**MASSACHUSETTS**

**RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM GUIDELINES**



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Massachusetts Recovery High School programs provide a structured plan of recovery for students who have been diagnosed with substance use disorder or dependency and offer students a comprehensive four-year high school education. Recovery High School programs are not autonomous schools or school districts; they are public programs operated by a school district or education collaboratives. Recovery High School programs are educational options for students needing support for recovery from addiction, combined with a comprehensive high school education.

These guidelines were adapted from the Association of Recovery Schools Accreditation Manual and is meant to serve as guidance on program quality expectations for Massachusetts Recovery High Schools programs. The expectations criteria included in this manual will be used as part of the program evaluation site visit conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Department will evolve these program quality expectations over time as needed.

The Department plans to send a team to conduct a site visit at each Massachusetts Recovery High School, at least once every two years. Prior to the visit, the Recovery High School program will be asked to self-asses their program on these expectations and to provide that information to the Department, so it may be used as a reference during the site visit and subsequent discussions. A post-visit letter will be sent out from the Department to the RHS programs within approximately two weeks of the site visit.

Each program quality expectation section will be measured on a continuum of four implementation levels to indicate the quality of **evidence** available.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Limited Evidence | Developing | Proficient | Exemplary |
| Necessary organizational practices, structures, and/or processes are nonexistent, evidence is limited, or practices are so infrequent that their impact is negligible. | Organizational practices, structures, and/or processes exist on paper or are being tried but are not yet fully developed or implemented consistently. For example, data might be collected, but only a few people are looking at or effectively using the information. | Systems are functional, and their structures and processes have been implemented consistently throughout the school; however, either communication between systems may be lacking or systems do not contribute to systemic decision making. | The organizational practices, structures, and processes are functioning effectively, and timely feedback systems are embedded to identify potential problems and challenges. Feedback systems include progress checks to inform timely course corrections. The practice is embedded into the school culture. |

Please contact the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with any questions at (781)338-3000.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

*Program Quality Expectations*

[**Section 1: School Organization**……………page 3](#_School_Organization)

* 1. Strategic Planning
  2. Board Involvement
  3. School Leadership
  4. Community Partnership
  5. Public Relations and Privacy Issues
  6. Program Evaluation

[**Section 2: School Community**……………page 5](#_School_Community)

2.1 Target Population

2.2 Enrollment Diversity

2.3 Transitional Planning and School Support

2.4 Climate and Culture

2.5 Parent Engagement

2.6 Sensitivity to Differences

[**Section 3: Recovery Practices**……………page 7](#_Recovery_Practices)

3.1 Recovery Supports

3.2 Recovery Climate

3.3 Recovery Assessment

3.4 Recovery/Therapeutic Staff Evaluation and Professional Development

3.5 Relapse Prevention and Recovery Support

3.6 Post Recovery High School Transition

[**Section 4: Educational Practices**……………page 10](#_Educational_Practices)

4.1 Diploma

4.2 High Quality Curriculum and Instruction

4.3 Data-Driven Instruction

4.4 Teaching Staff Evaluation and Professional Development

4.5 Special Education Services

4.6 College and Career Planning

# ***School Organization***

**1.1 Strategic Planning**: Does the Recovery High School operate with a strategic plan that provides for a reasonable level of autonomy and is created for long-term sustainability and viability?

*Evidence examples: budget, strategic/school improvement plan, organizational chart*

1. operates with organizational autonomy from sponsors, particularly in the area of school leadership
2. this autonomy is reflected in the mission statement
3. updates a school improvement plan at least annually
4. has a budget that is realistic and attainable
5. has an outreach plan that is updated at least annually
6. has realistic enrollment projections
7. has a clear plan to adapt to leadership changes

**1.2 Board Involvement**: Does the Recovery High School have a functional and appropriately involved board with a Director/Principal of RHS, Director of a Collaborative or Superintendent, members from established partnerships and other school personnel?

*Evidence examples: organizational charts, employee handbook, interviews, focus groups feedback, school documentation*

1. has members with divergent areas of expertise that benefit the school
2. receives regular updates from leaders
3. operates with financial oversight of school
4. regularly evaluates and provides feedback to leadership
5. all members have a well-defined relationship with leaders
6. reflects the diversity of the school and the local community

**1.3 School Leadership**: Does the Recovery High School have a recognized and fully trained leader or leaders in both academic and therapeutic programs who operate with a level of autonomy and flexibility within the larger organizational system?

*Evidence examples: organizational chart, employee handbook, interviews, focus groups feedback, school documentation*

1. possesses a leader trained in therapeutic and educational content
2. leader is provided with qualified support staff
3. personnel have appropriate certification and training
4. leader provides professional development
5. has a clearly defined job description with their roles and responsibilities
6. operates with autonomy regarding issues of treatment and education

**1.4 Community Partnerships**: Does the Recovery High School establish partnerships with local schools, treatments centers and other community resources to create a coordinated system of support?

*Evidence examples: list of collaborations, community resources, school and treatment partner, focus groups*

1. has collaborative and meaningful partnerships with local schools
2. has collaborative and meaningful partnerships with local treatment centers and mental health providers
3. has an official agreement with collaborative partners
4. local resources are leveraged to provide the best possible services for students
5. is a good community partner and offers services to the local community

**1.5 Privacy Issues**: Does the Recovery High School and its governing body respect the privacy of its students and families?

*Evidence examples: parent materials, privacy statement, public relations form, FERPA and HIPAA policy statements*

1. has a plan to protect confidential student records under the guidelines of FERPA
2. has adequate documentation and procedures for HIPAA compliance

**1.6** **Program Evaluation**: Does the Recovery High School perform regular evaluations for program improvements and identify areas for staff trainings?

*Evidence examples: school documentation, focus groups feedback, interviews*

1. disaggregates achievement and recovery data demographically for quality improvement
2. student assessment data is systematically analyzed to identify gaps and areas to strengthen in educational performance
3. student recovery data is systematically analyzed to identify gaps and areas to strengthen in recovery support and relapse prevention

# ***School Community***

**2.1** **Focus Population**: Does the Recovery High School have a clearly defined eligibility criterion aligned with the mission to support recovery from substance use and co-occurring disorder?

*Evidence examples: admission material, student handbook, admission policy*

1. the admissions requirements clearly reflect the stated mission of the school
2. has clearly documented admission procedures
3. admission materials clearly define admissions requirements
4. admission materials are available in multiple formats
5. admission criteria contain substance use/misuse treatment requirements
6. admission criteria contain age and educational progress requirements
7. admission requirements do not place undue burden on the applicant
8. lottery procedures (if needed) are simple and are fair to all applicants

**2.2** **Enrollment Diversity**: Does the Recovery High School’s admission and recruitment procedures reflect intentionality around enrolling a diverse student body?

*Evidence examples: admission material, student handbook, admission policy*

1. admission materials are available in multiple languages and/or can be translated
2. school handbook contains language promoting diversity
3. student body is made up of a diverse population comparable to that of the local school districts or communities

**2.3** **Transitional Planning and Support**: Does the Recovery High School have clear procedures for transitioning students from traditional school, community or treatment settings into the school setting?

*Evidence examples: school documents, focus groups feedback, interviews*

1. school has procedures in place to ensure that a student’s prior educational records are obtained in a timely manner and made available to relevant staff as needed
2. school has procedures in place to ensure that a student’s prior treatment and placement information is obtained in a timely manner and made available to relevant staff
3. baseline assessments are gathered when a student enrolls, and that data is shared with relevant staff

**2.4** **Climate and Culture**: Does the Recovery High School foster a safe, positive, healthy and inclusive whole-school learning environment that uses restorative practices?

*Evidence examples: school documents, focus groups, school policies, interviews*

1. school provides a discipline policy that is responsive/restorative rather than punitive
2. expectations and outcomes of behavior are clearly outlined in the school’s handbook
3. school enable students to build positive relationships with peers and adults
4. school promotes academic and non-academic success

**2.5** **Family Engagement**: Does the Recovery High School actively engage parents/guardians and families, and are parents/guardians acknowledged and involved in the education and recovery process? Does the school provide training and support for families to assist in promoting healthy growth and academic achievement for each student?

*Evidence examples: school documents, parent interviews*

1. school receives written consent from both the parents/guardians and the student to communicate and be actively involved in the education and recovery of the student
2. school frequently communicates with parents/guardians
3. information shared with parents/guardians is relevant and timely
4. parents feel welcome at the school
5. school provides support for parents/guardians to be part of the child’s recovery
6. school provides academic and sobriety data
7. school provides information via multiple modalities, including paper and electronic

**2.6** **Sensitivity to Differences**: Does the Recovery High School or its governing body create policies and procedures that promote sensitivity to human differences and are responsive to student’s individual needs?

*Evidence examples: school documents, focus groups feedback, interviews*

1. school has policies in place that promote the acceptance of diversity among students, including gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation
2. school has a bullying prevention and intervention plan
3. responses to violations are handled in a timely manner including notifying families and the proper personnel

# ***Recovery Practices***

**3.1** **Recovery Supports**: Are recovery supports and relapse prevention measures meeting the needs of students?

*Evidence examples: school documents, focus groups feedback, interviews, survey data*

1. school staff are providing recovery supports and relapse prevention efforts to meet students’ needs
2. students agree that the current support and relapse prevention practices are meeting their needs
3. there are clear and regular lines of communication between and among school staff members regarding student’s needs for recovery support and relapse prevention
4. recovery support and relapse prevention are continually updated to meet the needs of their students
5. students report that they are making progress in their recovery efforts

**3.2** **Recovery Climate**: Does the Recovery High School provide a recovery-oriented school climate that promotes a healthy relationship among faculty, student and their families?

*Evidence examples: school documents, focus groups feedback, interviews, survey*

1. school provides a strong, supportive recovery community
2. relationships between staff and students are healthy and respectful demonstrating clear boundaries between and among both groups
3. school incorporates an intake process that involves faculty, students, their families and/or supportive networks
4. recovery policies and supports are clearly defined for students and families as part of the intake process
5. recovery related talk is modeled and supported by school staff
6. there are opportunities for students and staff to provide positive feedback and support as part of the school culture

**3.3** **Recovery Assessment**: Does the Recovery High School collect data for initial screening, progress monitoring and outcome measures to assess and improve short and long-term results for students?

*Evidence examples: school documentation, data collection*

1. school collects screening data that are reliable and fully implemented
2. school performs active progress monitoring
3. school collects outcome measures that are reliable and implemented well
4. data is provided to relevant staff on a regular basis
5. data is actively reviewed and utilized to improve student’s outcomes
6. post RHS experience, follow-up data is collected and reviewed

**3.4** **Recovery/Therapeutic Staff Evaluation and Professional Development**: Are the recovery/therapeutic staff appropriately trained for their current position, with ongoing professional development in areas of the school community, such as health and therapeutic practices, cultural competence and adolescent development?

*Evidence examples: school documentation, employment records*

1. recovery/therapeutic staff members are appropriately licensed
2. recovery/therapeutic staff members are deployed in different contexts throughout the school to maximize their contributions
3. recovery/therapeutic staff receive feedback from performance evaluations
4. recovery/therapeutic staff receives professional development in evidence-based substance use and co-occurring disorders best practices

**3.5 Relapse Prevention and Recovery Support**: Does the Recovery High School have services throughout the school year as well as in the summer to support students’ plan to abstain from substance use and recover from substance use and co-occurring disorders, from intervention through recovery maintenance and relapse prevention?

*Evidence examples: school documents, school schedules*

1. school provides year-round services to support student’s recovery
2. school has services to support a students’ recovery with a licensed counselor available daily
3. mandatory random drug testing occurs on a regular basis
4. processes for all students to develop their own plans of recovery are in place
5. peer support and psycho-educational groups occur on a daily basis
6. specific policies and procedures are in place to support relapsed students
7. students are provided with access to mental health professionals on a regular basis or as needed

**3.6** **Post-Recovery High School Transition**: Does the Recovery High School have processes in place to help students transition smoothly from the recovery supports provided by the school to maintain sobriety?

*Evidence examples: school documents, interviews, resources, partnerships*

1. school works with students to design a transition plan for recovery supports after leaving the school
2. transition plan is a logical extension of the students’ current recovery plan
3. recovery plan includes information about recovery supports in the community to which the student will have easy access to
4. recovery plan includes access to behavioral health professionals when needed

# ***Educational Practices***

**4.1 Diploma**: Does the Recovery High School offer credits leading to state recognized high school diploma and does the offer the required courses needed to graduate?

*Evidence examples: school documents, curriculum*

1. school offers credits leading to a high school diploma
2. core courses needed are offered with enough frequency to allow a student to graduate on schedule
3. all courses offered have qualified instructors
4. curriculum is aligned to existing state standards
5. school offers accelerated coursework or opportunities for students
6. school provides opportunities for students who need to earn additional credits

**4.2 High Quality Curriculum and Instruction**: Does the Recovery High School provide high-quality curricula and classroom instruction?

*Evidence examples: school documents, interviews, curriculum*

1. school provides a quality education that includes a rigorous curriculum that is focused on core learning objectives
2. curricula are systematically reviewed to ensure there are no gaps in the student’s knowledge
3. teachers provide quality classrooms lessons that are appropriately paced
4. lessons are differentiated according to student learning styles/needs
5. classroom lessons have clear goals and outcomes

**4.3 Data-Driven Instruction**: Is the recovery High School curriculum and classroom instruction data-driven?

*Evidence examples: classroom observation, lesson plans, curriculum, IEPs*

1. school uses standardized and/or classroom assessments that are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives
2. assessment results are received by classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions
3. assessments have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities
4. assessment results are used to guide instruction or make adjustment to curriculum

**4.4 Teaching Staff Evaluation and Professional Development**: Is the teaching appropriately trained for their current position and does the Recovery High School perform regular performance evaluation to improve the quality of instruction? Does the recovery High School provide professional development in areas relevant to the education community?

*Evidence examples: classroom observation, document review, employee records*

1. teaching staff are appropriately licensed
2. teaching staff are regularly evaluated on their performance
3. performance evaluation system is understood by all teaching staff
4. teaching staff receive regular feedback from the performance evaluation
5. teaching staff receive professional development in evidence-based educational practices that meet the needs of their students
6. a record is kept of all teaching staff’s professional development

**4.5 Special Education Services**: For students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Accommodations Plan; are they in place?

*Evidence examples: school documents, IEPs, behavioral plans, school policies*

1. all students’ IEPs are up to date and contain the appropriate signatures
2. student goals and educational outcomes are designed for each student
3. staff are receiving appropriate training and provided with professional development opportunities in special education supports and services

**4.6 College and Career Planning**: Does the Recovery High School have criteria and plans to help students transition smoothly from the school to the student’s next educational or workforce setting, preparing the student for the broadest selection of reasonable post-secondary options?

*Evidence examples: school documents, interviews*

1. school provides a counselor who is trained to provide career and post-secondary advice
2. opportunities exist to explore post-secondary options
3. opportunities exist to explore workforce opportunities
4. workforce development training is available
5. ACT and SAT prep is available