

School Committee Briefing

To: Matthew Ferron, Superintendent of Schools

From: Beverly Shea, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

RE: Update from the Office of Pupil Personnel Services

Date: May 15, 2014

RETELL

(Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners) In the past, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education offered periodic training to general educators who had English Language Learners (ELL's) in their classrooms. These professional development offerings were called Category Training, Levels 1-4. In 2011 DESE determined the need to update Category Training to reflect recent research, a mission that was accelerated when the **U.S. Department of Justice determined that the state had failed to take appropriate action to overcome ELL's language barriers by not defining and mandating the basic preparation and training that teachers and other educators require to provide comprehensive instruction.** In response, the **RETELL Initiative** was launched.

The RETELL Initiative is guided by the principle that English Language Learners are entitled to *equity of access to effective teaching and learning*. In order to address the need for comprehensive teacher training in this realm, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has established a **new regulatory requirement for Core Academic Teachers with ELL's in their classrooms**. It is called the **SEI Endorsement** (Sheltered English Immersion). The requirement also applies to administrators who are responsible for the supervision and evaluation of teachers of ELL's.

Between 2012-2016, these teachers and administrators are required to earn the SEI Endorsement at different times based on their assignment to a cohort year. **Hanover is part of the Cohort 3** contingent, which means we will be offering the **SEI Endorsement Course to teachers in the fall of 2014**, beginning in **October and ending in January, 2015**. The **Administrator Course** will be offered in **Hanover in February and March of 2015**. (Please see attached schedules.)

We are fortunate to be able to **host these courses at Hanover High School**, making it more convenient for our teachers and administrators to participate. For the most part, the **courses are offered from 4-7p.m. on Thursday evenings**. Hanover has been identified as a regional site for these courses, which means that teachers from other communities may participate as well. Registration begins in July, and it is up to the individual teachers to register directly with the state. Teachers who may have ELL's in their classrooms in the fall of 2014 will be informed by their principals, with a **letter** provided to us, by DESE, intended for distribution to eligible teachers on or about **June 13, 2014**. **Registration for Cohort 3 participants begins on July 21st**.

This **initiative will continue into the 2015/16 school**, when we will apply again for the opportunity to host another round of the SEI Endorsement Course.

Other Related Points;

- . This regulation applies to collaboratives and charter schools.
- . On or after July 1, 2014, applicants for an initial license as a core academic teacher, principal, assistant principal, supervisor/director of core academic teachers must qualify for an SEI Endorsement.
- . There are **other ways to earn an SEI Endorsement**, including passing the SEI MTEL test.
- . Teachers who took certain Category Trainings in the past may be eligible to sign up for abbreviated versions of the course, called Long and Short Bridge courses. Those will be offered regionally. Hanover is not hosting these courses.
- . From school year 2013 through school year 2016, an incumbent core academic teacher is not Required to earn an SEI Endorsement if the educator does not have an ELL assigned to his/her classroom.
- . **Beginning July 1, 2016, a core academic teacher who is assigned an ELL, must either hold an SEI Endorsement or obtain one within a year.**
- . **New PDP Requirements for ALL seeking renewal of a Professional License on or after July 1, 2016: Requires a new distribution of the required 150 PDP's including at least 15 PDP's in SEI/ESL and 15 PDP's in SPED-strategies for effective schooling for students with disabilities and instruction of students with diverse learning styles.**
- . **Who is considered a CORE Academic Teacher? Subject Specific Teachers of ELL's-English, Reading or Language Arts, Math, Science, Civics, Government, Economics, History, Geography, plus Early Childhood and Elementary Teachers and Teachers of Moderate and Severe Disabilities.**

Corrective Action Plan for the Coordinated Program Review

Enclosed are summaries of all the findings of noncompliance by DESE for our Coordinated Program Review in the areas of Special Education and Civil Rights. The **biggest challenges we face are the requirements involving moving classrooms around and the implementation of a detailed internal monitoring plan with respect to special ed. timelines and such, given our current staffing patterns.** I have just submitted a **Corrective Action Plan** for DESE's approval. We have a year to demonstrate compliance in most areas, although I have to submit a progress report by the end of October, 2014, so training in many areas will begin right after the start of the new school year. DESE would prefer that we make changes to the layout of one hallway at the Center School prior to the start of the 2014.15 school year. They have asked us to submit floor plans to demonstrate the changes we propose over the summer, prior to moving anyone around. With respect to monitoring our timelines and other issues related to compliance at the building level, I will conduct on-site record reviews throughout the year, in addition to working closely with each Special Ed. Coordinator/Team Chair to plan a schedule for the year ahead of time with respect to annual reviews and re-evaluations. Our hope is to find a way to relieve the coordinators of their teaching duties in order to give them more time to monitor their own work, and to free them up to chair the majority of the team meetings in each building in order for us to address the issue in the CPR about needing someone at each team meeting who is able to allocate resources for the district. Clerical support for these positions will also be an important step in the right direction.

CPR Report Summary

Submitted by Beverly Shea,

Director of Pupil Personnel Services

5/15/14

Out of 59 possible areas of focus for **Special Education**, the DESE found our district to be out of compliance in the 16 areas described below. With respect to **Civil Rights**, we were found to be noncompliant in 12 of the 24 focus areas. The **ELE** report will be issued at a later date.

1. **SE 3A Special requirements for students on the autism spectrum**

Based on record reviews and staff interviews, it was determined that teams do not always consider and specifically address the following areas for students on the spectrum; verbal and nonverbal communication needs, the need to develop social interaction skills and proficiencies, needs resulting from unusual responses to sensory experiences, needs resulting from resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, needs resulting from engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, the need for positive behavioral interventions, etc.

After review of the educational advisory issued in 2007, it was clear that no additional documentation is required, and our teams, including speech therapists, occupational therapists, and behavioral consultants, do an extremely thorough and effective job of addressing all of these areas, so we have requested more information and clarification pertaining to this finding. Dese is asking us to develop a checklist as evidence of our practices.

2. **SE8 IEP Team Composition and Attendance**

Based on record reviews, they did not see evidence of consistent attendance at team meetings by general ed. teachers. Additionally, there was no evidence of excusal forms in the files. We are using them now, and will submit them as evidence for the Corrective Action Plan. **It was also determined that a representative of the school district who has the authority to allocate resources is not always present at the meetings.** We have attempted to address this by making recommendations for staffing changes including relieving the Sped. Coordinators/Team Chairs of teaching duties so they are available to chair the majority of the team meetings, in addition to providing them with some clerical support.

3. **SE 9 Timeline for determination of eligibility and provision of documentation to parent**

Based on record review, interviews and parent surveys, the district does not always determine eligibility for a student within the designated timeline of 45 days.

4. **SE 13 Progress Reports and content**

Based on record reviews, it was determined that we lacked consistent evidence of Progress Reports being issued regularly, and in some cases the content was lacking.

5. **SE 14 Review and Revision of IEP's**

IEP meetings are not always held on or before the anniversary date of the previous IEP.

This is an accurate finding. Historically, teams were under the false impression that the life of a one year IEP could be extended beyond the date of the annual review. This practice has been corrected.

6. SE 18A IEP Development and Content

Record review and staff interviews indicated that teams do not regularly consider bullying and its potential impact on students with disabilities. This is an accurate finding as well. Since September, 2013, teams have consistently utilized a bullying form as part of the process.

7. SE 18B Determination of placement; provision of IEP to parent

Record review and staff interviews indicated that the district does not provide 2 copies of the proposed IEP to parents. This is also accurate. We have altered that practice this year, with two copies of the IEP now going out to parents, and recording such on the N1 document attached to the IEP.

8. SE 20 Least Restrictive program selected

Record review indicated that the section of the IEP called Non-participation Justification does not consistently explain why removal of the student from the general ed. classroom is considered critical to the student's program.

9. SE 21 School day and school year requirements

It was determined that IEP teams do not always consider the need for extended year programming. Specifically, it was found that teams often put that decision off until later in the year.

10. SE22 IEP Implementation and Availability

Staff interviews indicated that at the Cedar School, students did not receive reading instruction outlined in their IEP's for a period of time, due to a lack of personnel, and it was determined that parents were not properly notified of the delay in service delivery.

11. SE25A Sending of Copy of Notice to Special Ed. Appeals

Record review indicated that we do not always send notice to the Bureau of Special Ed. Appeals within 5 days when we receive a rejected IEP. While this may have been true in the past, the PPS office has been sending these notices out within the timeline in the recent past.

12. SE32 Parent Advisory Council for Special Education

Interviews indicated that the PAC has not met regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the district's special education programs. While this has historically been the case, I have met with representatives from our PAC several times this year, and plan to continue that practice.

SE 36-see #22

13. SE41 Age Span Requirements

It was determined that there is more than a 48 month age span among students in one of our substantially separate programs at the Center School, for brief periods of time. In order to comply with state regulations, we are required to submit a waiver to the state, which we are in the process developing.

14. SE 48 Equal opportunity to participate in educational, nonacademic, extracurricular and ancillary programs, as well as participation in regular education.

It was determined that due to scheduling issues, students receiving special ed. services are not always able to participate in programs, services and activities with their general ed. peers. Specifically, it was their impression, that students in substantially separate classes at Hanover Middle School, Center and Sylvester, were unable to consistently take part in art and phys. Ed. with their non-disabled peers.

15. SE 54 Professional Development

It was determined that we need to provide professional development to paraprofessionals and general ed. teachers in the following areas;

- a. Review of state and federal SPED requirements and related local SPED policies and procedures.
- b. Analyzing and **accommodating diverse learning styles** of all students in order to achieve an objective of **inclusion** in the gen. ed. classroom of students with diverse learning styles
- c. **Methods of collaboration** among teachers, paraprofessionals and teacher assistants to **accommodate diverse learning styles** of all students in the general ed. classroom.

16. SE 55 Special Education facilities and classrooms

Observations and interviews indicated that special ed. classrooms are not equal in all physical respects to average standards of general ed. facilities and classrooms. Specifically, at Center, the reviewers felt that the substantially separate special ed. classrooms are located in a separate wing and are not fully integrated into the life of the school. O. T. services were observed in the hallway. O.T., Speech and P.T. are conducted in one small and overcrowded space simultaneously, with up to 7 students in the classroom at one time, creating many distractions.

At the high school, the small group instructional spaces are not physically equal to the average standards of general ed. classes. DESE felt they were overcrowded with distractions when serving 4 or more students at one time.

We have serious space constraints in the district, but we will explore alternative floor plans and submit them to DESE for consideration.

CPR Report Summary-Civil Rights -Submitted by Beverly Shea, PPS Director, 5/15/14

CR 3 Gender identity is not included as a protected category in the district's policies regarding access to a full range of education programs.

CR 7 The district does not have an established system of **oral interpretation** to assist parents with limited English **skills**.

CR 8 Gender identity is not included as a protected category in the district's policies regarding accessibility of extracurricular activities.

CR 10A There is **no written code of conduct for teachers**. Also, our non-discrimination policy does not include **gender identity** as a protected category.

CR 10B There are gaps in our **PD for all staff on bullying intervention and prevention**. Also, **employee handbooks** do not contain relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff.

CR 11A The district has not published **grievance procedures for employees** providing for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging discrimination based on sex or disability. In addition, the district does not have **a designated Title II coordinator**.

CR 17A While the district does conduct physical restraint training, we do not provide staff with the **written physical restraint procedures** on an annual basis.

CR 18 The district does not have a **District Curriculum Accommodation Plan** in place. This was the case at the beginning of the school year, but we have one in place now.

CR 20 Not all staff are trained on the **confidentiality of student records**.

CR 21 Not all staff are trained annually regarding their **civil rights responsibilities**.

CR 23 The district is **not providing ELL's with facilities comparable to those provided to the overall student population**. Specifically there was no designated space for English language instruction at the middle school with services provided in an open area in the library. At Cedar, the instructional space is in a small office located in an isolated hallway with no windows and students do not have materials and resources accessible to them.

CR 25 The district **does not evaluate all aspects of its K-12 program annually** to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs.