

**Amherst -Pelham Regional Public Schools**

**Targeted and Focused Monitoring Report**

**Onsite Dates:** **October 28, 2024 - November 1, 2024**

**Date of Final Report:** **01/28/2025**



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Acting Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

During the 2024-2025 school year, Amherst -Pelham Regional Public Schools participated in a Targeted and Focused Monitoring Review conducted by the Department’s Office of Language Acquisition (OLA). The purpose of the Targeted and Focused Monitoring Review is to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on English Learner Education.

District/charter schools are reviewed every six years through Targeted and Focused Monitoring. There are 12 ELE criteria that target implementation of the requirements related to ELE programs under state and federal law and regulations:

ELE 1: Annual English Language Proficiency Assessment

ELE 2: State Accountability Assessment

ELE 3: Initial Identification of ELs and FELs

ELE 5: ELE Program and Services

ELE 6: Program Exit and Readiness

ELE 7: Parent Involvement

ELE 8: Declining Entry to a Program

ELE 10: Parental Notification

ELE 13: Fallow-up Support

ELE 14: Licensure Requirements

ELE 15: Professional Development Requirements

ELE 18: Records of ELs

The monitoring process differs depending on the thorough data analysis the Department conducts.

The review process includes the following:

1. Self-Assessment

* District reviews English Learner Education documentation for required elements including document uploads.
* District reviews a sample of English learner (EL) student records selected across grade levels and EL focus areas such as opt-out students, former ELs and students and/or parents who need translation and/or interpretation.
* Upon completion of these two internal reviews, the district’s self-assessment is submitted to the Department for review.

1. Verification

* Review of EL student records: The Department may select a sample of student records and request certain documentation to be uploaded to the WBMS as evidence of implementation of the ELE criteria.
* Review of additional documents for English Learner Education
* Surveys of parents of ELs: Parents of ELs are sent a survey that solicits information regarding their experiences with the district’s implementation of English Learner Education program(s), related services, and procedural requirements.
* Interviews of staff
* Classroom observations as applicable
* Parent and student focus groups as applicable

**Report:**

Within approximately 20 business days of the onsite visit, the onsite chairperson will forward to the superintendent or charter school leader the findings from the Targeted and Focused Monitoring Review. Within 10 business days of receipt of the findings, the district reviews and comments on the findings for factual accuracy before they are finalized. After the report is finalized, districts 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. District 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**

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| **Implemented** | The requirement is substantially met in all important aspects. |
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| **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. |
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| **Partially Implemented** | The requirement, in one or several important aspects, is not entirely met. |
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| **Not Implemented** | The requirement is totally or substantially not met. |
| **Not Applicable** | The requirement does not apply to the school district or charter school. |

For more information on the Targeted and Focused Monitoring approach, please visit the Department’s [website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/cpr/default.html).

Amherst -Pelham Regional Public Schools

**SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS**

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|  | **English Learner Education Requirements** |
| **IMPLEMENTED** | ELE 2, ELE 7, ELE 10, ELE 13, ELE 15, ELE 18 |
| **PARTIALLY**  **IMPLEMENTED** | ELE 1, ELE 3, ELE 5, ELE 6, ELE 8, ELE 14 |

| **Improvement Area** **1** |
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| **Criterion:** ELE 1 - Annual English Language Proficiency Assessment |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of ACCESS participation rates and accommodations for the 2024 testing cycle revealed that fewer than 95% of English learners in the district participated in the assessment, and not all students with disabilities received the accommodations required under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71A, § 7, and federal guidelines. These laws mandate annual assessment of all ELs and appropriate accommodations as outlined in their IEPs or 504 Plans. |

| **Improvement Area 2** |
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| **Criterion:** ELE 3 - Initial Identification of ELs and FELs |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of student records and staff interviews revealed that the district does not always adhere to state-mandated cut scores on the WIDA Screener when determining placement in English learner programs. Placement decisions are sometimes influenced by factors such as conversations with the special education team rather than using the required assessment criteria. This practice does not comply with 603 CMR 14.02(1), which mandates that districts use Department-specified assessments and procedures to ensure valid and reliable identification of English learners. |

| **Improvement Area 3** |
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| **Criterion:** ELE 5 - Program Placement and Structure |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** The Department conducted a TFM review to evaluate the effectiveness of programs serving English learners as required by G.L. c. 71A, § 7A and identified the following compliance issues for this criterion:   * A review of documentation and staff interviews found that teachers in SEI courses sometimes rely on staff members to interpret content instead of sheltering the content to make it accessible for English learners. While leveraging native language and supporting translanguaging in moderation are important strategies, relying on direct translation too much at the expense of incorporating sheltering strategies does not promote the rapid learning of English nor grade level understanding of the content areas in SEI classes. * The district does not provide structured support for SEI instruction, such as systematic co-planning time or clear expectations for SEI strategies and language objectives from evaluators. These practices do not align with the requirements of G.L. c. 71A,§7, which mandates that SEI programs deliver content instruction that is comprehensible and supports English language development. * Staff interviews indicated that the district does not have a consistent, standards-aligned ESL curriculum in its SEI and Dual Language programs. In both programs, push-in ESL teachers focus on content support rather than delivering explicit ESL instruction, and ESL teachers providing ESL to students the Dual Language program are not consistently implementing an ESL curriculum. These practices do not meet the requirement for explicit ESL instruction aligned with state standards, limiting ELs' ability to develop English proficiency and succeed in the general curriculum. * Not all ELs, including those with disabilities, are receiving ESL services required by G.L. c. 71A. * Staff interviews revealed that the district does not have procedures to incorporate parent input into benchmark setting for ELs not making adequate progress in English proficiency as required by G.L. c. 71A, § 11. |

| **Improvement Area 4** |
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| **Criterion:** ELE 6 - Program Exit and Readiness |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of district practices revealed that students are sometimes exited from the English Learner (EL) program based on teacher input rather than ACCESS scores. The district's current reclassification procedures and practices are not in compliance with 603 CMR 14.02 that requires districts to establish exit criteria in accordance with the Department guidelines. |

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| **Improvement Area 5** |
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| **Criterion:** ELE 8 - Declining Entry to a Program |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** A review of the district documentation and staff interviews indicated that the written confirmation of the withdrawal (opt-out request) is not always provided annually to the school by the parent or legal guardian and such confirmation is not retained in the student's cumulative folder as required by G.L. c. 71A §12. |

| **Improvement Area 6** |
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| **Criterion:** ELE 14 - Licensure Requirements |
| **Rating:** Partially Implemented |
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| **Description of Current Issue:** Staff interviews and the relevant SEI Endorsement data indicated that most core academic teachers assigned to provide sheltered English instruction to English learners hold the SEI Teacher Endorsement, but some do not. |