

**Methuen Public Schools**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION & CIVIL RIGHTS**

**MONITORING REPORT**

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

**Dates of Onsite Visit:** **March 26-28, 2024**

**Date of Draft Report:** **June 25, 2024**

**Date of Final Report: August 15, 2024**

**Action Plan Due: September 12, 2024**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Onsite Team Members:**

**Erin VandeVeer, Chairperson**

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Acting Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION & CIVIL RIGHTS MONITORING REPORT**

**Methuen Public Schools**

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**OFFICE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL MONITORING**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION & CIVIL RIGHTS MONITORING REPORT**

During the 2023-2024 school year, Methuen Public Schools participated in a Special Education & Civil Rights Monitoring Review (Monitoring Review) conducted by the Department’s Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM). The purpose of the Monitoring Review is to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on special education and civil rights.

**Components of the Monitoring Review**

Each school district, charter school, vocational school, and virtual school undergoes a Monitoring Review every three years. The statewide 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), 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq* and accompanying regulations at 34 CFR Part 300.
* Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71B, and the Massachusetts Special Education regulations (603 CMR 28.00).

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

* Specific 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 select state requirements under M.G.L. c. 76, § 5 and M.G.L. c. 269 §§ 17 through 19.
* Specific requirements from the Massachusetts Physical Restraint regulations (603 CMR 46.00).
* Specific requirements from the Massachusetts Student Learning Time regulations (603 CMR 27.00).
* Specific requirements from the Massachusetts Student Records regulations (603 CMR 23.00).
* Various requirements under other federal and state laws and regulations.

**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.

**Report for 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 45 business days, draft 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 comments, the district/charter school reviews and comments on factual accuracy before the publication of a final Monitoring Report with ratings and findings. The final Monitoring 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 final Monitoring 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 comment in the final Monitoring 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 Monitoring 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 Monitoring Report.**

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

**SPECIAL EDUCATION & CIVIL RIGHTS MONITORING REPORT**

**Methuen Public Schools**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a monitoring review in Methuen Public Schools during the week of March 25, 2024, to evaluate the implementation of Group B 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 records for students who were suspended.
* 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 to determine whether procedural discipline requirements were met for students with disabilities.
* Observations of classrooms and other facilities: The onsite team visited a sample of classrooms and other school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements.

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

**Methuen Public Schools**

**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 15, SE 32, SE 35, SE 36, SE 50, SE 51, SE 52, SE 52A, SE 54, SE 55, SE 56 | CR 3, CR 7, CR 7A, CR 7B, CR 8, CR 10A, CR 10B, CR 10C, CR 12A, CR 17A, CR 20, CR 21, CR 22, CR 23, CR 25 | SE 44, SE 45, SE 46, SE 47 |
| **PARTIALLY****IMPLEMENTED** |  | CR 16, CR 24 |  |
| **NOT** **IMPLEMENTED** |  | CR 7C |  |
| **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>>.

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| **CIVIL RIGHTS** **METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION (CR)** **AND** **OTHER RELATED GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS****LEGAL STANDARDS,** **COMPLIANCE RATINGS AND** **FINDINGS** |

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| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **CR 7C** | Early release of high school seniorsWhen the school district schedules the early release at the end of the year of the senior class of a high school, it does so in a way that conforms with Board of Education requirements under 603 CMR 27.05, ensuring that neither the conclusion of the seniors’ school year nor graduation is more than 12 school days before the regular scheduled closing date of that school. |
|  | M.G.L. c. 69, § 1G; 603 CMR 27.05 |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Not Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of the district's calendar and interviews indicated that the conclusion of the seniors' school year is more than 12 school days before the regularly scheduled closing date of the high school.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** |       |
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|  | **Legal Standard** |
| CR 16 | Notice to students 16 or over leaving school without a high school diploma, certificate of attainment, or certificate of completion1. No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered to have permanently left public school unless an administrator of the school where the student last attended has sent notice within five days from the student's tenth consecutive absence to the student and the parent/guardian of the student in English and the primary language of the parent or guardian (to the extent practicable). The notice shall offer at least two dates and times for an exit interview between the superintendent (or designee) and the student and the parent/guardian to occur prior to the student permanently leaving school. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and indicate that the parties shall agree to a date and time for the exit interview and that the interview shall occur within 10 days of the notice. The time and the date for the exit interview may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian but for no longer than 14 days. The superintendent or designee may proceed with the exit interview without a parent/guardian if the superintendent or designee makes a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian.
2. The exit interview shall be for the purpose of discussing the reasons for the student permanently leaving school and to consider alternative education programs and services available to the student. The superintendent (or designee) shall convene a team of school personnel, such as the principal, guidance counselor, teachers, attendance officer and other relevant school staff, to participate in the exit interview with the student and the parent/guardian. During the exit interview, the student shall be given information about the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school, the benefits of earning a high school diploma and a list of alternative education program and services available to the student.
3. Any district serving students in high school grades sends annual written notice to former students who have not yet earned their competency determination and who have not transferred to another school
	1. to inform them of the availability of publicly funded post-high school academic support programs and
	2. to encourage them to participate in those programs.

At a minimum, the district sends annual written notice by first class mail to the last known address of each such student who attended a high school in the district within the past two years.1. The Superintendent shall annually report to the Department the number of students sixteen years of age or older who have permanently left school, the reasons for such leaving and any alternative educational or other placement the student has taken.
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|  | M.G.L. c. 76, §§ 5, 18; St. 1965, c. 741 |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of documents and interviews indicated that the district does not send written notice annually, for at least two years, to former students who have not yet earned their competency determination and who have not transferred to another school to inform them of the availability of publicly funded post-high school academic support programs and to encourage them to participate in those programs.* |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** | CIVIL RIGHTS METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION (CR)**AND OTHER RELATED GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS****VIII. PROGRAM PLAN AND EVALUATION** |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **CR 24** | Curriculum reviewThe district ensures that individual teachers in the district review all educational materials for simplistic and demeaning generalizations, lacking intellectual merit, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin and sexual orientation. Appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials are used to provide balance and context for any such stereotypes depicted in such materials. |
|  | M.G.L. c. 76, § 5; 603 CMR 26.05(2) as amended by Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011 |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

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| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *A review of documents and interviews indicated that the district does not ensure that individual teachers review all educational materials for simplistic and demeaning generalizations, lacking intellectual merit, based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation. Furthermore, the district does not ensure that appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials are used to provide balance and context for any such stereotypes depicted in such materials.* |

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| This Special Education and Civil Rights 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 2024 |
| File Name: | Methuen Final Report |
| Last Revised on:  | August 13, 2024 |
| Prepared by: | AP/AM/EV |