



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION

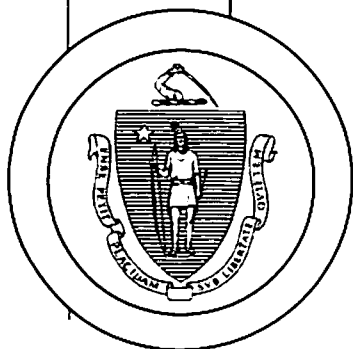
COORDINATED PROGRAM REVIEW

MID-CYCLE REPORT

District: Andover Public Schools

MCR Onsite Dates: 04/24/2017 - 04/25/2017

Program Area: Special Education



Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

**COORDINATED PROGRAM REVIEW
MID-CYCLE REPORT**

SE Criterion # 2 - Required and optional assessments

Rating:

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that assessments are consistently provided for all areas of suspected disability and document the history of the student's educational progress in general education. Additionally, assessments by teachers with current knowledge regarding the student's specific abilities related to the general curriculum, attention skills, participation behaviors, communication skills, memory, and social relations with peers and adults are consistently provided.

SE Criterion # 3A - Special requirements for students on the autism spectrum

Rating:

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that the Team consistently implements procedures to consider the following for students on the autism spectrum: 1) verbal and nonverbal communication needs; 2) social interaction skills and proficiencies; 3) unusual responses to sensory experiences; 4) resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines; 5) engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements; 6) positive behavioral interventions; and 7) other needs impacting progress in the general curriculum, including social and emotional development. Specifically, the district employs the use of a checklist for Teams to use when considering each area. Student needs are addressed in the IEP and the Notice of Proposed School District Action (N1).

SE Criterion # 4 - Reports of assessment results

Rating:

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated that assessment reports are consistently completed two days prior to the IEP Team meeting. Assessment reports consistently include the procedures employed, diagnostic impressions, the student's needs defined in common, educationally relevant terms and the explicit means of meeting those needs. An administrator interview also indicated that district school psychologists meet with administration on a regular basis to review assessment procedures and protocols to ensure adherence to evaluation procedures.

SE Criterion # 6 - Determination of transition services

Rating:

Partially Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated that the Transition Planning Form is consistently completed and revised annually.

A review of student records and staff interviews, however, indicated that students ages 14 and over are not always encouraged to attend all or part of IEP Team meetings. When not in attendance, the district does not always document whether other steps were taken to ensure that the student's preferences and interests were considered.

Department Order of Corrective Action:

Provide training to secondary level special education teachers and Team chairs to ensure that all students ages 14 and over are encouraged to attend part or all of Team meetings at which transition services are discussed or proposed. Training should also address instances when a student does not attend the IEP Team meeting and the district's responsibility to take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered, consistent with IDEA regulation 300.321(b)(2).

Develop an internal oversight and tracking system to ensure that all students ages 14 and over are encouraged to attend IEP Team meetings and, when students do not attend, the Team documents other steps taken to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered. The oversight system should include periodic reviews by an administrator to ensure ongoing compliance.

Subsequent to implementation of all corrective actions, conduct an internal review of records of students ages 14 and over who did not attend the IEP Team meeting to ensure that the Team: 1) encouraged the student to attend all or part of the meeting; and 2) documented other steps taken to ensure that the student's preferences and interests were considered.

***Please note when conducting internal monitoring the district must maintain the following documentation and make it available to the Department upon request: a) list of the student names and grade levels for the records reviewed; b) date of the review; and c) name of person(s) who conducted the review, their role(s), and signature(s).**

Required Elements of Progress Reports:

By November 3, 2017, submit evidence of staff training, including name of presenter, agenda, and signed attendance sheet with staff name, role and signature.

By November 3, 2017, submit a description of the district's internal oversight and tracking system.

By February 9, 2018, submit the results of an internal review of records and include the following: 1) the number of records reviewed; 2) the number of records in compliance; and 3) for any records not in compliance, determine the root cause for the noncompliance and any specific corrective actions taken to remedy each instance of noncompliance.

Progress Report Due Date(s):

11/03/2017	02/09/2018		
------------	------------	--	--

SE Criterion # 7 - Transfer of parental rights at age of majority and student participation and consent at the age of majority

Rating:
Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that the notice for the transfer of parent rights at the age of majority is provided to both the parent and student one year prior to the student reaching age 18. Records and staff interviews also indicated that consent from the student is obtained upon reaching the age of majority for continued implementation of the IEP. Staff interviews also indicated that several meetings or other relevant communications between the school, student, and family often take place before the student provides consent for continued implementation of the IEP.

SE Criterion # 8 - IEP Team composition and attendance

Rating:
Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated that required general education and special education teachers are consistently present for IEP Team meetings. A review of records also indicated that when Team members are not present, an excusal form is completed and the Team member provides written information prior to the meeting in lieu of meeting attendance. Staff interviews also indicated that staff are aware of the excusal process. At the high school level, it is standard practice for all of a student's general education teachers to be invited and present at Team meetings.

SE Criterion # 9 - Timeline for determination of eligibility and provision of documentation to parent

Rating:
Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated within 45 school working days after receipt of the parent's written consent, the district determines whether the student is eligible for special education and provides to the parent either a proposed IEP and proposed placement or a written explanation of the finding of no eligibility.

SE Criterion # 12 - Frequency of re-evaluation**Rating:**

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated that at the time a re-evaluation is due, and upon parental consent, the district completes all required assessments including assessments in all areas of suspected disabilities, as well as specific abilities in relation to learning standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum frameworks, the general education curriculum, attention skills, participation behaviors, communication skills, memory and social relations with groups, peers and adults. Additionally, the district documents the history of the student's educational progress in the general curriculum. The district uses a consent form that adheres to state mandated procedures and parents are no longer given an option on the consent form to seek an outside evaluation instead of an evaluation completed by the district.

SE Criterion # 13 - Progress Reports and content**Rating:**

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated that the district consistently provides progress reports at least as often as parents are informed of the progress of non-disabled students. Progress reports are completed for all IEP goals and specifically address progress towards each goal. Additionally, upon graduation or when a student exceeds the age of eligibility, the district provides a summary of student academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her post-secondary goals.

SE Criterion # 14 - Review and revision of IEPs**Rating:**

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated that Team meetings are consistently held at least annually, on or before the anniversary date of the IEP. When a Team meeting occurs beyond the one year timeline, the reason for delay, such as a parent's request to change the meeting date, is documented. Student records and staff interviews also indicated that amendments are no longer used to extend the anniversary date of an IEP. Student records and staff interviews confirmed that between annual IEP meetings the district and parent may agree to make changes to a student's IEP, documented in writing, without convening a meeting of the Team. Upon request, the parent is provided with a revised copy of the IEP with the amendments incorporated.

SE Criterion # 18A - IEP development and content

Rating:
Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that upon determining that a student is eligible for special education, the Team, including the parent(s), develops an IEP at the Team meeting using the current format provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Staff interviews indicated that the district ensures the IEP will not be changed outside of the Team meeting.

A review of student records also indicated that IEP Teams specifically address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing for students whose disability affects social skills development, when the student's disability makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing, and for students identified with a disability on the autism spectrum. These considerations are documented with individualized statements in the Additional Information section of the IEP. Additionally, the IEP Team identifies services and goals for students requiring specific skills and proficiencies.

SE Criterion # 18B - Determination of placement; provision of IEP to parent

Rating:
Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that IEP Teams develop the IEP prior to determining the appropriate placement to deliver the student's identified services and accommodations. Record review and staff interviews demonstrated that Teams consistently ensure that students are educated in the school she or he would attend if the student did not require special education, unless otherwise required by the IEP. Record review also indicated that placements are based on the IEP, including the types of related services, types of settings, types of service providers, and location where services are to be provided. A review of student records also indicated that immediately following the Team meeting, parents are provided with two complete copies of the IEP.

SE Criterion # 19 - Extended evaluation

Rating:
Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that the district no longer utilizes 45-day evaluations as an extended evaluation without initiating its own evaluation. Staff interviews indicated that extended evaluations may be employed after an evaluation is completed and reports indicate the need for further evaluation in a specific area of need.

SE Criterion # 20 - Least restrictive program selected

Rating:

Partially Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated that Nonparticipation Justification statements in the IEP are not always individualized. Review of records also indicated that the IEP Team does not consistently provide documentation of its consideration of potential harmful effects by removing a student from the general education classroom.

Department Order of Corrective Action:

Provide training to Team chairs, special education teachers, and special education administrators on selection of the least restrictive program for each student. Training shall include the development of individualized Nonparticipation Justification statements and consideration of potential harmful effects caused by removing a student from the general education classroom.

Develop an internal oversight and tracking system to ensure that Nonparticipation Justification statements indicate that the program selected is the least restrictive environment for students and that the statements give consideration to any potential harmful effects on the student who is removed from the general education classroom.

Subsequent to implementation of all corrective actions, conduct a review of records to ensure that IEPs include Nonparticipation Justification statements that give consideration to potential harmful effects for students removed from the general education classroom.

***Please note when conducting internal monitoring the district must maintain the following documentation and make it available to the Department upon request: a) list of the student names and grade levels for the records reviewed; b) date of the review; and c) name of person(s) who conducted the review, their role(s), and signature(s).**

Required Elements of Progress Reports:

By November 3, 2017, submit evidence of staff training, including name of presenter, agenda, and signed attendance sheet with staff name, role and signature.

By November 3, 2017, submit a description of the district's internal oversight and tracking system.

By February 9, 2018, submit the results of an internal review of records and include the following: 1) the number of records reviewed; 2) the number of records in compliance; and 3) for any records not in compliance, determine the root cause for the noncompliance and any specific corrective actions taken to remedy each instance of noncompliance.

Progress Report Due Date(s):

11/03/2017

02/09/2018

SE Criterion # 22 - IEP implementation and availability**Rating:**

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that all eligible students start the year with an IEP in effect. Staff interviews also indicated that there are multiple processes at the school level so that schedules are created before the start of the school year to ensure that all students receive services. The district has procedures that include specific steps that must be taken to implement the IEP when there is a lack of personnel.

SE Criterion # 24 - Notice to parent regarding proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the student or the provision of FAPE**Rating:**

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated that the Notice of Proposed School District Action (N1) consistently addresses the federally required questions such as: 1) rejected options considered and why each option was rejected; 2) evaluation procedures, test record or report used as a basis for the proposed action; and 3) other factors relevant to the school district's decision.

SE Criterion # 25 - Parental consent**Rating:**

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated that evaluations consented to by the parent are consistently completed. A review of records also indicated that in instances where parental consent for an IEP is not received in a timely manner, multiple attempts are made to secure consent. Specifically, records included copies of letters sent to parents when consent was not received in a timely manner.

SE Criterion # 26 - Parent participation in meetings**Rating:**

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated that parents consistently attend IEP meetings. Staff interviews also indicated that case managers and Team chairs document multiple attempts to secure alternative means for parents to participate in IEP meetings.

The district provided its special education student roster as requested by the Department.

SE Criterion # 29 - Communications are in English and primary language of home

Rating: Implemented
Basis for Findings: A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that documents are consistently translated for parents whose primary language is not English. Staff interviews indicated that the district has a system in place to secure interpreters when needed. An administrator interview also indicated practices are in place to ensure that interpreters are familiar with special education and provide accurate interpretation to families.

SE Criterion # 40 - Instructional grouping requirements for students aged five and older

Rating: Implemented
Basis for Findings: A review of documents and staff interviews indicated that instructional groupings for students on IEPs at Doherty Middle School who are outside of the general education classroom for 60% or less of their schedules do not exceed group size requirements.

SE Criterion # 41 - Age span requirements

Rating: Implemented
Basis for Findings: A review of documents and staff interviews indicated that age spans within instructional groupings do not exceed 48 months.

SE Criterion # 51 - Appropriate special education teacher licensure

Rating: Implemented
Basis for Findings: A review of documents indicated that all special education teachers in the district have current licensure.

SE Criterion # 54 - Professional development**Rating:**

Implemented

Basis for Findings:

A review of documents and staff interviews indicated that required training for all special education and general education staff include: 1) state and federal special education requirements; and 2) analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles and methods of collaboration. Specifically, teachers are provided with regular training on special education policies and procedures at the building level. Additionally, the district regularly provides training on topics including early literacy instructional supports, co-teaching, and universal design for learning. A review of documents also indicated that transportation providers receive all required training, including emergency procedures.

SE Criterion # 55 - Special education facilities and classrooms**Rating:**

Partially Implemented

Basis for Findings:

Observations at Andover High School indicated that speech and language instructional spaces only contain signage that indicates the room number, thus reducing stigmatization. Shawsheen Elementary School no longer uses a shared instructional space for speech and language services and English language instruction.

Observations, a review of documents and staff interviews, however, indicated that at West Elementary School, speech and language services and applied behavior analysis (ABA) services are provided simultaneously in the B pod hallway. These instructional spaces in the hallway are adjacent to several classrooms and only partitions separate the instructional groups. This creates auditory distractions and does not allow for confidentiality for speech and language services or ABA services.

Department Order of Corrective Action:

Relocate speech and language services and ABA services at West Elementary School from Hallway B to spaces that reduce auditory distractions and allow for confidentiality.

Required Elements of Progress Reports:

By November 3, 2017, submit evidence that West Elementary School's instructional spaces for speech and language as well as ABA services are provided in a location that reduces auditory distractions and allows for confidentiality. Include the location of the services as well as schedules. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will conduct an onsite observation to confirm the issue has been remedied.

Progress Report Due Date:

11/03/2017