

**The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION & CIVIL RIGHTS MONITORING**

**REPORT**

**Office of Public School Monitoring**

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

**Dates of Onsite Visit:** **April 2-3, 2024**

**Date of Draft Report:** **June 10, 2024**

**Date of Final Report: July 10, 2024**

**Action Plan Due: August 7, 2024**

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

**Michael McDonald, Chairperson**

**Charles Agong**



Russell D. Johnston

Acting Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION & CIVIL RIGHTS MONITORING REPORT**

**The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough**

[REPORT INTRODUCTION 3](#_Toc256000000)

[FINAL REPORT 5](#_Toc256000001)

[DEFINITION OF COMPLIANCE RATINGS 6](#_Toc256000002)

[SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS 7](#_Toc256000003)

[SUMMARY OF INDICATOR DATA REVIEW 8](#_Toc256000004)

[LEGAL STANDARDS, COMPLIANCE RATINGS AND FINDINGS: 9](#_Toc256000005)

[SPECIAL EDUCATION 9](#_Toc256000006)

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**OFFICE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL MONITORING**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION & CIVIL RIGHTS MONITORING REPORT**

During the 2023-2024 school year, The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough 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 on-line through the Web-based Monitoring System (WBMS). Within 10 business days of receipt of the draft comments, the district 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**

 **for The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a monitoring review in The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough during the week of April 1, 2024, 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 and instructional staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification.
* Interview of a parent advisory council (PAC) representative 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 time-out rooms.

|  |
| --- |
| 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. |

|  |
| --- |
| **DEFINITION OF COMPLIANCE RATINGS** |
|  |
| **Commendable** | Any requirement or aspect of a requirement implemented in an exemplary manner significantly beyond the requirements of law or regulation. |
|  |
| **Implemented** | The requirement is substantially met in all important aspects. |
|  |
| **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. |
|  |
| **Partially Implemented** | The requirement, in one or several important aspects, is not entirely met. |
|  |
| **Not Implemented** | The requirement is totally or substantially not met. |
|  |
| **Not Applicable**  | The requirement does not apply to the school district or charter school. |

**The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough**

**SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **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 7, SE 8, SE 9, SE 9A, SE 10, SE 11, SE 12, SE 13, SE 14, SE 17, SE 18A, 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 19 |  |
| **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:

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

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

 |

| **CRITERION****NUMBER** | SE 19: Extended Evaluation |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Legal Standard** |
| **SE 19** | Extended evaluationIf the Team finds the evaluation information insufficient to develop an IEP, the Team, with parental consent, may agree to an extended evaluation period.1. The extended evaluation period is not used to deny programs or services determined to be necessary by the Team. If, prior to the extended evaluation, the Team determines that sufficient information is available to determine, in part, necessary annual goals and services, the Team writes a partial IEP that, if accepted by the parent, is immediately implemented by the district while the extended evaluation is occurring.
2. The extended evaluation period is not used to allow additional time to complete the required assessments.
3. If the parent consents to an extended evaluation, the Team documents its findings and determines what evaluation time period is necessary and the types of information needed to develop an IEP. The Team may decide to meet at intervals during the extended evaluation, but in all cases reconvenes promptly to develop an IEP when the evaluation is complete.
4. The extended evaluation may extend longer than one week but does not exceed eight school weeks.
5. The extended evaluation is not considered a placement.
 |
|  | State Requirements | Federal Requirements |
|  | 603 CMR 28.05(2)(b) |  |
|  | **Rating:** |  **Partially Implemented**  | **District Response Required:** | **Yes** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:** |
| *Student record review and interviews indicated that the district does not consistently complete extended evaluations in eight weeks or less.* |

|  |
| --- |
| 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/>. |

|  |
| --- |
| WBMS Final Report  |
| File Name: | **The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough Final Report**  |
| Last Revised on:  | **07/10/2024** |
| Prepared by: | **ABK/MM/AP** |