



Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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April 9, 2021

Shaun Cusson
Executive Vice President
Hillcrest Educational Centers, Inc.
788 South Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Re: Approved Special Education Schools Mid-cycle Review
A - Hillcrest Autism Spectrum Disorder Residential Program
B - Housatonic Academy Program
C - Intensive Residential Treatment Program
D - Residential Program

Dear Mr. Cusson:

Enclosed is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“Department”) Approved Special Education Schools Mid-cycle Review Final Report based upon the Mid-cycle Review conducted for your Approved Special Education School Programs in March 2021.

This report includes detailed information describing the determinations of the Department about the implementation status of each requirement of the selected Mid-cycle Review criteria as well as implementation of new state or federal special education requirements enacted since your programs’ last Program Review. Please note that all requirements were found to be fully implemented; therefore, the Department does not need to order a corrective action plan.

At this time, the Department requests that you upload a separate statement signed by you and the Chairperson of your Board of Directors which describes the steps the programs are taking to make the Department’s report available to staff, parent groups and the general public. Please go into the WBMS and upload your programs’ statement that has been signed by you and the chairperson of your Board of Directors into Additional Documents no later than **April 28, 2021**. You can do this by accessing: > MCR > Self-Assessment > Additional Documents.

The approval certificates enclosed with this correspondence shall remain in effect until August 31, 2024 and will be contingent upon continued compliance with all regulations contained within 603 CMR 28.00 “Special 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 46.00 “Prevention of Physical Restraint and Requirements If Used.” The Department may change this approval status at any point during this three-year period if circumstances arise that warrant such a change.

Please be advised that the attached Department Approval Certificates must be conspicuously posted in a public place within the programs as required by 603 CMR 28.09.

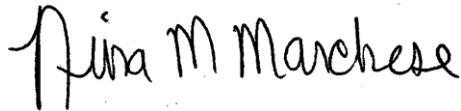
The Department will notify you of your programs’ next regularly scheduled Program Review several months before it is to occur. At this time, we anticipate the next routine monitoring visit to occur sometime during the 2023-2024 school year, unless the Department determines that there is some reason to schedule this visit earlier.

In closing, we would like to extend our thanks to the administration and staff who shared their time and thoughts so generously during the preparation and review phases of the visit. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the Team Chairperson - Bridgette Mekkaoui at bridgette.mekkaoui@mass.gov.

Sincerely,



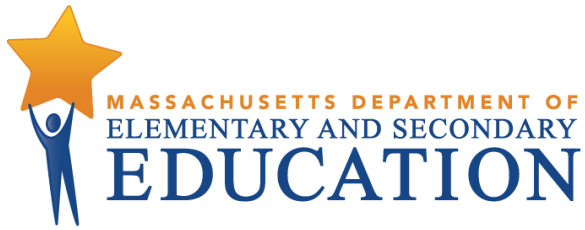
Bridgette Mekkaoui, Mid-cycle Review Chairperson
Office of Approved Special Education Schools



Nina M. Marchese, M.Ed., Director
Office of Approved Special Education Schools

c: Gerard Burke, President of the Board of Directors
Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
Russell Johnston, Ph.D., Senior Associate Commissioner
Karen Brann, Supervisor, Office of Approved Special Education Schools

Encl.: Mid-cycle Review Report
Full Approval Certificate, Expiration Date: August 31, 2024
Hillcrest Autism Spectrum Disorder Residential Program
Housatonic Academy Program
Intensive Residential Treatment Program
Residential Program



MID-CYCLE REVIEW REPORT
Hillcrest Educational Centers, Inc.
MCR Onsite Dates: 03/29/2021 - 04/02/2021

Programs under review for the agency:

- A - Hillcrest Autism Spectrum Disorder Residential Program**
- B - Housatonic Academy Program**
- C - Intensive Residential Treatment Program**
- D - Residential Program**



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MID-CYCLE REVIEW REPORT

PS Criterion #1.2 - Program & Student Descriptions, Program Capacity

Rating:

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation, interviews and observations indicated that the program served students consistent with characteristics included in the approved Program & Student Description regarding population of students to be served, ages of students, and educational and behavioral characteristics of students.

PS Criterion #2.2 - Approvals, Licenses, Certificates of Inspection

Rating:

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation and observations indicated that there were current approvals, licenses and certificates of inspection from appropriate local authorities for all buildings used by the students.

PS Criterion #2.3 - EEC Licensure (Residential Programs Only)

Rating:

Implemented

Applies To:

A - Hillcrest Autism Spectrum Disorder Residential Program, C - Hillcrest Intensive Residential Treatment Program, D - Hillcrest Residential Program

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation and observations indicated that there was a current license from the Department of Early Education and Care for all residential facilities.

PS Criterion #3.1(d) - Evacuation and Emergency Procedures

Rating:

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation and interviews indicated that the program has developed and implemented Evacuation and Emergency Procedures that comply with 603 CMR 18.05(10).

PS Criterion #4.5 - Immediate Notification**Rating:**

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation and student records indicated that the policy on Immediate Notification Regarding Serious Incidents met the current requirements and included notification to appropriate parties of such incidents, as well as the person responsible for oversight. A review of student records showed that the program maintains copies of all incidents regarding students.

PS Criterion #5.2(a) - Contracts**Rating:**

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of student records indicated the program maintained a signed written contract for each enrolled student consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 28.06(3)(f).

PS Criterion #6.1 - Daily Instructional Hours/6.4 School Days Per Year**Rating:**

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation indicated that all students were scheduled to receive the required number of instructional hours per year, and that the required number of school days per year was scheduled for all students.

PS Criterion #8.5 - Current IEP & Student Roster**Rating:**

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation and review of student records indicated that there was a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each enrolled Massachusetts student that had been issued by the responsible public school district and consented to by the student's parent or the student, when applicable. In student records where an IEP was found not to be current, there was documentation of the program's efforts to obtain a current IEP from the responsible school district.

PS Criterion #9.7 - Terminations**Rating:**

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation and staff interviews indicated that the program has developed and implements a written termination policy that includes provisions related to planned and emergency termination, and that the policy is compliant with regulatory requirements.

PS Criterion #11.3 - Educational Administrator Qualifications**Rating:**

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation indicated that the Educational Administrator possessed the required qualifications to serve in this position.

PS Criterion #11.4 - Teachers (Special Education Teachers and General Education Teachers)**Rating:**

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation indicated that at the time of the Mid-cycle Review the teaching staff were appropriately licensed or had been granted an appropriate waiver for the 2020-2021 school year.

PS Criterion #11.5 - Related Services Staff**Rating:**

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation indicated that the staff providing or supervising the provision of related services were appropriately certified, licensed or registered in their professional areas.

PS Criterion #11.6 - Master Staff Roster**Rating:**

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

A review of documentation indicated that at the time of the Mid-Cycle Review, the Master Staff Roster contained the names, program job titles, corresponding Uniform Financial Report (UFR) title numbers and full-time equivalents (FTE) for all staff. The Master Staff Roster also accurately corresponded to the most recently approved DESE staffing plan.

PS Criterion #11.10 - Supervision of Direct Care Day and Residential Staff**Rating:**

Implemented

Applies To:

All

Basis for Findings:

Review of documentation, staff records and interviews indicated the program has developed and implemented a written plan to indicate how regularly scheduled conferences occur between residential childcare workers and residential supervisors. Review of documentation, staff records and interviews also indicated the program provided regular supervision of all direct care workers by someone who has; supervisory and administrative responsibility within the program and regularly scheduled conferences occurred between direct care workers and supervisor and between teachers, direct care workers and other educational personnel.