

**Stoneham Public Schools**

**Tiered Focused Monitoring Report**

**Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan**

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

**Tier Level** **1**

**Dates of Onsite Visit:** **February 8-9, 2021**

**Date of Final Report:** **May 28, 2021**



Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

During the 2020-2021 school year, Stoneham 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/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).
* 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 Stoneham Public Schools included:

Self-Assessment Phase:

* The district reviewed special education and civil rights documentation for required elements including document uploads.
* Upon completion of these two internal reviews, 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. |

**Stoneham 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 8, CR 10B,  CR 12A, CR 16, CR 17A, CR 20, CR 21, CR 22,  CR 23, CR 24 |
| **PARTIALLY**  **IMPLEMENTED** |  | CR 10A, CR 10C, CR 25 |
| **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](http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/resources/default.html).

| **Improvement Area** **1** |
| --- |
| **Criterion:** CR 10A - Student handbooks and codes of conduct |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
|  |
| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documents and administrative interviews indicated that the district's student handbook does not include the following:  - The protected categories of national origin and gender identity in its nondiscrimination statements;  - Procedural requirements applied to students not yet determined to be eligible for special education, including procedures to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility;  - Procedures for investigation of harassment and discrimination and the disciplinary measures that may be imposed; and  - A description and statement prohibiting cyberbullying in the section of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.  Document review and administrative interviews also indicated that the 2020-21 school year handbook has not yet been published and distributed to students, parents, and school personnel. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The Stoneham Public Schools will ensure that the student handbook is published and distributed to students, parents and school personnel in both hard copy and online. The revised handbook will include the following:  - The protected categories of national origin and gender identity in its nondiscrimination statements;  - Procedural requirements applied to students not yet determined to be eligible for special education, including procedures to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility;  - Procedures for investigation of harassment and discrimination and the disciplinary measures that may be imposed; and  - A description and statement prohibiting cyberbullying in the section of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. |
| **Action Plan:** Stoneham Public Schools will revise the student handbook by adding the protected categories of national origin and gender identity to the nondiscrimination statements; the procedural requirements applied to students not yet determined to be eligible for special education, including procedures to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility; procedures to investigate harassment and discrimination and the disciplinary measures that may be imposed; and a description and statement prohibiting cyberbullying in the handbook section on Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Specific reference to the updated language and revisions will be included in the annual mandatory trainings required for all faculty and staff.  By July 12, 2021, Stoneham Public Schools will submit the revised handbook, along with a description of the process to obtain school committee approval as required, disseminate the updated language and revisions to staff, and post the handbooks online.  By September 10, 2021, Stoneham Public Schools will submit a link to the revised handbook online. Hard copy of the handbooks will be available as needed. |
| **Success Metric:** Stoneham Public Schools will post and make available the revised nondiscrimination statement, revised procedures for students not yet determined eligible, revised procedures for harassment and discrimination and the revised procedures prohibiting cyberbullying. The handbook will also be translated for those students/families, as needed. Specific reference to the updated language and revisions will be included in the annual mandatory trainings required for all faculty and staff.  Evidence:  \*Links to updated student handbook posted on the website containing the nondiscrimination statement with national origin and gender identity added; the procedural requirements applied to students not yet determined to be eligible for special education, including procedures to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility; procedures to investigate harassment and discrimination and the disciplinary measures that may be imposed; and a description and statement prohibiting cyberbullying in the handbook section on Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan  \*Staff training agenda/memorandum to all staff |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Continuing after the completion deadline:  Stoneham Public School's student handbook will be reviewed annually to ensure full compliance for public release and posting no later than September 7th of each school year. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 09/10/2021 |
|  |

| **Improvement Area 2** |
| --- |
| **Criterion:** CR 10C - Student Discipline |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
|  |
| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documents and administrative interviews indicated that the assistant superintendent conducts an annual review of suspension data for evidence of potential bias against special populations. However, document review and interviews indicated that principals do not periodically review suspension data for the following purposes:  - To assess what the data reveals about the extent of the use of suspension in their schools;  - To determine the impact that disciplinary practices have on the removal and exclusion of selected student sub-groups; and  - To consider and implement adjustments to practice as necessary and appropriate to address over-reliance on suspensions and expulsions and the impact on one or more student sub-groups compared with others. |
| **LEA Outcome:** Stoneham Public Schools will ensure its system for periodic review of discipline data by principals will assess the extent of the use of suspension, determine its impact on the removal and exclusion of selected student sub-groups, and make adjustments as necessary to address over-reliance on suspensions and expulsions. |
| **Action Plan:** Stoneham Public Schools will assess current practices by principals and designated building administrators to review discipline data by student sub-groups. Principals at each level will gather discipline data for the purpose of identifying disproportionate use of discipline related to any sub-group, assess what the data reveal about the extent and use of suspension in their school, and determine the impact that disciplinary practices have on the removal and exclusion of selected student sub-groups. Appropriate adjustments and alternate supports and services will be identified and implemented to ensure equity for all students.  By July 12, 2021, Stoneham Public Schools will submit a description of its system for periodic review of discipline data by principals, including timelines, specific sub-groups, and the data platform for disaggregating data.  By January 7, 2022, Stoneham Public Schools will submit examples of discipline data analyzed by sub-group, along with a narrative and action plan, as needed. |
| **Success Metric:** Stoneham Public Schools will maintain monthly reports of each school's student discipline data with summarized trend and/or pattern analysis by student sub-group to determine if any group is disproportionately impacted by suspension or exclusion. Stoneham Public Schools will make appropriate adjustments and create alternate supports and services to address possible over-reliance on suspensions and expulsions.  Evidence:  \* Description of school-level system for periodic review of discipline data  \* Agendas from administrative meeting  \* Sub-groups for data tracking  \* Summaries and analysis of discipline data  \* Any adjustments to practice addressing over-reliance on suspensions and expulsions and the impact on one or more student sub-groups compared with others |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Continuing after the completion deadline:  Principals, along with designated building team members, will meet monthly to review discipline data to assess the extent of the school's use of suspension, determine its impact on the removal and exclusion of selected student sub-groups, and make adjustments as necessary to address over-reliance on suspensions and expulsions. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 01/07/2022 |
|  |

| **Improvement Area 3** |
| --- |
| **Criterion:** CR 25 - Institutional self-evaluation |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
|  |
| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of documents and administrative interviews indicated that although the district has a method to assess whether civil rights policies are implemented, the district does not evaluate all aspects of its K-12 program annually to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities. |
| **LEA Outcome:** The Stoneham Public Schools will evaluate its K-12 academic, athletic, and extracurricular programs annually to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs. |
| **Action Plan:** By September 10, 2021, Stoneham Public Schools will submit its annual self-evaluation and review process, including data collection protocols and documents for review; instruments (surveys, focus groups, equity walks) to collect student, parent, staff and administrator input; and the estimated annual timeline for collecting, reviewing and analyzing the results.  By January 7, 2022, Stoneham Public Schools will submit a summary of its results, along with an action plan to address any inequities and barriers within policies and procedures that limit student access and participation identified during the process. |
| **Success Metric:** Stoneham Public Schools will annually evaluate its K-12 academic, athletic, and extracurricular programs to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs.  Evidence:  \*Internal and external stakeholder group membership by name, role and school, along with proposed meeting dates  \*Description of the annual review process, including data collection protocols, instruments to be used, timeline for annual implementation, completion timeline, and posting and disseminating results  \*Summary of results and action plan |
| **Measurement Mechanism:** Continuing after the completion deadline:  Each fall, Stoneham Public Schools will examine its annual institutional self-review process and revise as needed. No later than spring of each year, the district will implement the selected review instruments, analyze the data collected, and develop an action plan to address any inequities found. By the end of each school year, the results of the institutional review will be posted on the district's website with recommended actions to address any inequities found based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status. |
| **Completion Timeframe:** 01/07/2022 |
|  |