



# Somerville Public Schools

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Tiered Focused Monitoring Review of SPS Special Education Program and civil rights protocols set for week of March 8 as part of DESE 3-year review cycle**

Somerville, MA -- During the week of March 8, 2021 the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM) will conduct a Tiered Focused Monitoring Review of Somerville Public Schools. The Office of Public School Monitoring visits each district and charter school every three years to monitor compliance with federal and state special education and civil rights regulations. Areas of review related to special education include student assessments, determination of eligibility, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team process, and IEP development and implementation. Areas of review related to civil rights include bullying, student discipline, physical restraint, and equal access to school programs for all students.

In addition to the onsite visit, parent outreach is an important part of the review process. The review chairperson from the Office of Public School Monitoring will send all parents of students with disabilities an online survey that focuses on key areas of their child's special education program. Survey results will contribute to the development of a report. During the onsite review, the Office of Public School Monitoring will interview the chairperson(s) of the district's Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). Other onsite activities may include interviews of district staff and administrators, reviews of student records, and onsite observations.

Parents and other individuals may call Joan Brinckerhoff, Public School Monitoring Chairperson, at (781) 338-3715 to request a telephone interview. If an individual requires an accommodation, such as translation, to participate in an interview, the Department will make the necessary arrangements.

Within approximately 60 business days after the onsite visit, the review chairperson will provide the Somerville Public Schools with a report with information about areas in which SPS meets or exceeds regulatory requirements and areas in which the district requires assistance to correct or improve practices. The public will be able to access the report at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/reports/>.

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