



The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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May 13, 2010

Maria Geryk, Interim Superintendent
Amherst School District
170 Chestnut Street
Amherst, MA 01002

Re: Amherst Mid-cycle Report

Dear Superintendent Geryk:


Enclosed is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Mid-cycle Report based on the Mid-cycle Review conducted in your district in April 2010. In this Mid-cycle Review the Department monitored selected special education criteria to determine your district's compliance with special education laws and regulations. The review consisted of information gathered from one or more of the following activities: staff interview, review of student records, examination of documentation, and/or classroom observation.

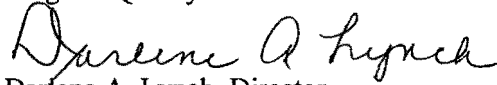
The Department found one or more of the criteria monitored in your district to be "Partially Implemented" or "Not Implemented." In all instances where noncompliance has been found, the Department has prescribed corrective action for the district. This corrective action must be implemented as soon as possible, but in no case later than a year from the date of this report. You will find these requirements for corrective action included in the enclosed report, along with requirements for submitting progress reports using the enclosed form.

Please provide the Department with your written assurance that all of the required corrective action will be implemented by your district within the timelines specified in the report. You must submit your statement of assurance to Darlene Lynch, Director, Program Quality Assurance Services, by June 1, 2010.

Your staff's cooperation throughout this Mid-cycle Review is appreciated. If you have questions about this letter or the enclosed report, please do not hesitate to contact Sandra Hanig at (413) 858-4591.

Sincerely,


Sandra K. Hanig, Mid-cycle Review Chairperson
Program Quality Assurance Services


Darlene A. Lynch, Director
Program Quality Assurance Services

cc: Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D., Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
D. Beth Lopez, Supervisor, Program Quality Assurance Services
Irv Rhodes, Amherst School Committee Chairperson
Jo Ann Smith, Interim Director of Special Education

Encs: Mid-cycle Report
Mid-cycle Progress Report Form

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
MID-CYCLE REPORT**

Amherst Public School District

Dates of the Mid-cycle Review Onsite: April 1, 2010

Date of this Report: May 13, 2010

Required Special Education Criteria Monitored in this Mid-cycle Review

Current special education criteria available by scrolling down to the special education instrument at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/default.html>

Criterion	Criterion Implemented ✓	Criterion Partially Implemented or Not Implemented	Method(s) of Investigation	Basis of Determination about Criterion	<i>If Partially Implemented or Not Implemented:</i> (a) Required Corrective Action and Timelines for Implementation	(b) Progress Report Due Date(s) and Required Elements
SE 3 Special Requirements for the Determination of Specific Learning Disability	Implemented		Student Record Review and Staff Interview	Student record review and staff interview indicated that the district is appropriately evaluating students suspected of having a specific learning disability (SLD.) Written documentation was found in the file of each student suspected of having a SLD, including all current recommended SLD forms and the mandated Team Determination of Eligibility Form with the signature of each IEP Team member.		
SE 52A Registration	Implemented		Documentation Review and	Document review and staff interview indicated that the district		

Criterion	Criterion Implemented ✓	Criterion Partially Implemented or Not Implemented	Method(s) of Investigation	Basis of Determination about Criterion	<i>If Partially Implemented or Not Implemented:</i> (a) Required Corrective Action and Timelines for Implementation	(b) Progress Report Due Date(s) and Required Elements
of Educational Interpreters			Staff Interview	does not currently have a deaf or hard of hearing student enrolled who requires the assistance of an interpreter. The district submitted its written plan to contact the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing when a registered educational interpreter must be hired. This plan meets requirements of this criterion.		

Additional Special Education Criteria Monitored in this Mid-cycle Review

Current special education criteria available by scrolling down to the special education instrument at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/default.html>

Criterion	Criterion Implemented ✓	Criterion Partially Implemented or Not Implemented	Method(s) of Investigation	Basis of Determination about Criterion	If Partially Implemented or Not Implemented: (a) Required Corrective Action and Timelines for Implementation	(b) Progress Report Due Date(s) and Required Elements
SE 6 Determination of Transition Services	Not Applicable		Documentation Review and Staff Interview	Amherst School District serves students in grades Pre-Kindergarten to grade 6 exclusively. Documentation of transition services is required for students age 14 and above.		
SE 8 IEP Team Composition and Attendance	Implemented		Student Record Review and Staff Interview	Student record review and staff interview indicated that IEP Teams are consistently comprised of all required members. The Department found a signed attendance sheet for the most recent IEP in each student record reviewed, which verifies all required persons attended. If the parent and district agreed that a Team member's attendance was not required, documentation of the parent's written consent to excuse the Team member, and the absent member's written input was found. The		

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				district is meeting the regulatory requirements of this criterion.		
SE 9 Timelines for Determination of Eligibility and Provision of Documentation to Parents	Implemented		Student Record Review and Staff Interview	Student record review and staff interview indicated that within 45 school-working days after receipt of the parent's written consent to conduct evaluations, the school district provides the parent with either a proposed IEP or written explanation of the finding of no eligibility. For each student record reviewed, the Department compared the date parental consent was received with the date the proposed IEP was sent to the parent. The district is meeting the regulatory requirements of this criterion.		
SE 18B Determination of Placement; Provision of IEP to Parent		Partially Implemented	Student Record Review and Staff Interview	The Department found a copy of the written summary of the decisions and agreements reached during the Team meeting in each student record reviewed, which includes a completed	The district must develop procedures to ensure that parents are provided with two copies of the complete proposed IEP within two weeks of the IEP Team meeting, if a written	By September 20, 2010, the district must submit its procedures to ensure the IEP is provided to parents within two weeks of the IEP Team meeting. This plan must

Criterion	Criterion Implemented ✓	Criterion Partially Implemented or Not Implemented	Method(s) of Investigation	Basis of Determination about Criterion	<i>If Partially Implemented or Not Implemented:</i> (a) Required Corrective Action and Timelines for Implementation	(b) Progress Report Due Date(s) and Required Elements
				<p>IEP service delivery grid describing the types and amounts of special education and/or related services proposed by the district and a statement of the major goal areas associated with these services, as required.</p> <p>When a district provides parents with a written summary at the conclusion of the IEP Team meeting, it then is required to provide the parent with two copies (one to sign and return, one to keep) of the proposed IEP within two weeks of the IEP Team meeting. When reviewing documentation in student records of the date the IEP meeting was held and the date the IEP was sent to the parent, the Department found the district has not consistently met this required timeline.</p>	<p>summary is provided at the conclusion of the meeting. Further, the district must train appropriate staff in these procedures.</p> <p>The district must also conduct internal monitoring of IEP timelines and provide the Department with a report on its findings. Information that must be included in this report is detailed in the column to the right.</p> <p>The district will maintain the following documentation and make it available to the Department upon request: list of student names and grade levels for the student records reviewed, date of the review, name(s) of person(s) who conducted the review with roles and signatures.</p>	<p>include information on person(s) responsible for each procedural step, as well as a plan for on-going monitoring of the effectiveness of planned procedures.</p> <p>In addition, provide evidence that staff members who have a role in these procedures have been trained, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda • Materials used • Signature and title of staff in attendance <p>By January 20, 2011, the district must submit the results of an administrative review of timelines for provision of IEP to the parent for all IEP meetings held in the district after September 20, 2010 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Means of review • Number of IEPs monitored. • Number found in compliance with

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						requirements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Root causes of any non-compliance. • Actions taken to remedy any non-compliance.
SE 29 Communications in English and Primary Language of the Home		Partially Implemented	Student Record Review, Documentation Review and Staff Interview	<p>The district has developed procedures to determine what the primary language of the home is and is providing interpreters and translating some documents.</p> <p>Review of the attendance sheet at IEP Team meetings indicated interpreters are attending IEP Team meetings. Although some written translated documents and notation of the use of a foreign language interpreter to orally communicate the content of notices were found in student records, documentation of translation of all important special education forms and notices was not consistently found in student records.</p>	<p>The district must submit a written plan to ensure that it is providing oral and written communication of all special education forms and notices in both English and the primary language of the home, if such primary language is not English.</p> <p>The district must also conduct internal monitoring of the effectiveness of its procedures and provide the Department with a report on its findings.</p> <p>The district will maintain the following documentation and make it available to the Department upon</p>	<p>By September 20, 2010, submit the district's written plan to ensure that it is providing oral and written communication of all special education forms and notices to in both English and the primary language of the home, if such primary language is not English.</p> <p>By January 20, 2011, submit the results of a review of the records. This report must include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Means of review • Number of IEPs monitored. • Number found in compliance with

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
MID-CYCLE REVIEW

School District: Amherst School District

MID-CYCLE PROGRESS REPORT

Date Prepared: _____

Prepared by: _____
(name and title)

Criterion: _____

Topic: _____

For each criterion for which you prepare a progress report, please

- make a copy of this cover page,
- fill in the information requested above, and
- attach a complete description of the corrective action taken and any accompanying documentation.

(Description of corrective action for each criterion and any accompanying documentation should include all of the "Progress Report Required Elements" for that criterion in the Mid-cycle Report.)

Send the whole set of completed progress reports to:
Darlene Lynch, Director
Program Quality Assurance Services
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148-4906