

**Dartmouth Public Schools**

**Tiered Focused Monitoring Report**

**Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan**

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

**Tier Level** **1**

**Date of Onsite Visit:** **March 27, 2023**

**Date of Final Report:** **June 22, 2023**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT**

**Dartmouth Public Schools**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

# **TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT INTRODUCTION**

During the 2022-2023 school year, Dartmouth 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/3yrcycle.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 September 20, 2022.

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

For the 2022-2023 school year, the tier assignments are based on:

* Annual drop-out rate for students with disabilities
* 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 SPP/APR compliance Indicator data for Indicators 4B, 9 & 10
	+ Indicator 4B: Significant discrepancy by race or ethnicity in removal of students with

 IEPs greater than 10 days

* + Indicator 9: Overall disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups identified

 as eligible for special education

* + Indicator 10: Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups within specific

 disability categories

* Special education SPP/APR performance Indicator data for Indicators 5 & 6
	+ Indicator 5: Education Environments (6-21)
	+ Indicator 6: Preschool Environments
* Significant Disproportionality data 2021-2022 & 2022-2023

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. **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**

**for Dartmouth Public Schools**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review at Dartmouth Public Schools during the week of March 27, 2023, 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 Verification Phase:**

* Interviews of administrative, instructional, and support 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 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 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.) Tiered Focused Monitoring Reports do not include criteria receiving a rating of “Implemented” or “Not Applicable.” This will allow the district 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. |

**Dartmouth 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 3, SE 3A, SE 6, SE 9, SE 9A, SE 10, SE 11, SE 12, SE 13, 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 39, SE 40, SE 41, SE 42, SE 43, SE 48, SE 49 | CR 13, CR 14 |
| **PARTIALLY****IMPLEMENTED** | SE 7, SE 8 | CR 18 |
| **NOT** **IMPLEMENTED** |  |  |
| **NOT** **APPLICABLE** | SE 38 |  |

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>>.

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# **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 district’s submissions for 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 |  |  |

The district submitted evidence of corrective action, including an additional data set, to address the non-compliance identified for Indicator 12. The submissions have been reviewed and approved by the Department; no further action is required.

| **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN** |
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| **Improvement Area** **1** |
| **Criterion:** SE 7 - Transfer of parental rights at age of majority and student participation and consent at the age of majority |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that although the district notifies 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 district does not always provide the notice at least one year prior to the student reaching age 18. |
| **LEA Outcome:** At least one year prior to the student reaching age 18, the district will always inform the student and parent/guardian of the rights that will transfer from the parent/guardian to the student upon the student's 18th birthday. |
| **Action Plan:** By July 28, 2023, the district will review the current procedures and make any necessary revisions. The updated procedures will also describe the district's internal monitoring system to ensure compliance. By October 06, 2023, the district will provide training to all relevant staff on the updated procedures and the internal monitoring system. By January 26, 2024, the district will submit the results of a review of 10 records of students who turned 17 during the school year to ensure the transfer of rights procedures are implemented. For any identified noncompliance, the district will submit a root cause analysis and a description of appropriate corrective actions. |
| **Success Metric:** By January 2024 and beyond, at least one year prior to a student reaching the age of 18, the district will always inform the student and parent/guardian of the rights that will transfer from the parent/guardian to the student upon the student's 18th birthday. Evidence: * Transfer of rights procedures
* Description of internal monitoring system
* Training agendas, materials, and attendance sheets
* Results of internal record review
* Root cause analysis and corrective actions, if necessary
 |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Continuing after the completion deadline, the Pupil Support Services Administrator will conduct annual training on the transfer of rights to all relevant staff. The Pupil Support Services Administrator will also implement the internal monitoring procedures to ensure that all students and parents/guardians are appropriately informed of the rights that will transfer from the parent/guardian to the student when the student reaches the age of majority. For any noncompliance identified, the district will conduct a root cause analysis and implement appropriate corrective action. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 01/26/2024 |
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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 the district does not always document in writing any agreement between the parent and the district to excuse the attendance of a Team member whose area of curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed at the Team meeting. A review of student records and staff interviews also indicated that when the Team determines a student is likely to require continuing services from adult human service agencies, the district makes a referral to the Bureau of Transitional Planning in the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, as appropriate. However, when one purpose of the Team meeting is to discuss transition services, with the consent of the parent(s) or student who has reached the age of majority, the district does not always invite a representative of the participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services for the referred student. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The district will always document in writing any agreement between the parent and the district to excuse the attendance of a Team member whose area of curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed at the Team meeting. The district will also ensure that, when one purpose of the Team meeting is to discuss transition services, with the consent of the parent(s) or student who has reached the age of majority, the district will always invite a representative of the participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services for any referred student. |
| **Action Plan:** By July 28, 2023, the district will submit revised Team meeting invitation and attendance procedures that include documentation requirements when IEP Team members do not attend the meeting. The updated procedures will also describe the district's internal monitoring system to ensure compliance. By October 6, 2023, the district will submit evidence that all relevant personnel have been trained on the required Team meeting invitation and attendance procedures and internal monitoring system. By January 26, 2024, the district will submit the results of a review of five records for which a Team member was unable to attend the IEP Team meeting and five records of students who have been referred to a public agency to ensure implementation of the updated procedures. For any identified noncompliance, the district will submit a root cause analysis and a description of appropriate corrective actions. |
| **Success Metric:** By January 2024 and beyond, whenever a Team member does not attend the Team meeting, the district will follow the appropriate excusal steps. The district will also ensure that all required Team members are invited to Team meetings, including representatives of public agencies, where applicable. Evidence: * Team meeting invitation and attendance procedures
* Description of internal monitoring system
* Training agendas, materials, and attendance sheets
* Results of internal record review
* Root cause analysis and corrective actions, if necessary
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| **Measurement Mechanism:** Continuing after the completion deadline, the Pupil Support Services Administrator will conduct annual training on the updated Team meeting invitation and attendance procedures to all relevant staff. The Pupil Support Services Administrator will also implement the internal monitoring procedures to ensure that all required Team members are invited and, when necessary, appropriate excusal steps are followed. For any noncompliance identified, the district will conduct a root cause analysis and implement appropriate corrective action. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 01/26/2024 |
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| **Improvement Area 3** |
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| **Criterion:** CR 18 - Responsibilities of the school principal |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documents and staff interviews indicated that the district updated the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan so that it addresses all requirements, including remedial instruction and direct and systematic instruction in reading. However, the updates have yet to be approved by district leadership and staff have not been trained on the revisions. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The district will ensure that the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) is approved by district leadership and will provide relevant staff with training on the DCAP at least annually. |
| **Action Plan:** While the current draft DCAP includes all requirements, the district plans to make further improvements prior to obtaining district leadership approval. By July 28, 2023, the district will complete the planned improvements and submit the final DCAP and evidence of district leadership approval. By October 06, 2023, the district will submit evidence that all relevant staff have been trained on the revised DCAP. |
| **Success Metric:** By October 2023 and beyond, the district’s DCAP will be approved by district leadership and all staff will receive DCAP training. Evidence: * Finalized DCAP
* Evidence of DCAP approval
* Training agendas, materials, and sign-in sheets
 |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Continuing after the completion due date, the district will review the DCAP on an annual basis and make any necessary updates. The district will also provide DCAP training to all relevant staff at least annually and conduct ongoing monitoring of implementation. For any noncompliance identified, the district will conduct a root cause analysis and implement appropriate corrective action, including additional training and coaching. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 10/06/2023 |
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