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| **Area** | **MASSACHUSETTS’ Higher Standard or Different Standard (and reference information)** |
| Personnel | Specific personnel requirement for an Administrator of Special Education for districts depending on student enrollment numbers. 603 CMR 28.03(2). |
| Assessment | Massachusetts requires additional information related to the educational assessment required when an initial evaluation is conducted. 603 CMR 28.04. Massachusetts requires specific assessment considerations for autism. M.G.L. c.71B, § 3. Massachusetts requires assessment of each student's reading and progress in literacy skills at least twice per year from kindergarten through at least third grade. 603 CMR 28.03(1)(f). |
| Eligibility | Students may be found eligible if they are disabled and need a related service to access the general curriculum although they do not need specially designed instruction. 603 CMR 28.02(9). |
| Unscheduled Evaluations | If a student is likely to remain at home, in a hospital, or in a pediatric nursing home for more than 60 school days, the Administrator of Special Education is directed to convene a Team to consider evaluation needs or if it is necessary to amend the student’s IEP. 603 CMR 28.04(4). |
| Extended Evaluation | The parent may agree to an extended evaluation if the Team finds the evaluation insufficient to fully develop an IEP. 603 CMR 28.05(2)(b). |
| IEP Development | Massachusetts continues use of objectives or benchmarks in IEP development Policy. Massachusetts requires including skills and proficiencies in the IEPs of students with disabilities on the autism spectrum, or when a student’s disability affects social skills development or makes him or her vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing. M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010. |
| Consent | Massachusetts requires consent for all evaluations or reevaluations, all IEPs, and all placements. 603 CMR 28.07(1). Students over 18 may delegate authority to the parent or choose to share decision-making with the parent for special education. 603 CMR 28.07(5). |
| Timelines | Massachusetts requires an evaluation and convening a Team meeting within 45 school days after consent to evaluate, with an additional 15 days if placement is initial placement to an out-of-district setting. 603 CMR 28.05(1) & 28.06(2)(e). Massachusetts allows a district to convene a placement meeting 15 days later than the IEP development meeting if considering an initial placement to a day or residential program. 603 CMR 28.06(2)(e). |
| Independent Educational Evaluation | Massachusetts has additional requirements relating to a sliding fee scale allowing a district to seek voluntary financial information from families for cost-sharing or full payment for an IEE. 603 CMR 28.04(5). |
| Parentally-placed private school students | Right to IEP and generally comparable program, full access to procedural safeguards for Massachusetts residents. 603 CMR 28.03(1)(e).State complaint [protocols](http://www.doe.mass.edu/prs/guide/) permit a private school official to file a complaint alleging that the public school district did not comply with child find requirements to identify parentally-placed private school students attending a private school in the district who are eligible for equitable services. |
| FAPE | Massachusetts also offers a right to educational tutoring or other supportive services to maintain educational progress for all students at home or in hospital for medical reasons for over 14 days in a school year. 603 CMR 28.03(3)(c). |
| School District Responsibility | Massachusetts has extensive regulations regarding assignment of school district programmatic and fiscal responsibility. 603 CMR 28.10. |
| Parent Participation | Massachusetts has an additional requirement for local parent advisory councils for special education in each school district. 603 CMR 28.07(4).Massachusetts requires local districts to conduct an annual workshop for parents on the rights of students and their parents/guardians under state and federal special education laws. 603 CMR 28.03(1)(a)(4).Massachusetts explicitly provides for reimbursement to parents who transport their own children when such children require special transportation. 603 CMR 28.07(6).Massachusetts provides protections for a parent or designee to observe a child in his or her program or a proposed program. M.G.L. c. 71B § 3. |
| Placement | Massachusetts requires a contract between a public school district and a private school when an eligible student is placed in a private school. 603 CMR 28.06(3)Massachusetts specifies instructional group sizes for eligible students receiving special education services in groups solely for students with disabilities. 603 CMR 28.06(6).Massachusetts has additional requirements about transportation and the information and training received by transportation providers in relation to the needs of the students they are transporting. 603 CMR 28.06(8).Massachusetts requires that when making placement today or residential schools, the school district must give preference to approved, in-state programs and must meet additional requirements if using an unapproved program. 603 CMR 28.06(3)(d) & (e). |
| Approval of Private Special Education Schools | Massachusetts explicitly requires that private schools serving publicly funded students with disabilities meet state standards for approval before public funds may be used to pay tuition in such settings. 603 CMR 28.09 |
| Related laws | Massachusetts has laws regulating charter schools, vocational schools, Metco schools, school choice, and virtual schools, each of which may affect funding or responsibilities associated with students with disabilities. M.G.L. c. 71, §89; c. 74; c. 76, §12A; c. 76, §12B; c. 71, § 94 respectively. |
| Transition to Adult Life | Massachusetts requires that a referral be made to the Executive Office of Health and Human services when a student who is likely to require continuing services from adult human service agencies approaches graduation or the age of twenty-two, whichever comes first. M.G.L. c. 71B, §12A and 603 CMR 28.05(4)(c). Massachusetts requires transition planning at age 14. M.G.L. c.71B, § 2. |
| Facilities | Massachusetts requires that resource rooms and separate classrooms for students with disabilities is given the same priority as general education programs, with specific requirements related to comparable facilities and classrooms, including requirements on location, signage, and response to financial or construction considerations. 603 CMR 28.03(1)(b). |
| Responsibilities of the School Principal | Massachusetts requires that the district develop and the principal implement a curriculum accommodation plan to ensure that efforts have been made or will be made to meet the needs of diverse student learners in the general education program. 603 CMR 28.03(3)(a). |
| Institutional Settings | Massachusetts provides funding to the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide services to students with disabilities in state institutional settings run by Department of Youth Services, Department of Mental Health, County Houses of Corrections, and Department of Public Health. The state provides special education services according to the students’ IEPs and to the level of the appropriation. School districts retain responsibility for these students and work cooperatively with MA DESE. 603 CMR 28.06(9) |
| Special Education Surrogate Parents | Massachusetts requires districts to assist in identification of persons willing to serve as special education surrogate parent upon request. 603 CMR 28.07(7). |
| Insurance | Massachusetts has a law that enables families with certain insurance plans to obtain additional services for children with autism spectrum disorders. Chapter 207 of the Acts of 2010. |