



Chelmsford Public Schools

Tiered Focused Monitoring Report

Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan

**For Group A Universal Standards
Tier Level 1**

Dates of Onsite Visit: January 4 and 10-12, 2023

Date of Final Report: March 23, 2023

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT**

Chelmsford Public Schools

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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION TIERED FOCUSED MONITORING REPORT INTRODUCTION

During the 2022-2023 school year, Chelmsford 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.

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 Chelmsford Public Schools

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review in Chelmsford Public Schools during the week of January 2 and 9, 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 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 solicits 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.

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/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.

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.

Chelmsford Public Schools

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 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 38, SE 39, SE 40, SE 41, SE 42, SE 43, SE 48, SE 49	CR 13, CR 14, CR 18
PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	SE 8	
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 district's submissions for 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		

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN

Improvement Area 1
Criterion: SE 8 - IEP Team composition and attendance
Rating: Partially Implemented
<p>Description of Current Issue: A review of student records and interviews indicated that when a Team member does not attend the Team meeting, the district does not consistently follow the required procedures, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documenting, in writing, that the district and 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 district and 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.
<p>LEA Outcome: Chelmsford Public Schools will ensure that the Team chairperson or special education liaison (whomever is responsible for facilitating the meeting) document, in writing, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district 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 in the meeting; or • The district 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.
<p>Action Plan: By June 2, 2023, the district will develop procedures for excusing Team members from the Team meeting. In addition, the procedures will include an internal tracking and monitoring system to maintain compliance and ensure administrative oversight.</p> <p>By June 2, 2023, the district will provide training on the excusal procedures to Team chairpersons, special education liaisons, and other relevant staff.</p> <p>By November 3, 2023, the district will, subsequent to all corrective actions, conduct an internal review of a representative sample of student records for evidence of implementation of the district's excusal procedures. For any records that are non-compliant, the district will conduct a root cause analysis and implement appropriate corrective action to address the issue(s) based upon the analysis.</p>
<p>Success Metric: By November 2023 and beyond, district Team chairpersons and/or special education liaisons will follow the district's excusal procedures.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for excusing team members • Internal tracking and monitoring system • Training agendas and staff attendance sheets • Results of an internal record review, root cause analysis, and summary of corrective action, if applicable
<p>Measurement Mechanism: The Director of Student Services, the Assistant Director of Student Services, and/or Administrative Team Chairpersons will conduct a bi-annual review of student records</p>

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN

Improvement Area 1
in January and July to ensure future compliance. If there are instances of non-compliance, a root cause analysis will be conducted, and the district will take appropriate corrective action to address the issue(s).
Completion Timeframe: 11/03/2023