

**Re: MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COORDINATED PROGRAM REVIEW REPORTS**
**From: Susan Horn, Assistant Superintendent
Nancy Kolb, Director of Pupil Services**
Date: February 17, 2006

All school districts in Massachusetts are scheduled to receive visits through the Department of Education's Coordinated Program Review system on a six-year cycle with an additional mid-cycle special education follow-up visit. The Coordinated Program Review criteria encompass the required elements for the specific program areas: Special Education, Title I, English Language Learner Education, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Nutrition Program and Services, Civil Rights, and Other General Requirements. The compliance criteria selected in all of the regulated program areas are those that are most closely aligned with the goals of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, and intended to promote high standards and achievement for all students. In March 2005, The Department of Education conducted these reviews. The final reports contain findings based on the onsite visits to our schools.

*The districts have received the Department of Education's Coordinated Program Review Final Reports containing findings based on the onsite visits to our schools that were conducted in March 2005. It is helpful for the public to understand what a Massachusetts Department of Education Coordinated Program Review is? Each State Department of Education is mandated by the federal government to review school districts' implementation of state and federal laws in certain areas. The onsite review does not comment on the effectiveness or quality of education within the district. In fact, The President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education (PCESE) found that:
"no state is in full compliance with IDEA. there is little demonstrable link between process compliance and student results and success. "*

These reports include an Executive Summary of findings together with more detailed findings for each program area describing the determinations of the DoE about the implementation status of each requirement. The reports note those requirements of the implementation of which the on-site team found to be commendable. Those areas that are not fully implemented the school districts are responsible for proposing corrective actions to bring those areas into compliance with respective statutes or regulations.

You may visit the following website to view the districts' reports in their entirety:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/reports/#A>

*A copy of the reports will also be made available at the Acton and Boxborough Public libraries and all the school libraries. **Presentations of the Coordinated Program Reviews will take place at the Administration Building Conference Room on April 11th from 7:00-8:30pm and April 12th from 10:00-11:30am.***

We have been encouraged to incorporate the corrective action activities into our overall districts' plans. A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) will be developed to address all the criteria of Partial Implementation and Non Implementation. The plan will describe the steps the districts' are taking to make available to staff, parent advisory groups and the general public the findings of the DoE. The report is due to the DoE on March 20, 2006 and will have the signatures of the Superintendent and the School Committee Chairpersons. Once the CAP is approved by the DoE, we will be eligible to receive funding to assist in the implementation of the CAP in the area of Special Education.

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS
OVERVIEW OF REVIEW PROCEDURES

As one part of its Accountability System, the Department of Education oversees local compliance with education requirements through the Coordinated Program Review System (CPR). All reviews include the following selected requirements:

- special education under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-97), and M.G.L. Chapter 71B (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972);
- federal civil rights 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 related state requirements under M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 5 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971) and other Massachusetts General Laws;
- targeted standards from the Board of Education’s Physical Restraint regulations (603 CMR 46.00);
- targeted standards from the Board of Education’s Student Learning Time regulations (603 CMR 27.00);
- targeted standards from the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 (included in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001); and
- provisions of M.G.L. c. 71A, the state law that governs the provision of education to limited English proficient students. Note that due to the voters’ approval in 2002 of an initiative petition entitled “Question 2,” M.G.L. c. 71A has been significantly amended. Under the amended Chapter 71A, limited English proficient students, now referred to as “English learners,” must be provided instruction in sheltered English immersion or two-way bilingual programs unless they have received a waiver. As a result of this change in the law, the Department’s Coordinated Program Review standards under Chapter 71A were significantly revised for the 2003-2004 school year. All districts that enroll limited English proficient students will be reviewed using these updated standards during the 2004-2005 school year.

Additional program areas reviewed during the Coordinated Program Review visits in selected districts included:

- Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, including other related grants funded by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001;
- Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act;
- Innovative assistance programs funded under Title V of the No Child Left Behind Act; and
- Nutrition Programs and Services.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

FOR THE RATING OF EACH COMPLIANCE CRITERION

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.
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.

Several key areas of compliance with federal special education requirements have been highlighted in **SHADED TEXT** in the Program Review Criteria. These highlighted areas are included in the Massachusetts Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) that is being used by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), to track over time this state’s compliance in these key areas.

ACTON – BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORT INTRODUCTION

An eleven-member Massachusetts Department of Education team visited the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District during the weeks of March 22, 2005, March 29, 2005 and on April 6, 2005 to evaluate the implementation of selected criteria in the program areas of Special Education, Civil Rights, English Learner Education, Nutrition, Safe and Drug Free Schools, and Title I. The team appreciated the opportunity to interview staff and parents, to observe classroom facilities and to review the programs underway in the district. The onsite team commended the following areas that were brought to its attention and that it believed had a significant and positive impact on the delivery of educational services for students enrolled in the **Acton-Boxborough Regional School District**.

These areas of commendation are as follows:

- *Several areas in the Safe and Drug Free Schools program were found to be commendable. Among these are the areas of parental involvement in the Safe and Drug Free Schools program, as well as the development of the district's application through timely and meaningful consultation with community agencies, parents, students and representatives from the schools and prevention community.*
- *The coordination of the district's programs and projects with community-wide efforts to achieve the district's goals for drug and violence prevention, and district collaboration were also found to be commendable.*
- *In the area of Nutrition, the district's sanitation and health standards were found to be commendable.*
- *Department staff repeatedly heard of efforts to ensure that the district forms positive collaborative relationships within its community, and the district is to be commended on the level of community collaboration on the whole. The district is also to be commended on the level of coordination of its administrative staff. The administrative cabinet meets weekly and the administrative council meets monthly. The district is also commended on the outstanding sanitation observed during meal preparation, serving and cleanup.*
- *The district has made ELE parent involvement a focus. The district has implemented a paired buddies program, in which English proficient parents are placed with limited English proficient parents to facilitate the involvement of limited English proficient parents' involvement in the school. The district offers a night ESL class for LEP parents, with financial aid if necessary.*
- *Some of the commendations noted above are repeated within the body of the Department's report under the appropriate compliance criteria.*

The Department submitted the following Coordinated Program Review Report containing findings made pursuant to this onsite visit. In preparing this report, the team reviewed extensive written documentation regarding the operation of the district's programs, together with information gathered by means of following Department program review methods:

- 17 interviews with administrative staff.
- 55 interviews of teaching and support services staff across all levels.
- Interviews of one parent advisory council (PAC) representative and interviews of five parents concerning the Safe and Drug Free Schools program and one parent concerning the Title I program.
- Interviews as requested by persons from the general public.
- Student record reviews: A sample of fifteen special student records and ten English Learner Education records were selected by the Department. Student records were first examined by local staff, whose findings were then verified by the onsite team using standard Department of Education student record review procedures to make determinations regarding the implementation of procedural and programmatic requirements.
- Parent surveys: A number of parents of students with disabilities were sent surveys that solicited information regarding their experiences with the district's implementation of special education programs, related services and procedural requirements. Twelve of these parent surveys were returned to the Department of Education for review by the onsite team.
- Observation of classrooms and other facilities. A sample of 22 instructional classrooms and other school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services were visited to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements. Department staff also toured the junior high and high school buildings, and viewed additional instructional spaces during these tours.

The report included findings in the program areas reviewed organized under nine components. These components are listed in the executive summary. The findings in each program area explain the "ratings," determinations by the team about the implementation status of the criteria reviewed. The ratings indicate those criteria that were found by the team to be substantially "Implemented" or implemented in a "Commendable" manner. (Refer to the "Definition of Terms" section of the report.) Where criteria were found to be either "Partially Implemented" or "Not Implemented," the district or charter school must propose to the Department corrective actions to bring those areas into compliance with the controlling statute or regulation. In some instances the team may have rated a requirement as "Implemented" but made a specific comment on the district's implementation methods that also may require response from the district.

Districts are expected to incorporate the corrective action into district and school improvement plans, including professional development plans.

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT
RECEIVING A COMMENDABLE RATING
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Special Education	Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements	Safe and Drug Free Schools	Nutrition Programs and Services	Title I	English Learner Education
		SDF 1, SDF 2, SDF 3, SDF 4, SDF 5	NS 6		

SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT
REQUIRING CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT
in response to the following
COORDINATED PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT FINDINGS

PROGRAM AREA	IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED	OTHER CRITERIA REQUIRING RESPONSE
<p style="text-align: center;">Special Education</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Special Education Criteria Not Applicable:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SE 17, SE 42</p>	SE1, SE3, SE4, SE5, SE6, SE10, SE11, SE12, SE13, SE14, SE15, SE16, SE19, SE20, SE21, SE22, SE23, SE26, SE27, SE29, SE30, SE31, SE33, SE34, SE35, SE36, SE38, SE39, SE43, SE44, SE45, SE46, SE49, SE49A, SE50, SE52, SE53, SE54, SE57, SE58	SE 2, SE 7, SE 8, SE 9, SE 18A, SE 18B, SE 24, SE 25, SE 28, SE 32, SE 37, SE 40, SE 41, SE 47, SE 48, SE 51, SE 55, SE 56		
<p style="text-align: center;">Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements</p>	MOA1, MOA 2A, MOA 2B, MOA 2C, MOA 5A, MOA 5B, MOA 5C, MOA 5D, MOA 6, MOA 6A, MOA 6B, MOA 6C, MOA 6D, MOA 12A, MOA 14A, MOA 14B, MOA15, MOA 23A, MOA26	MOA 2, MOA 3, MOA 4, MOA 7, MOA 7A, MOA 7B, MOA 7C, MOA 8, MOA 9, MOA 10A, MOA 11A, MOA 13, MOA 14, MOA 16, MOA 17A, MOA 18A, MOA 21, MOA 22, MOA 23, MOA 24, MOA 25		
<p style="text-align: center;">Title I</p>	TI 1, TI 2, TI 3, TI 4, TI 5, TI 6, TI 8, TI 9, TI 10, TI 13, TI 14, TI 15, TI 16, TI 17, TI 18, TI 19, TI 20, TI 22, TI 24, TI 25, TI 26, TI 27, TI 28, TI 29A, TI 29B, TI 31, TI 34, TI 35, TI 36, TI 37, TI 38, TI 40	TI 21, TI 23, TI 30, TI 32, TI 33, TI 39, TI 7, TI 11, TI 12		
<p style="text-align: center;">Title I Criteria Not Applicable:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TI 26, TI 27, TI 28, TI 29B, TI 34, TI 35, TI 36, TI 37, TI 38, TI 9, TI 10, TI 17</p>				
<p style="text-align: center;">Safe and Drug Free Schools</p>	SDF 6, SDF 7, SDF 8, SDF 9, SDF 10			
<p style="text-align: center;">English Learner Education</p>	ELE 1, ELE 2, ELE 3	ELE 4, ELE 5, ELE 6, ELE 7, ELE 8, ELE 9, ELE 10, ELE 11, ELE 12, ELE 13, ELE 14, ELE 15, ELE 16, ELE 17, ELE 18		
<p style="text-align: center;">Nutrition Programs and Services</p>	NS 5	NS 2, NS 3, NS 4	NS 1	

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORT INTRODUCTION

An eleven-member Massachusetts Department of Education team visited the Acton Public Schools during the weeks of March 22, 2005, March 29, 2005 and April 6, 2005 to evaluate the implementation of selected criteria in the program areas of Civil Rights, English Learner Education, Nutrition, Safe and Drug Free Schools, and Title I. The team appreciated the opportunity to interview staff and parents, to observe classroom facilities and to review the programs underway in the district. The onsite team commended the following areas that were brought to its attention and that it believed had a significant and positive impact on the delivery of educational services for students enrolled in the **Acton Public Schools**.

These commendable areas are as follows:

- *Several areas in the Safe and Drug Free Schools program were found to be commendable. Among these are the areas of parental involvement in the Safe and Drug Free Schools program, as well as the development of the district's application through timely and meaningful consultation with community agencies, parents, students and representatives from the schools and prevention community.*
- *The coordination of the district's programs and projects with community-wide efforts to achieve the district's goals for drug and violence prevention, and district collaboration were also found to be commendable.*
- *In the area of Nutrition, the district's sanitation and health standards were found to be commendable.*
- *Department staff repeatedly heard of efforts to ensure that the district forms positive collaborative relationships within its community, and the district is to be commended on the level of community collaboration on the whole. The district is also to be commended on the level of coordination with its administrative staff. The administrative cabinet meets weekly and the administrative council meets monthly.*
- *The Department also commends the district for the establishment of an in-district ABA early childhood program, and the subsequent expansion of this program to the elementary school.*
- *The district has made ELE parent involvement a focus. The district has implemented a paired buddies program, in which English proficient parents are placed with limited English proficient parents to facilitate limited English proficient parents' involvement in the school. The district offers night English as a Second Language classes for LEP parents, with financial aid if necessary.*
- *Some of the commendations noted above are repeated within the body of the Department's report under the appropriate compliance criteria.*

The Department submitted the following Coordinated Program Review Report containing findings made pursuant to this onsite visit. In preparing this report, the team reviewed extensive written documentation regarding the operation of the district's programs, together with information gathered by means of following Department program review methods:

- 18 interviews administrative staff.
- 42 interviews of teaching and support services staff across all levels.
- Interviews of one parent advisory council (PAC) representative and interviews of three parents concerning the Safe and Drug Free Schools program and one parent concerning the Title I program.
- Interviews as requested by persons from the general public.
- Student record reviews: A sample of 18 special education student records and 11 English Learner Education student records was selected by the Department. Student records were first examined by local staff, whose findings were then verified by the onsite team using standard Department of Education student record review procedures to make determinations regarding the implementation of procedural and programmatic requirements.
- Parent surveys: A number of parents of students with disabilities were sent surveys that solicited information regarding their experiences with the district's implementation of special education programs, related services and procedural requirements. Fifteen of these parent surveys were returned to the Department of Education for review by the onsite team.
- Observation of classrooms and other facilities. A sample of 20 instructional classrooms and other school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services was visited to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements. Department staff also toured some of the school buildings.

The report included findings in the program areas reviewed organized under nine components. These components are listed in the executive summary. The findings in each program area explain the "ratings", determinations by the team about the implementation status of the criteria reviewed. The ratings indicate those criteria that were found by the team to be substantially "Implemented" or implemented in a "Commendable" manner. (Refer to the "Definition of Terms" section of the report.) Where criteria were found to be either "Partially Implemented" or "Not Implemented," the district must propose to the Department corrective actions to bring those areas into compliance with the controlling statute or regulation. In some instances the team may have rated a requirement as "Implemented" but made a specific comment on the district's implementation methods that also may require response from the district.

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ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT
RECEIVING A COMMENDABLE RATING
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Special Education	Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements	Safe and Drug Free Schools	Title I	<i>Nutrition</i>	English Learner Education
		SDF 1, SDF 2, SDF 3, SDF 4, SDF 5, SDF 8		NS 6	

SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT
REQUIRING CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT
in response to the following
COORDINATED PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT FINDINGS

PROGRAM AREA	IMPLEMENTED	PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED	NOT IMPLEMENTED	OTHER CRITERIA REQUIRING RESPONSE
Special Education	SE 1, SE 3, SE 4, SE 5, SE 10, SE 11, SE 12, SE 14, SE 15, SE 19, SE 20, SE 21, SE 22, SE 23, SE 25, SE 26, SE 27, SE 29, SE 30, SE 31, SE 33, SE 34, SE 35, SE 36, SE 38, SE 39, SE 40, SE 43, SE 44, SE 45, SE 46, SE 49, SE 49A, SE 50, SE 51, SE 52, SE 53, SE 54, SE 58	SE 2, SE 8, SE 9, SE 13, SE 16, SE 17, SE 18A, SE 18B, SE 24, SE 28, SE 32, SE 37, SE 41, SE 42, SE 47, SE 48, SE 55, SE 56, SE 57		
SE Criteria Not Applicable: SE 6, SE 7				
Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements Civil Rights Requirements Not Applicable: MOA 7C, MOA 9, MOA 13, MOA 16	MOA 2A, MOA 2B, MOA 2C, MOA 5A, MOA 5B, MOA 5C, MOA 5D, MOA 6, MOA 6A, MOA 6B, MOA 6C, MOA 6D, MOA 7A, MOA 7B, MOA 11, MOA 12, MOA 12A, MOA 14A, MOA 14B, MOA 15, MOA 18, MOA 22, MOA 23A, MOA 26	MOA 1, MOA 2, MOA 3, MOA 4, MOA 7, MOA 8, MOA 10A, MOA 11A, MOA 14, MOA 17A, MOA 18A, MOA 21, MOA 23, MOA 24, MOA 25		
Title I Title I Criteria Not Applicable: TI 26, TI 27, TI 28, TI 29B, TI 34, TI 35, TI 36, TI 37, TI 38, TI 9, TI 10, TI 17	TI 1, TI 2, TI 3, TI 4, TI 5, TI 6, TI 8, TI 13, TI 14, TI 15, TI 16, TI 18, TI 19, TI 20, TI 22, TI 24, TI 25, TI 29A, TI 31, TI 40	TI 21, TI 23, TI 30, TI 32, TI 33, TI 39, TI 7, TI 11, TI 12		
Safe and Drug Free Schools	SDF 6, SDF 7, SDF 9, SDF 10			
English Learner Education	ELE 1, ELE 2	ELE 3, ELE 4, ELE 5, ELE 6, ELE 7, ELE 8, ELE 9, ELE 10, ELE 11, ELE 12, ELE 13, ELE 14, ELE 15, ELE 16, ELE 17, ELE 18		
Nutrition Programs and Services	NS 5	NS 1, NS 2, NS 3, NS 4		