



Lincoln Public Schools

Stephanie Powers
Administrator for Student Services

To: School Committee
Mickey Brandmeyer, Superintendent
From: Stephanie Powers, Administrator for Student Services
Re: Report on Coordinated Program Review
Date: March 7, 2012

This report is provided to describe the upcoming Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Coordinated Program Review (CPR) and the responsibilities of the Lincoln Public Schools during the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years. The DESE implements the CPR as a tool for ensuring compliance with laws, regulations and policies. In the Lincoln Public Schools, the CPR will include auditing of the district's actions in following areas:

- Special Education (SE);
- Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements (CR);
- English Learner Education (ELE) in Public Schools; and
- Title 1 Program.

During the 2011-2012 school year, the District engaged in a self-assessment in order to identify areas of non-compliance and to intervene with self-correction prior to the full DESE CPR the following year. Activities have included participation in the DESE self-assessment training, selection of special education student records for review, partial review of records (to be completed by May 30, 2012), gathering and development of selected policy and procedure documents. All documents are to be uploaded through a secure website portal to DESE and the process will be completed well ahead of the June 30, 2012 deadline.

Coordinated Program Review Elements

During the 2012-2013 school year, the District will participate in the full CPR process. Elements of this are described below.

- Team: The DESE is expected to convene a team of 2 Department staff members to conduct the CPR.
- Timing: The Lincoln Public Schools is scheduled to receive a Coordinated Program Review every six years (2013) and a mid-cycle special education follow-up visit (2016) three years after the Coordinated Program Review.
- Methods: Methods used in reviewing programs include:
- review of documentation about the operation of the district's programs,
 - interviews of administrative, instructional, and support staff across grade levels,
 - interviews of parent advisory council (PAC) representatives and telephone interviews as requested by other parents or members of the general public,
 - review of selected student records for special education (and for student accommodation plans under Section 504) and English learner education,

- surveys of parents of students with disabilities and parents of English learners, and
- observation of classrooms and other facilities.

Exit Meeting: At the end of the onsite visit, the DESE team will hold an informal exit meeting to summarize its comments.

Draft Report: Within approximately 45 business days of the onsite visit, the Onsite Chairperson will forward to the Superintendent a Draft Report containing specific comments from the Program Review. The district will then have 10 business days to review the report for factual accuracy before the publication of a Final Report.

Final Report: The Final Report will be issued within approximately 60 business days of the conclusion of the onsite visit and posted on the Department's website.

Ratings: The onsite team gives a rating for each compliance criterion it reviews; those ratings are "Commendable," "Implemented" (meaning at least substantially implemented), "Partially Implemented," "Not Implemented" (meaning at least substantially not implemented), and "Not Applicable."

Response: Where criteria are found "Partially Implemented" or "Not Implemented," the district must propose corrective action to bring those areas into compliance with the relevant statutes and regulations. This corrective action plan will be due to the Department within 20 business days after the issuance of the Final Report and is subject to the Department's review and approval.

Historical Perspective

During May of 2007, the DESE completed the last full CPR in Lincoln. The review included the following actions and a draft report was issued on August 21, 2007.

- Interviews of nine administrative staff from the Lincoln Public Schools.
- Interviews of 29 teaching and support services staff across all levels, from both the Lincoln Public Schools and the CASE Collaborative classrooms located in the Lincoln Public Schools.
- Interviews of one parent advisory council (PAC) representative, and six other parents.
- Interviews as requested by persons from the general public.
- Student record reviews: A sample of 31 special education records from the Lincoln Public Schools and the CASE Collaborative classrooms located in the Lincoln Public Schools, and nine ELE student records was selected by the Department.
- Surveys of parents of students with disabilities: 60 parents of students with disabilities were sent surveys that solicited information about their experiences with the district's implementation of special education programs, related services and procedural requirements. Eighteen of these parent surveys were returned to the Department of Education for review.
- Surveys of parents of ELE students: Nine parents of ELE students were sent surveys that solicited information about their experiences with the district's implementation of English learner education programs, services, and procedural requirements. Four of these parent surveys were returned to the Department of Education for review.
- Observation of classrooms and other facilities. The team toured the Lincoln School, the Hanscom School, and the Hartwell Building, which houses the school administration and preschool programs. The Team also toured instructional spaces within the district assigned to the CASE Collaborative programs. A sample of approximately 30 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.

The district responded to that draft report with clarifying information and a Final Report was received on October 24, 2007. The district's corrective action plan was approved by DESE on October 21, 2008.

The district received 6 commendations in the area of special education and 1 commendation in the area of civil rights. The commendations were for:

- The quality of special education assessment reports and the timely provision of these documents to parents.
- Extensive and year round preschool screening and spring building-based Kindergarten screenings
- Comprehensive transition practices from Early Intervention to Preschool; preschool services for students with disabilities starting at age 2 years 9 months; and a diagnostic placement protocol for the purpose of assessment.
- High level of commitment to effective, inclusive education, with a low percentage of students placed out of the district to receive special education; common planning time for collaborative programming; implementation of highly effective instructional practices; and training offered to parents and staff on meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.
- Timely provision of documents to parents and procedures to secure consent to implement special education programs and services.
- Full implementation of all Individualized Education Programs; compliance with all elements of the IEPs; ensuring a continuum of services and alternative placements; and exceeding the services required by law.
- An integrative education model in which general and special educators work together to educate the full range of student learners in all schools; a comprehensive professional development program; a teacher mentoring program; and responsive remedial programs.

The areas of corrective action identified in the Final Report are paraphrased below. A complete report can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/reports/>.

Special Education Findings

- Special education Notices of Proposed School District Action lacked details in some cases.
- Parents were allowed to sign IEPs at the end of team meetings and the IEPs did not have the accompanying Notice of Proposed School District Action with them and subsequently the student record was missing this paperwork.
- The district had interpreters at IEP meetings when appropriate but failed to maintain written documentation of the oral translation.
- The district documents did not include information regarding all class and instructional groupings by period, date of birth and teacher.
- Some district social workers did hold Department of Education licensure, although they held state professional licensure.
- Not all general education faculty and paraprofessional staff had participated in training on the state and federal special education requirements and related local special education policies and procedures.
- An instructional space in the Lincoln School did not provide sufficient confidentiality during the delivery of services.

Civil Rights Findings

- The Lincoln Public Schools Parent Handbook and the Hanscom Primary and Middle School Handbooks omitted several required elements, such as the names and contact information for Title

VI and Title IX coordinators, grievance procedures for students and for employees alleging discrimination based on sex or disability, notification that the District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

- The District did not articulate the procedures in place to ensure that counseling and counseling materials are free from bias and stereotypes on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, and homelessness.
- The District did not provide training regarding physical restraint to all faculty and information to parents.
- Lincoln School's shower and locker room facilities offered for boys are not equal to those offered for girls.
- Not all staff had participated in workshops on cultural sensitivity.
- The District did not evaluate all aspects of its K-12 program annually to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities.

English Language Learner Findings

- The District did not provide parents with sufficient information regarding ELL waivers.
- Teachers had not yet completed the state required training on working effectively with LEP students.
- The District has some inconsistency in time spent in direct English language instruction.
- The District needed to expand the types of assessment data used to plan and implement its educational program for its LEP students at the different proficiency levels.
- The District did not have a district-wide effort to include LEP parents in matters pertaining to their children's education, such as through the development of a parent advisory council on English language education.
- The district's parent notification form letter (entitled "English Language Learner (ELL) Program Parent Permission to Begin ELL Services") was missing some of the required information.
- One of the two ESL teachers assigned to teach ESL at that time was not appropriately licensed.
- The ELL classroom at the Lincoln School was not comparable to classrooms provided to the overall student population.
- The District did not formally document periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of its ELE program.
- Student record review indicated that records did not always contain the required information.

Following this review, the District took steps to resolve all the areas of non-compliance. Supporting evidence was provided to the DESE throughout the 2008- 2009 school year until verification of full compliance was received.

On May 12, 2010, the DESE returned to Lincoln to conduct a Mid-Cycle Review. This process included a selected review of 8 of the areas of partial compliance from the 2007 Full Audit. This time, the DESE looked for evidence of compliance to address the following:

- Special education Notices of Proposed School District Action lacked details in some cases.
- Parents were allowed to sign IEPs at the end of team meetings and the IEPs did not have the accompanying Notice of Proposed School District Action with them and subsequently the student record was missing this paperwork.
- The district had interpreters at IEP meetings when appropriate but failed to maintain written documentation of the oral translation.

- The district documents did not include information regarding all class and instructional groupings by period, date of birth and teacher.
- Four district social workers did hold Department of Education licensure, although they held state professional licensure.
- An instructional space in the Lincoln School did not provide sufficient confidentiality during instructional services.

On October 6, 2010, the District received a letter from the DESE documenting Full Compliance in all areas. It is quite rare for a school district to receive a report that awards this commendation. It is important to acknowledge the work of the special education faculty, staff and administrators, along with the support of the School Committee and the Lincoln School community, that made this happen.