



Arlington Public Schools

Tiered Focused Monitoring Report

**For Group B Universal Standards
Tier Level 2**

Dates of Onsite Visit: January 20 & 21, 2021

Date of Final Report: May 20, 2021



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Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

During the 2020-2021 school year, Arlington Public Schools participated in a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review conducted by the Department's Office of Public School Monitoring. The purpose of the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review is to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on special education and civil rights.

Districts and charter schools are reviewed every three years through Tiered Focused Monitoring. This review process emphasizes elements most tied to student outcomes, and alternates the focus of each review on either Group A Universal Standards or Group B Universal Standards.

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

In addition, the Department has reserved a specific set of criteria, collectively known as Targeted Standards, employed when LEA or school-level risk assessment data indicate that there is a potential issue. 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 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); and
- Various requirements under other federal and state laws.

Tiered Focused Monitoring allows for differentiated monitoring based on a district/charter school's level of need, the Tiers are defined as follows:

LEAs in Tiers 1 and 2 have been determined to have no or low risk:

- Tier 1/Self-Directed Improvement: Data points indicate no concern on compliance and performance outcomes – meets requirements.
- Tier 2/Directed Improvement: No demonstrated risk in areas with close link to student outcomes – low risk.

LEAs in Tiers 3 and 4 have demonstrated greater risk:

- Tier 3/Corrective Action: Areas of concern include both compliance and student outcomes – moderate risk.
- Tier 4/Cross-unit Support and Corrective Action: Areas of concern have profound effect on student outcomes and ongoing compliance – high risk.

The phases of Tiered Focused Monitoring for Arlington Public Schools included:

Self-Assessment Phase:

- The district reviewed special education and civil rights documentation for required elements including document uploads.
- Upon completion, the district's self-assessment was submitted to the Department for review.

On-site Verification Phase:

- Review of additional documents for special education and civil rights.
- Surveys of parents of students with disabilities: Parents of students with disabilities were sent a survey to solicit information regarding their experiences with the district's implementation of special education programs, related services, and procedural requirements.
- Interviews of 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.
- Observations of classrooms and other facilities: The onsite team visited a sample of classrooms and school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements.

Report: For Tier 1 & 2 Tiered Focused Monitoring Reviews

Following the onsite visit, the onsite team holds an informal exit meeting to summarize its comments for the superintendent or charter school leader. Within approximately 20 business days of the onsite visit, the onsite chairperson forwards to the superintendent or charter school leader the findings from the Tiered Focused Monitoring Review. All districts/charter schools in Tiers 1 and 2, as part of the reporting process, 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 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. Districts and charter schools are expected to incorporate the CIMP 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 and means that 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.

Arlington Public Schools

SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS

	Universal Standards Special Education	Universal Standards Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements
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 7C, CR 10B, CR 10C, CR 12A, CR 16, CR 20, CR 21, CR 22, CR 23, CR 24, CR 25
PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED		CR 10A, CR 17A
NOT IMPLEMENTED		
NOT APPLICABLE		

The review instruments, that include the regulatory requirements specific to the special education and civil rights criteria referenced in the table above, can be found at www.doe.mass.edu/psm/resources/default.html.

Improvement Area 1
Criterion: CR 10A - Student handbooks and codes of conduct
Rating: Partially Implemented
<p>Description of Current Issue: A review of documents indicated that the district's code of conduct procedures assuring due process in disciplinary proceedings do not contain all required components. Specifically, disciplinary procedures do not include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedures to ensure academic progress for students on short- or long-term suspension or emergency removal (School-wide Education Service Plan); - The right for students who are suspended long-term to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent; and - The principal's obligation to provide, in writing, the student's hearing rights and the parent's opportunity to participate in the hearing, prior to the student's short-term suspension.
<p>LEA Outcome: Arlington Public Schools will ensure the district's code of conduct procedures assuring due process in disciplinary proceedings contain all required components. Specifically, disciplinary procedures will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedures to ensure academic progress for students on short- or long-term suspension or emergency removal (School-wide Education Service Plan); - The right for students who are suspended long-term to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent; and - The principal's obligation to provide, in writing, the student's hearing rights and the parent's opportunity to participate in the hearing, prior to the student's short-term suspension.
<p>Action Plan:</p> <p>By June 25, 2021, Arlington Public Schools will submit its revised disciplinary procedures.</p> <p>By September 24, 2021, Arlington Public Schools will supply a link to its student handbooks on the district's website, along with page numbers aligning with the revised disciplinary procedures.</p> <p>By September 24, 2021, Arlington Public Schools will submit training materials and signed attendance sheets for building administrators on its revised discipline procedures.</p>
<p>Success Metric: By the start of the 2021-22 school year, Arlington Public Schools will have code of conduct procedures in place that provide due process in disciplinary proceedings.</p> <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Procedures ensuring academic progress for students on short- or long-term suspension or emergency removal (School-wide Education Service Plan); * Procedures stating the right for students who are suspended long-term to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent; * Procedures stating a principal's obligation to provide, in writing, the student's hearing rights and the parent's opportunity to participate in the hearing, prior to the student's short-term suspension; * Link to posted 2021-22 handbook with updated procedures; and * Signed training attendance sheet and materials.
<p>Measurement Mechanism: Continuing after the completion deadline: The district will annually review and update the student handbooks to ensure the district's code of conduct procedures provide due process in disciplinary proceedings.</p>
Completion Timeframe: 09/24/2021

Improvement Area 2

Criterion: CR 17A - Use of physical restraint on any student enrolled in a publicly-funded education program

Rating: Partially Implemented

Description of Current Issue: A review of documents and administrative interviews indicated that the following required restraint prevention and behavior support procedures are not made available in hard copy or on the district website for parents of enrolled students:

- Appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention;
- Descriptions and explanations of alternatives to physical restraint, as well as the district's method of physical restraint for use in emergency situations;
- Descriptions of the district's training and procedures to comply with reporting requirements, including, but not limited to, making reasonable efforts to orally notify a parent of the use of restraint within 24 hours of the event;
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints; and
- A process for obtaining principal approval for a time out exceeding 30 minutes.

LEA Outcome: Arlington Public Schools will ensure that restraint prevention and behavior support procedures are available in hard copy or on the district website for parents of enrolled students and encompass the following elements:

- Appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention;
- Descriptions and explanations of alternatives to physical restraint, as well as the district's method of physical restraint for use in emergency situations;
- Descriptions of the district's training and procedures to comply with reporting requirements, including, but not limited to, making reasonable efforts to orally notify a parent of the use of restraint within 24 hours of the event;
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints; and
- A process for obtaining principal approval for a time out exceeding 30 minutes.

Action Plan:

By June 25, 2021, Arlington Public Schools will submit its restraint prevention and behavior support procedures.

By June 25, 2021, Arlington Public Schools will submit its plans for disseminating/sharing restraint prevention and behavior support procedures.

By September 24, 2021, Arlington Public Schools will supply a link to its student handbooks on the district's website, along with page numbers aligning with the restraint prevention and behavior support procedures.

By September 24, 2021, Arlington Public Schools will supply a link to its restraint prevention and behavior support procedures on the district's website, separate from the student handbooks.

Success Metric: By the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, parents of enrolled students will have access to the district's updated restraint prevention and behavioral support procedures.

Evidence:

- * Restraint prevention and behavior support procedures;
- * Plan for sharing restraint prevention and behavior support procedures with parents; and
- * Website links to posted restraint prevention and support procedures.

Improvement Area 1

Measurement Mechanism: Continuing after the completion deadline: The district will annually review parental access to restraint prevention and behavioral support procedures.

Completion Timeframe: 09/24/2021