



MASSACHUSETTS

**Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education**

Northshore Education Consortium

**Kevin O'Grady School
Topsfield Vocational Academy
Northshore Academy Lower School
Northshore Academy Upper School
Embark/Soar Programs**

Program Review Report

**Week of Onsite Visit: March 16, 2026
Draft Report Issued: April 06, 2026
Final Report Issued: April 28, 2026
Corrective Action Plan Due: May 27, 2026**

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Onsite Team Members:

**Cecelia Auditore, Chairperson
Christine Romancewicz, Team Member**



Massachusetts Department Of Elementary And Secondary Education
Approved Special Education School Program Review Report
Overview Of Review Procedures
Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department) is required under M.G.L. c. 71B, §10 to review special education programs in collaborative and approved public day school programs that serve publicly funded students under the provisions of Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations 603 CMR 18.00, 28.09 and 46.00. Each year, the Department's Office of Approved Special Education Schools (OASES) conducts onsite visits to selected collaborative and approved public day school programs to verify the implementation of these programs. In the spring of the previous school year, the schools participating in review cycle were notified of the dates of the onsite visits and were required to conduct a Data Collection before the onsite portion of the review using the Department's Communication Hub and Monitoring Portal (CHAMP).

The statewide six-year Collaborative Program Review cycle together with the Department's Mid-cycle monitoring schedule is posted on the Department's Website at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/oases/crs/6yrcycle.html>.

Scope Of Collaborative Program Review

The Office of Approved Special Education Schools of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education oversees compliance with education requirements through its Collaborative Program Review System (PR), private special education school program reviews, as well as reviews of certain Special Education in Institutional Schools Settings programs. The collaborative reviews cover selected requirements in the following areas:

Special Education (CSE)

1. Selected requirements from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); 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 27, 2018.

Civil Rights Methods of Administration and Other General Education Requirements (CCR)

1. 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.
2. Selected requirements from the Massachusetts Board of Education's Physical Restraint regulations (603 CMR 46.00).
3. Selected requirements from the Massachusetts Board of Education's Student Learning Time regulations (603 CMR 27.00).
4. Selected requirements governing bullying prevention and intervention under M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, and as amended by sections 72-74 of the Acts of 2013; M.G.L. c. 71, §37O.
5. Various requirements under other federal and state laws.

Approved Public Day Program Standards (APD) (where applicable)

1. Selected requirements from the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Special Education regulations from 603 CMR 28.09.
2. Selected requirements from the Massachusetts Program and Safety Standards for Approved Public or Private Day and Residential Special Education School Programs 603 CMR 18.00

The report includes findings in the program areas reviewed organized under three components: Special Education Legal Standards, Civil Rights: Methods of Administration and Other Related General Education Requirements and Approved Public Day Program Standards.

The findings in each 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”. (Refer to the “Definition of Compliance Ratings” section of the report.) Where criteria were found to be either "Partially Implemented," "Implementation in Progress," or "Not Implemented," the collaborative must propose to the Department corrective actions to bring those areas into compliance with the controlling statute or regulation. The collaborative is expected to incorporate the corrective action into their professional development plans.

Collaborative Program Review Elements

Criteria: The Collaborative Program Review criteria encompass key elements drawn from 603 CMR 18.00, 28.09, 46.00 and the approved public day school program’s application for approval. They also include those required by the federal Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP) and revised requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq. (IDEA-2004) as described in the Department’s Special Education Advisories. Through the Desk Review the OASES chairperson examines the Data Collection submission and determines which criteria will be followed up on through onsite verification activities. The Data Collection and Desk Review are both described below.

Data Collection Phase: This is a requirement for all collaborative programs being monitored. It is completed for the onsite review and covers all of the Department selected criteria. The collaborative is responsible for completing the Self- Assessment for each individual program being reviewed, which consists of:

1. Collaborative review of policies and procedures,
2. Collaborative review of student documentation including a sample of student records.
3. Collaborative review of facilities, buildings, and grounds.

Upon completion of these portions, the collaborative submits the Data Collection to the Department for review.

Desk Review Phase: The OASES chairperson assigned to each collaborative reviews the responses by the collaborative regarding the critical elements for appropriate policies, procedures, and practices, as well as actual documents and data submitted for each criterion. The OASES chairperson also reviews documents, student record data, and explanatory comments. The outcome of this review, along with 3-year trend data from the Problem Resolution System, restraint reports, restraint injuries, serious incidents and notification or prior approval from the Department through its notification system is used to determine the scope and nature of onsite activities.

Onsite Verification Phase:

This includes activities selected from the following:

1. Interviews with administrative, instructional, and other staff consistent with those criteria selected for verification.
2. Telephone interviews as requested by parents, guardians or members of the general public.
3. Review of student records: The Department selects a sample of student records from those the collaborative reviewed as part of its data collection to verify the accuracy of the data. The Department also conducts an independent review of a sample of student records that reflect activities conducted since the beginning of the school year. The Department monitoring team will conduct this review using standard Department procedures to determine whether procedural and programmatic requirements have been implemented.
4. Observation of classrooms and other facilities: The team observes a sample of classrooms and other school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements.

Team: Depending upon the scope of follow-up activities that have been identified based on the Department's Desk Review of the collaborative's Data Collection, a two-to-three-member Department team will conduct a two-to-five-day Program Review.

Final Report: A Final Report is then issued via the CHAMP. The Final Report includes findings organized under 4 specified compliance areas. The findings explain the "ratings," or determinations by the Department about the implementation status of the compliance criteria reviewed within each of these areas. The ratings indicate those criteria that were found by the OASES monitoring team to be "Implemented," "Implementation in Progress," "Partially Implemented," or "Not Implemented."

Response: The collaborative program must propose to the Department corrective action to bring into compliance with the required statute or regulation each area found to be not fully "Implemented." In some instances, the team may have found certain requirements to be fully "Implemented" but made a specific comment on the program's implementation methods that also may require response from the collaborative. **Under federal Special Education State Performance Plan requirements pursuant to IDEA-2004, public and approved special education school programs serving disabled students must demonstrate effective resolution of noncompliance identified by the Department as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from the issuance of the Department's Final Program Review Report.**

Report Introduction

A two-member team conducted a visit to Northshore Education Consortium during the week of March 16, 2026 to evaluate the implementation of selected compliance criteria under the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations 603 CMR 18.00 (Program and Safety Standards for Approved Public or Private Day and Residential Special Education School Programs) and 603 CMR 28.09 (Approval of Public or Private Day and Residential Special Education School Programs), 603 CMR 46.00 (Prevention of Physical Restraint and Requirements If Used), M.G.L c. 71B, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq, as amended in 2004 (IDEA--2004), and civil rights provisions that are pertinent to Approved Special Education School Programs. The team appreciated the opportunity to interview staff, to observe classroom facilities, and to review the program efforts underway. The Department is submitting the following Approved Special Education School Program Review Report containing findings made pursuant to this onsite visit. In preparing this report the team reviewed extensive documentation regarding the operation of the school programs, together with information gathered by means of the following Department program review methods:

1. Interviews of 5 leadership staff;
2. Interviews of 5 related services staff;
3. Interviews of 5 teaching staff; and
4. Interviews of 5 direct care staff.
5. Student record review: A sample of 30 Massachusetts student records was selected by the Department. Student records were first examined by the school program's staff and then verified by the OASES monitoring team using standard Department student record review procedures to make determinations regarding the implementation of procedural and programmatic requirements. An additional number of randomly selected student records were also reviewed by the OASES monitoring team to ensure determinations regarding the implementation of procedural and programmatic requirements remain in effect.
6. Observation of classrooms and other facilities: A sample of instructional classrooms and other facilities used in the delivery of programs and services was observed to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements.

1. Summary of Compliance Criteria Included In This Report Requiring Corrective Action Plan Development In Response to the Following Program Review Report Findings

Implemented

1. The requirement is totally or substantially met

Implemented Response Required

1. The requirement is met, but the Agency is required to provide additional information.

Implementation in Progress

1. This rating is used for criteria containing new or updated legal requirements and means that the agency 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

1. The requirement, in one or several important aspects, is not entirely met.

Not Implemented

1. The requirement is totally or substantially not met.

Policies & Procedures

Criteria	Implemented	Implemented Response Required	Implementation In Progress	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
APD 4.2 Public Information and Postings	All	-	-	-	-
APD 9.7 Terminations	All	-	-	-	-
CCR 7A School year schedules	All	-	-	-	-
CCR 10C Student Discipline	All	-	-	-	-
CCR 14 Counseling and counseling materials free from bias and stereotypes	All	-	-	-	-
CCR 24 Curriculum review	All	-	-	-	-

Staff Documentation

Criteria	Implemented	Implemented Response Required	Implementation In Progress	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
APD 12.2 In-service Training Plan and Calendar	All	-	-	-	-
APD 16.3 Nursing	All	-	-	-	-
CCR 21 Staff training regarding civil rights responsibilities	All	-	-	-	-
CSE 51 Appropriate Special Education Teacher Licensure	All	-	-	-	-
CSE 52 Appropriate certifications/licenses or other credentials--related service providers	All	-	-	-	-
CSE 54 Professional Development	All	-	-	-	-

Student Documentation

Criteria	Implemented	Implemented Response Required	Implementation In Progress	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
APD 4.5 Immediate Notification	-	-	-	Northshore Academy Upper School; Topsfield Vocational Academy	-
APD 15.5 Parent Consent and Required Notification	All	-	-	-	-
CCR 7 Information to be translated into languages other than English	All	-	-	-	-
CCR 10A Student handbooks and codes of conduct	All	-	-	-	-
CCR 10B Bullying Prevention and Intervention	All	-	-	-	-
CCR 20 / CCR26A Staff training on confidentiality of student records/Confidentiality and student records	All	-	-	-	-
CSE 13 Progress Reports and Content	All	-	-	-	-
CSE 22 IEP implementation and availability	All	-	-	-	-
CSE 29 Communications are in English and Primary language of home	All	-	-	-	-
CSE 40 Instructional grouping requirements for students aged five and older	All	-	-	-	-
CSE 41 Age Span requirements	All	-	-	-	-
CSE 46 Procedures for suspension of students with disabilities when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days; responsibilities of the Team; responsibilities of the district	All	-	-	-	-

Buildings/Facilities

Criteria	Implemented	Implemented Response Required	Implementation In Progress	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
CSE 55 Special Education Facilities and Classrooms	All	-	-	-	-

Student Documentation

APD 4.5 Immediate Notification

Requirements

The program shall develop and implement written policies and procedures on notification of serious incidents within the program to all required parties and identifies the person responsible for making this notification.

Pursuant to applicable regulations and agency policy this school is hereby providing immediate notification to DESE for ANY student enrolled in its program (Massachusetts Student, Out-of-State Student or Privately Funded Student) concerning incidents that occur during school hours.

1. The filing of a 51-A report with Department of Children and Families (DCF) OR a complaint to the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) against the school or a school staff member for alleged abuse or neglect of any student;
2. The hospitalization of a student (including out-patient emergency room and urgent care visits) due to physical injury at school or PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN illness, accident or disorder which occurs while the student is in the program;
3. A student run from the program; and
4. Any other incident of serious nature that involves a student. (Some examples include: any police involvement, any media involvement, weapons, fire setting, alcohol or drug possession or use while in the program).
5. The death of any student (immediate verbal notification to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), responsible public school district, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and any other state agency involved in the education and care of this student).
6. The emergency termination of a student pursuant to 28.09(12)(b).

NOTE: All incident reports must be maintained in student records.

The program shall develop and implement a written procedure describing how it notifies all appropriate parties of serious incidents within the program and identifying the person responsible for making this notification.

Legal Standards

[28.09\(12\) \(a, b\)](#)

Confirmed Findings

Applies To	Rating	Response Required	Finding Description
Northshore Academy Upper School; Topsfield Vocational Academy	Partially Implemented	Yes	A review of student records and staff interviews indicated that while the collaborative has a procedure for immediate notification, the procedure was unclear and not consistently followed. Not all serious incidents that require immediate notification were submitted to DESE.