| **Improvement Area** **1** |
| **Criterion:** SE 2 - Required and optional assessments |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that the charter school does not conduct all required assessments for initial and re-evaluations. Specifically, the school does not conduct an educational assessment completed by a school representative that includes a history of the student's educational progress in the general curriculum (Educational Assessment A) or an assessment completed by a teacher(s) with current knowledge of the student's specific abilities, attention skills, participation behaviors, communication skills, memory, and social skills (Educational Assessment B). |
| **LEA Outcome:** For all initial and re-evaluations, the charter school will always conduct all required assessments, including an Educational Assessment A and an Educational Assessment B. |
| **Action Plan:**  By June 3, 2022, the charter school will ensure that issues of noncompliance for the students identified by the Department are corrected. Specifically, the charter school will conduct Educational Assessments A and B and reconvene IEP Teams, as appropriate. Evidence will include the completed educational assessments, attendance sheets, and Notices of Proposed School District Action (N1).  By June 3, 2022, the charter school will submit updated evaluation procedures to ensure the completion of all required assessments. These will include a description of the internal monitoring system developed to track the completion of all assessments.  By September 9, 2022, the charter school will submit evidence that all relevant personnel have been trained on the updated evaluation procedures and internal monitoring system.  By December 7, 2022, the charter school will submit the results of a record review of 10 initial and re-evaluations to determine whether all the required assessments are completed. The school will conduct a root cause analysis for any identified noncompliance and implement appropriate corrective actions. |
| **Success Metric:** By December 2022 and beyond, all initial and re-evaluations will include the required assessments, including Educational Assessments A and B.  **Evidence:**  -Completed Educational Assessments A & B, signed attendance sheets, and N1 notices  -Revised procedures  -Description of internal monitoring system  -Training agendas, materials, and sign-in sheets  -Results of record review  -Root cause analysis and corrective actions, if necessary |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Continuing after the completion due date, the Dean of Scholar Support will implement the internal monitoring system to ensure all the required assessments, including Educational Assessments A and B, are completed for all initial and re-evaluations. Additionally, all relevant staff will be trained at least annually on required assessments. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 12/07/2022 |
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| **Improvement Area 2** |
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| **Criterion:** SE 8 - IEP Team composition and attendance |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that when a Team member does not attend the Team meeting, the charter school does not always follow the required procedures, including the following:   * Documenting, in writing, that the charter school and the parent agree the attendance of the Team member is not necessary because the member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed; or * Documenting, in writing, the charter school and the parent agree to excuse a required Team member's participation and the excused member provides written input into the development of the IEP to the parent and the IEP Team prior to the meeting. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The charter school will ensure that if a Team member is unable to attend a Team meeting, the school will implement all required procedures, including the following:   * Documenting, in writing, that the charter school and the parent agree the attendance of the Team member is not necessary because the member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed; or * Documenting, in writing, the charter school and the parent agree to excuse a required Team member's participation and the excused member provides written input into the development of the IEP to the parent and the IEP Team prior to the meeting. |
| **Action Plan:**  By June 3, 2022, the charter school will submit revised Team meeting attendance procedures and a description of an internal monitoring system to ensure implementation.  By September 9, 2022, the charter school will submit evidence that all relevant personnel have been trained on the required Team attendance procedures and internal monitoring system.  By December 7, 2022, the charter school will submit the results of a review of 10 records to determine whether the requirements of IEP Team meeting attendance are met. The school will conduct a root cause analysis for any identified noncompliance and implement appropriate corrective actions. |
| **Success Metric:** By December 2022 and beyond, any time a Team member is absent, the charter school will follow the appropriate excusal steps.  **Evidence:**  -Revised procedures  -Description of internal monitoring system  -Training agendas, materials, and sign-in sheets  -Results of record review  -Root cause analysis and corrective actions, if necessary |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Continuing after the completion due date, the Dean of Scholar Support will implement the internal monitoring system to ensure compliance with the regulations. Additionally, training will be provided to relevant staff at least annually on IEP Team meeting attendance; appropriate excusal of members who do not attend the meeting; and obtaining written input from required Team members prior to the Team meeting. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 12/07/2022 |
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| **Improvement Area 3** |
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| **Criterion:** SE 9 - Timeline for determination of eligibility |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of records indicated that within 45 school working days after receipt of the parent's written consent to an evaluation, the charter school does not always determine whether the student is eligible for special education, and, if eligible, develop and provide the parents with the proposed IEP and placement. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The charter school will ensure that within 45 school working days after receipt of the parent’s written consent to an evaluation, the school will determine whether a student is eligible for special education, and, if eligible, develop and provide the parents with the proposed IEP and placement. |
| **Action Plan:**  By June 3, 2022, the charter school will review and submit updated timeline procedures to ensure eligibility and IEP provision timelines are met. The school will also submit a description of an internal monitoring system to track timelines.  By September 9, 2022, the charter school will submit evidence that all relevant personnel have been trained on the eligibility determination timelines and the internal monitoring system.  By December 7, 2022, the charter school will submit the results of a record review of 10 evaluations to determine whether all timelines were met. The school will conduct a root cause analysis for any identified noncompliance and implement appropriate corrective actions. |
| **Success Metric:** By December 2022 and beyond, the charter school will always meet eligibility and IEP provision timelines.  **Evidence:**  -Revised procedures  -Description of internal monitoring system  -Training agendas, materials, and sign-in sheets  -Results of record review  -Root cause analysis and corrective actions, if necessary |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Continuing after the completion due date, the Dean of Scholar Support will implement the internal monitoring system to ensure that, within 45 school working days after receipt of the parent’s written consent to an evaluation, eligibility determination is completed and a proposed IEP and placement is provided if the student is found eligible. Additionally, all relevant staff will be trained at least annually on required timelines. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 12/07/2022 |
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