

Needham Public Schools

**A school and community partnership that creates excited learners,
inspires excellence, and fosters integrity**



District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)

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DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATION PLAN OVERVIEW

The DCAP is the result of a collaborative effort from a broad-based team of educators and support personnel from across the district who came together to examine our belief systems and to develop a common vision for what all educators in the Needham Public Schools are expected to know and do to support ALL learners. Their work ultimately guided the development of this document. With this document in hand, the committee and district are now well-positioned to begin to identify our strengths and areas of growth within an RTI or tiered intervention model of support for students at each level across the district.

What is a DCAP?

DCAP stands for “District Curriculum Accommodation Plan.” Districts are required by Massachusetts General Law to have a DCAP and a recent amendment includes the role of school councils in the DCAP. Language directly from the law is below.

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38Q1/2

“A school district shall adopt and implement a curriculum accommodation plan to assist principals in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet the students’ needs in regular education. The plan shall be designed to assist the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all children in the regular classroom and in providing appropriate services and support within the regular education programming, including, but not limited to, direct and systematic instruction in reading and provision of services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning, or who do not qualify for special education services under chapter 71B. The curriculum accommodation plan shall include provisions encouraging teacher mentoring and collaboration and parental involvement.”

School Councils and District Accommodation Plan, Ch. 71 Section 59C -Amended Language

“The school council, including the school principal, shall meet regularly and shall assist in the identification of the educational needs of all students attending the school, shall make recommendations to the principal for the development, implementation and assessment of the Curriculum Accommodation Plan required pursuant to Section 38Q1/2, shall assist in the review of the annual school budget and in the formulation of a School Improvement Plan.”

What is the purpose of the DCAP?

The Needham Public Schools District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) is a resource for all educators and parents to assist with meeting the needs of all learners.

The DCAP includes the following:

- Information that can assist teachers in analyzing the diverse learning styles of students within the general classroom
- Examples of accommodations and strategies that can be used within a general education classroom to meet the needs of all learners
- General education services and supports available to students and teachers to support both academic and social-emotional growth
- Services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning
- Encouragement of teacher mentoring and collaboration, and provision of professional development to assist general education staff
- Encouragement of parental involvement in their student's education

How does the DCAP help teacher instruction and practices, students, and parents?

The DCAP is a great resource to identify techniques/accommodations that can be provided to all students in the general education classroom. No two students are the same; we accommodate and differentiate our instruction and curriculum to meet students where they are. It is expected that across content areas and grade-levels, students will need various levels of supports. Needing accommodations does not mean a student is at-risk in their learning; all individuals vary in their needs based on content, age, development, social/emotional wellbeing, external factors, and more. The DCAP can be a reference and resource to school staff, as well as a resource for parents to see the wide range of supports that their students can receive within the general education setting, and clarifying the difference between regular accommodations that can be provided to students and those more significant accommodations and modifications that require an IEP or 504 plan.

How do students gain access to the supports, interventions, and accommodations noted within the DCAP?

All staff may provide individual accommodations to students on an as-needed basis and specific to the content or situation. This document includes curriculum accommodations for elementary, middle, and high school. The DCAP includes suggestions for accommodating concerns regarding academic progress as well as strategies and interventions designed to resolve social and behavioral issues. While it lists best practices, sample strategies and other actions from which the teachers and collaborating staff may select for appropriate accommodations for individual students, in no way does the DCAP limit the accommodations that staff may choose to implement in order to meet a student's needs.

Building based Student Support Teams, Teacher Support Teams, and Data Teams meet on a regular basis and provide general education teachers the opportunity to work together to identify accommodations and interventions designed to meet the needs of students. Consult with specialists who can provide important information and expertise to the general education teacher are a common part of the SST/TST meetings. These support teams use a problem solving process to discuss specific students who encounter learning and behavioral challenges, analyze the potential reasons for the challenge, develop and implement a plan to overcome the challenge, and monitor progress. Our schools employ the services of many specialists for the purpose of assisting students who need extra support. Parent/Guardian communication is an important part of the process as well. Establishing home/school connections is a strategy that is often implemented as a result of referral to these support teams.

NEEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS DCAP VALUE STATEMENT

Our mission is to ensure high levels of learning for ALL students. Our work is guided by the following five core beliefs:

Core Belief 1: ALL students can learn

The Needham Public Schools believe that all students can learn and succeed when given the right opportunities. We recognize that each student brings a unique background, skill set, interests, and learning style to the classroom and that curriculum must be designed from the start to meet these diverse needs. We also know that students acquire skills and express their learning in a myriad of ways. Providing a variety of pathways for students to approach learning tasks and demonstrate understanding is not only essential to the learning process, but also gives students choice and options that can fuel their desire for lifelong learning.

Core Belief 2: High Quality Classroom Instruction grounded in standards-based practices is essential

We believe that each student must have the opportunity to experience high quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices that enable them to be engaged in challenging, creative, and rigorous learning activities.

- a. Instructional practices are guided by a well articulated, engaging curriculum that is aligned to standards, delivered in a way that ensures students acquire both content and skills and provides students with a range of opportunities to demonstrate their learning.
- b. Differentiation is essential to instruction and maintains rigor in standards based practice. Differentiation increases flexibility and adaptation to student needs so that all students can learn from instructional practices and materials that are accessible to them, including the ways in which they take in information, process as they learn, show what they have learned, and engage with instruction and materials.
- c. Developing competencies in social-emotional learning is critical for student success in life. Social emotional learning practices in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationships, and responsible decision making are specifically taught and embedded throughout the school day. Students ability to learn well depends not just on instruction but also on factors such as the classroom climate, school culture, a sense of belonging with peers, positive relationships with teachers, and the feedback they receive.
- d. Assessment practices are in place that monitor student progress as well as efficacy of instruction. Teachers monitor progress frequently to make decisions about changes to instruction that best address student needs. Universal screenings and diagnostic assessments are included as some of the tools used to inform differentiated instructional practices. Data from these assessment tools is analyzed on a regular basis to inform day to day practices as well as to measure the success of identified interventions.
- e. Students are taught and have multiple opportunities to practice being reflective about their own progress and influence their own learning. Learning targets are explicit, students are able to

gauge their progress towards those targets and are able to identify strategies that would enable them to advance their own learning.

Core Belief 3: Systematic Approaches to Instruction and Intervention are an embedded part of all teaching practices

Interventions are part of a system that responds equitably to each student, regardless of which teachers are assigned to them. Teachers and their respective teams systematically identify, monitor, and revise individual student intervention needs. Multiple skills and perspectives are applied to developing intervention strategies for individuals and small groups. Identified strategies are applied and their efficacy assessed at regular intervals.

Core Belief 4: A Culture of Continuous Learning Strengthens our Capacity to Support All Students

We are committed to fostering a teaching culture that champions continuous learning, improvement, and high performance. Professional learning is embedded in collaborative team culture and team time is structured and used to support these efforts. All teachers and support staff share collective ownership of and responsibility for the learning of all students.

Core Belief 5: Parent Engagement and Communication are key to student success

Parent and teacher partnerships and involvement with the school are key to the overall success of our students. We have much to learn about our students from their family and life experiences that can enhance and support the learning process. It is also our responsibility to partner with parents in a way that strengthens everyone’s understanding of academic and social-emotional expectations and guides the process of supporting each child’s educational experience.

CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations are ways to assist students in accessing the curriculum more effectively. Accommodations are provided within the general education classroom and may be available to any/all students. Such changes are made to provide a student with equal access to learning along with an equal opportunity to be able to show what he/she knows or can do.

Accommodations do **NOT** change the instructional level or content, delivery of instruction, or performance criteria. These latter changes are called modifications or “specially designed instruction” and those are only appropriate for students on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP.)

The following list of accommodations high lights possibilities for teachers to use within their classroom instruction. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather a starting point for teachers as they consider how to best reach and teach all students.

ASSESSMENT ACCOMMODATIONS
Format <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Fill-In-the-Blanks: (blanks at the end of sentence)● Graphic organizers

- Word bank
- Short answers rather than essay
- Fewer answer choices (multiple choice and matching)
- Reduced number of items/problems
- Open-note or open-book
- Simplified directions
- Chunking
- Simplified vocabulary
- Alternative assessment (oral, project, performance)
- Easier numbers

Administration

- Clarify directions
- Test in alternative location
- Permit breaks during testing
- Extend time
- Monitor test progress
- Provide incremental testing
- Set time limits
- Modify pacing
- Provide wait time
- work/performance examples

Reference Tools

- Calculator
- Formulas
- Reference sheet
- Multiplication chart
- Word banks
- Study guides
- Dictionaries
- Graphic Organizers

Alter Visual Presentation

- Write directly on test
- Use additional white space
- Bold or underline key words
- Highlight or color code material
- Provide larger print
- Provide lines on test

Assistive Technology

- Word processing
- Calculator
- Audio Books
- Speech to text

Other

- Quiz or test corrections
- Retakes for tests and quizzes
- Use of assessment checklists, scoring rubrics, and multiple examples of annotated student
- allow oral elaboration

INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS**Pacing**

- Extend time
- Chunk information
- Provide wait time
- Set limit
- Allow breaks

Additional Instruction

- After school
- Extra review and practice
- Drill and practice
- Pre-teach vocabulary
- Pre-teach critical prerequisite concepts
- Target small group instruction

Emphasize Main Ideas

- Highlight
- Repeat
- Bold

Presentation

- Vary lesson activities
- Connect to prior knowledge
- Use multi-sensory input
- Preview the lesson
- Provide wait time
- Story webs
- Outlining tools
- Concept mapping tools
- Chunk information into smaller elements

Alter Visual Presentation

- Display fewer items per page
- Include visuals
- Vary format
- Bold, underline, highlight
- Provide lines/boxes on test

Assistive Technology

- Word processing
- Calculator
- Audio Books
- Speech to text
- Spell check, grammar check
- Word prediction software
- Provide electronic translation tools
- Provide links to multilingual glossaries on web

Modeling

- Provide exemplars
- Provide examples/non-examples
- Demonstrate processes
- Provide sentence starters or sentence strips
- Use cues and prompts to draw attention to critical features

Resources

- Checklists
- Study guides
- Guided notes
- Rubrics
- Graphic organizers
- Mnemonic aids
- Extra textbook

Monitor

- Cue student
- Check progress
- Circulate
- Check for understanding
- Preferential Seating

BEHAVIORAL/SOCIAL EMOTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS**Classroom Management**

- Clearly defined expectations
- Create class routines
- Breaks, as needed
- Cueing behavior
- Alerts and previews that can help learners anticipate and prepare for changes in activities, schedules, and novel events
- Create an accepting and supportive classroom climate
- Vary the level of novelty or risk

- Charts, calendars, schedules, visible timers, cues, etc that can increase the predictability of daily activities and transitions
- Create school-wide programs of positive behavior support with differentiated objectives and supports
- Provide prompts that guide learners in when and how to ask peers and/or teachers for help
- Encourage and support opportunities for peer interactions and supports (e.g. peer tutors)
- Create expectations for group work (e.g. rubrics, norms, etc)

Behavior Modifications

- Plans
- Checklists
- Contracts
- Charts
- Incentives
- Provide prompts, reminders, guides, rubrics, checklists that focus on:
 - self regulatory goals like reducing the frequency of aggressive outbursts in response to frustration
 - Increasing the length of on-task orientation in the face of distractions
 - Elevating the frequency of self-reflection and self-reinforcements
- Verbal/Written feedback
- Embed prompts to “stop and think” before acting as well as adequate space
- Variation in pace of work, length of work sessions, availability of breaks

Additional Services

- Allow access to other specialists (pupil services, special ed, nurse)
- Guidance/School Counselor check in
- Embed coaches or mentors that model think-alouds of the process

Transitions

- Directions
- Advanced notifications for change of daily routines leaving early

ORGANIZATION - EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING ACCOMMODATIONS

Monitor Management of Material

- Locker
- Binder
- Backpacks
- Agenda check in

Time Management Tools

- Break down assignments
- Provide guides for breaking long-term goals into reachable short-term objectives
- Provide incremental due dates feedback
- Provide checklists and project planning templates for understanding the problem, setting up prioritization, sequences, and schedules of steps

Tools

- Checklists
- Label
- Color Code
- Sticky notes
- Electronic reminders
- Provide extra set of books at home
- Use advanced organizers (e.g. KWL methods, concept methods)
- Use of outlines
- Use of graphic organizers
- Provide templates, concept maps, checklists to support note taking

GENERAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Academic Structures, Supports, and District Resources

- Reading support
- Small group classroom teacher instruction in literacy & math
- Literacy/Math coaches work with individual/small groups of students who struggle with literacy or math. Instruction is both pull-out and push-in.
- Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) materials used as appropriate
- Literacy and Math Coaches co-teach and provide support to students in classrooms
- K-3 FOUNDATIONS phonics instruction common assessments lead to “double dose” of instruction as needed
- Title 1 teachers provide reading support in eligible schools
- ELL Instruction
- After-school teacher support for individuals and small groups
- Small group math intervention
- Launching Scholars program (summer & after school) to provide support and self-confidence in math learning (secondary level)
- Flexible scheduling (e.g. Middle School FLEX & STRETCH blocks)
- MCAS tutoring
- Peer tutoring
- Freshman & Sophomore academy (High School)
- Personal Learning Center for academic support services for general education students (High School)

- Summer programs to maintain progress in literacy for students entering grades 1,2 and 3 METCO tutoring
- METCO Enrichment Programs
- Technology resources with a range of literacy and math applications that support classroom instruction are readily available to students

Teacher and Staff Support Structures

Support for teachers, such as teacher mentoring, time for collaboration, and professional development that helps with analyzing and accommodating various student learning needs

Teacher Consultation: assistance with problem-solving; analyzing instructional practices; analyzing student data

- Collaborative Planning Time
- Consultation with Literacy & Math Coaches/Specialists
- Consultation with Library/Media and Instructional Technology Specialists for additional reading or technology supports
- Consultation with colleagues (e.g. grade level meetings, cluster meetings, department meetings)
- Meeting with Mentor Teacher (new teachers)
- Consultation with guidance counselors, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Psychologists, & Special Educators and administrators
- Consultation with Curriculum Coordinators
- Consultation with ELL Teachers

Teacher Professional Learning: content & pedagogy

- Literacy/Math coaches provide
 - Ongoing training/coaching cycles
 - Demonstration lessons in classrooms
 - In-class student support
 - Training in formalized reading programs an assessments (e.g. FOUNDATIONS program, Fountas & Pinnell reading)
 - Data informed decision making protocols to inform instruction
- Job-embedded professional learning during faculty meeting, school and district early release time
- Ongoing training for staff on Cultural Proficiency
- Ongoing training for staff on Social Emotional Learning (e.g. Responsive Classroom, Mindfulness, etc)
- Professional Learning Communities

Data Driven Instructional Practice

- Universal screening assessments
- Common math assessments administered after each instructional unit
- Literacy/Math coaches help teachers to administer assessments, interpret results and design instruction to meet student needs
- Data analyzed to inform instruction, develop instructional groups and monitor student progress
- Student performance data held in common repository for monitoring individual progress and trends in grade level student
- Student placement in leveled math classes informed by multiple data points (secondary level)
- Student/Teacher Support Teams assist teachers in analyzing student performance and implementing evidence-based interventions to support student learning outcomes

learning

Social, Emotional, Behavioral Support Structures and District Resources

Supports and services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning

Social Emotional Learning

CASEL Framework for Systematic Social Emotional Learning Identifies 5 core SEL:

- Self Awareness
- Self Management
- Responsible Decision Making
- Relationship Skills
- Social Awareness

A variety of approaches are used to foster social and emotional skills, attitudes, and behaviors:

- Free-standing lessons designed to enhance students' social and emotional competence explicitly
 - Second Step
 - Steps to Respect
 - Social Thinking Lessons
 - Anti-bullying lessons
- Teaching practices such as cooperative learning and project-based learning, which promote SEL
 - Responsive Classroom
 - Advisory
 - Extended Homeroom
- Integration of SEL and academic curriculum such as language arts, math, and social studies, or health
 - First 20 Days of Math (Elementary)
 - Health & Wellness Standards incorporates SEL Competencies
- Organizational strategies that promote SEL as school-wide initiatives that create a climate and culture conducive to learning
 - ONE Day
 - Own Your Peace
 - Cluster Connections
 - All-School Morning Meeting



<p>Academic Curriculum Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational, Culture, and Climate Strategies 	<p>Enhanced Learning Environment: Supportive, Engaging, and Participatory</p>	<p>Less Emotional Distress</p> <p>Improved Academic Performance</p>
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Resource cited from the Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) <http://www.casel.org/>

Consultation & Direct Services

- Psychologists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and special education teachers provide behavior support and can assist in development of student/classroom support plans
- School Counselors provide individual and small group counseling
- CARE Teams (Crisis Avoidance and Response Expert Teams) assist teachers with problem solving, developing support plans, and monitoring progress for students experiencing behavioral challenges
- Safety Care Teams trained in de-escalation and behavioral interventions including, as a last resort, physical restraint

Family and Community Support Structures

Promote learning and growth of all students through effective partnerships with families, caregivers, and the community

General Communication

- District websites
- School websites
- Classroom webpages
- Email, phone, and face-to-face contact

Parent Involvement

- Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
- Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC)
- School Council
- METCO Parent Advisory Committee

Homework Support

- Websites provide information on assignments, classroom calendars, & additional resources
- Online learning platforms support skill development beyond the school setting

Community Partnerships

- Needham Youth and Family Services
- Department of Health
- Riverside Community Care
- Needham Youth Service Network
- Needham Housing Authority
- Charles River YMCA
- Needham Community Council

Progress Monitoring

- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Progress reports
- Report cards
- Ongoing communication from teachers

Parent Education

- Afterschool and evening presentations
- Parent educational workshops

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