



Executive Summary BSE Compliance Monitoring Review of the Mastery Charter High School

PART I SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A. Review Process

Prior to the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) monitoring the week of February 4, 2010, the Mastery Charter High School was formally notified of the dates the onsite review would be conducted. Notice and invitation to comment was also provided to the Local Task Force on Right-to-Education. The charter school was informed of its responsibility to compile various reports, written policies, and procedures to document compliance with requirements.

While onsite, the monitoring team employed a variety of techniques to gain an in depth understanding of the charter school's program operations. These techniques included:

- Interviews of charter school administrative and instructional personnel
- Review of policies, notices, plans, outcome and performance data, special education forms and formats, and data reports used and compiled by the charter school (Facilitated Self-Assessment)
- Comprehensive case studies (including classroom observations, interviews of parents, students, and general and special education teachers, and student file reviews).

B. General Findings

In reaching compliance determinations, the BSE monitoring teams apply criteria contained in federal and state special education regulations. Specifically, these are:

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004
- 22 Pa. Code Chapter 711
- 34 CFR Part 300

Commendations

In addition to reporting the status of compliance, the BSE wishes to recognize the Mastery Charter High School for the following:

- The Charter School is commended for its foresight in establishing a school-based mental health program.
- The Charter School is commended for its full time emotional support classroom/program which enables students to receive expanded placement options while remaining at the Charter School.
- The Charter School is commended for the number and variety of additional resources and supports (administrative and teaching staff) devoted to the special education program.
- The Charter School is commended for building a strong infrastructure for parent involvement and communication between parents and staff. All teachers are required to have a minimum of (7) parent contacts per week.

- The Charter School is commended for its comprehensive pre-IEP referral process which involves an intensive approach to address students' needs prior to initiating the formal IEP evaluation process.

This report focuses on compliance with requirements and also contains descriptive information (such as interview results) intended to provide feedback to assist in program planning.

C. Overall Findings

1. FACILITATED SELF-ASSESSMENT (FSA)

The chairperson reviewed the FSA submitted by the charter school and conducted onsite verification activities of the information submitted in the FSA. The onsite verification activities included review of policies, notices, procedures, and charter school file reviews.

FSA	In Compliance	Out of Compliance
Assistive Technology and Services; Hearing Aids	2	0
Positive Behavior Support Policy	1	0
Child Find (Annual Public Notice and General Dissemination Materials)	1	0
Confidentiality	1	0
Dispute Resolution (Due process hearing decision implementation)	1	0
Exclusions: Suspensions and Expulsions (Procedural Requirements)	1	0
Independent Education Evaluation	1	0
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	1	0
Provision of Extended School Year Services	1	0
Provision of Related Service Including Psychological Counseling	1	0
Parent Training	1	0
Public School Enrollment	1	0
Surrogate Parents (Students Requiring)	1	0
Personnel Training	1	0
Intensive Interagency Approach	1	0
Summary of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance/Procedural Safeguard Requirements for Graduation	1	0
Disproportionate Representation that is the Result of Inappropriate Identification	1	0

IMPROVEMENT PLAN REQUIRED	Yes	No
Effective use of Dispute Resolution	0	1
Graduation Rates (SPP)	0	1
Dropout Rates (SPP)	0	1
Suspensions (Rates)	0	1
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) (SPP)	0	1
Participation in PSSA and PASA (SPP)	0	1
Participation in Charter-Wide Assessment	0	1
Public School Enrollment	0	1
Disproportionate Representation due to Identification, Educational Environment, Suspension or Expulsion	0	1

2. FILE REVIEW (Student case studies)

The education records of randomly selected students participating in special education programs were studied to determine whether the charter school complied with essential requirements.

The status of compliance of the Mastery Charter High School is as follows:

Sections of the FILE REVIEW	In Compliance	Out of Compliance	NA
Essential Student Documents Are Present and Were Prepared Within Timelines	102	7	83
Evaluation/Reevaluation: Process and Content	396	11	529
Individualized Education Program: Process and Content	640	5	315
Procedural Safeguards: Process and Content	136	7	1
TOTALS	1274	30	928

3. TEACHER AND PARENT INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with parents and teachers of students selected by the BSE for the sample group. The goal is to determine if the charter school involves parents and professionals in required processes (e.g., evaluation, IEP development), whether programs and services are being provided, and whether the charter school provides training to enhance knowledge. Parent and teacher satisfaction with the special education program is also generally assessed.

	# Yes Responses	# No Responses	# of Other Responses
Program Implementation: General Ed Teacher Interviews	261	1	38
Program Implementation: Special Ed Teacher Interviews	329	0	31
Program Implementation: Parent Interviews	131	15	102
TOTALS	721	16	171

4. STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Results of the student interviews are reflected on the Charter School Corrective Action Verification/Compliance and Improvement Planning document.

5. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Observations are conducted in classrooms of students selected by the BSE for the sample group.

	# Yes Responses	# No Responses	# of Other Responses
Classroom Observations	56	0	21

PART II CORRECTIVE ACTION PROCESS

PART I of this report presented an overall summary of findings. In the Appendix to the report, we have provided the detailed findings for each of the criteria of the compliance monitoring document, i.e. FSA, File Reviews, Interviews and Classroom Observations. The detailed report of findings includes:

- Criteria Number
- Statements of all requirements
- Whether each requirement was met, not met, not applicable or other
- Statements of corrective action required for those criteria not met. *Criteria not met that require corrective action by the charter school are gray-shaded.*

Charter schools are advised that in accordance with requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, all noncompliance must be corrected as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from the date of the monitoring report. The BSE is required to verify timely correction of noncompliance, and must report annually to the federal government and the public on this requirement.

Upon receipt of this report, the charter school should review the corrective action and improvement planning required. The report is formatted so that findings from all components of the monitoring are consolidated by topical area. The report lists the finding, and whether corrective action is required. For certain types of findings, corrective action will be prescribed, and will not vary from charter school to charter school. For example, if the finding is that the charter school lacks a specific required policy, it is reasonable to have the BSE prescribe a standardized remedy and timeline for correcting this deficiency. However, the majority of corrective action activities will be individually designed by the charter school based on their own unique circumstances and goals.

With respect to the File Review, because students were selected at random, findings are generalized to the entire population of students with disabilities. During the corrective action review, the BSE Single Point of Contact (SPOC) will generally select students at random and not focus solely on those students in the original sample. However in specific circumstances, e.g. students of secondary transition age, follow up of students in the original sample is required. Consequently, the charter school should approach corrective action on a systemic basis. If there has been a finding of noncompliance regarding the appropriateness or implementation of an individual student's program, the individual students are identified to the charter school and, because of the significance of the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to these students; the charter school must take immediate, individual corrective action.

The SPOC will schedule an onsite visit with the charter school within 60 days following issuance of the monitoring report. The SPOC, charter school, and PaTTAN staff will develop a Charter School Corrective Action Verification/Compliance and Improvement Plan. PaTTAN and IU staff is available to assist the charter school.

Upon conclusion of the corrective action process, the charter school will be notified of its successful completion of the monitoring process.