

# Hamilton Wenham Regional School District

## *District Curriculum Accommodation Plan*



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# Table of Contents

## What is a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)?

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

Purpose of the DCAP:

Process for using the DCAP

District and School Systems of Support

HWRSD Resources for Teacher Professional Development and Support:

## Accommodations and Instructional Strategies to Assist Students to Access the Core Curriculum.

Organizational Strategies

Motivational Strategies

Behavioral Strategies

Assessment Strategies

Instructional Strategies

Attentional Strategies

Modifying the Presentation of Material

Modifying the Environment

Modifying Time Demands

## Modification of Materials for Students With Specific Concerns

Written Expression Problems

Visual Processing Problems

Organizational Problems

Language Processing Problems

Use of Groups and Peers

Assisting the Reluctant Starter

Dealing with Inappropriate Behavior

## What is a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)?

Massachusetts General Laws requires the adoption and implementation of a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). This plan is intended to guide principals and teachers in ensuring that all possible efforts are made to meet student needs in general education classrooms. Specifically, the DCAP is intended to aid teachers in identifying and accommodating the wide range of student learning styles and needs that exist in any school or classroom. By describing in a document the accommodations and instructional supports and strategies that are available in general education and the process for determining effective interventions for struggling learners, it is hoped that the DCAP will help support diverse learners in our schools.

### **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.”*

### **Purpose of the DCAP:**

- To assist general education teachers in analyzing, assessing, and accommodating diverse learners
- To highlight support services and instructional delivery options available within general education settings
- To note instructional interventions available for struggling learners
- To delineate resources available to teachers in the areas of student support, mentoring, professional development, and coaching

### **The following statements reflect the district’s philosophy of teaching and learning:**

- All students can learn and should have opportunity to reach their full potential
- Students have different rates and styles of learning
- Students are diverse in their cognitive, physical, linguistic, social, and emotional development

- Students differ in their ability to work and study independently
- Students will have different responses to curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Students require different amounts and types of instructional support

The DCAP that follows is grounded in this philosophy of teaching and learning. It provides an accounting of resources and accommodations available to students and classroom teachers. In addition, the DCAP provides a process that each school follows in order to support struggling learners.

### **Process for using the DCAP**

Following a tiered system of intervention consistent with Response to Intervention (RTI), the classroom teacher will provide Tier 1 instruction for all students. Tier 1 instruction would be considered “best practice” and many of these suggested strategies are included in the DCAP. If a student or group of students is not making effective progress in the classroom, the teacher will provide a more intensive Tier 2 intervention. Tier 2 interventions may be developed from the DCAP strategies as well as other effective resources available to the teacher. The Tier 2 intervention is timed and tracked with student progress data collected to determine effectiveness. If the student responds well to this intervention and begins to make effective progress, the teacher will continue with the regular education program. If the teacher determines that the student is not responding well to the Tier 2 intervention and therefore, is not making effective progress, the teacher will refer the student to the IST for discussion and determination of possible Tier 3 interventions and supports.

Students may not be referred for special education services unless the student has been through the IST process. A general rule requires a minimum of at least two IST meetings at which specific interventions are discussed, and afterward followed and documented, before a child can be referred to special education.

### **District and School Systems of Support**

Instruction in the regular education classroom provides a rich educational experience for all students. The district is committed to maintaining strong core instruction so that all students are adequately supported to access and benefit from the curriculum in the general education classroom. Schools strive to make the regular education classroom an appropriate placement for all students.

Working together, general and special educators provide support to each other to address student learning needs. As a result, learning is supported through a clearly defined curriculum, differentiated instructional practices, and varied programs and services geared to individual student needs.

## **HWRSD Resources for Teacher Professional Development and Support:**

The HWRSD offers a variety of teacher trainings and support mechanisms throughout the school year and summer.

Resources include:

- Two Full-day Professional Development
- Community-based Justice Meetings
- IST process
- Wednesday Release Time for Professional Development
- Summer & School Year Curriculum Projects
- Differentiated Instruction Training and Supports
- Support of Off Site Professional Development
- Mentor-Mentee Program
- Integrated Technology Specialist
- Consultations with District Specialists
  - Speech/Language, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Clinical Psychologist, Assistive Technology, Behavioral Supports

## **Accommodations and Instructional Strategies to Assist Students to Access the Core Curriculum.**

Below is a list of accommodations that support access to the core curriculum. This list is not intended to be exhaustive but rather highlights possibilities.

### **Organizational Strategies**

- Provide agenda
- Establish predictable routines
- Check for understanding
- Clear homework recording system
- Frequent progress reporting
- Clear and consistent visual and verbal instructions and expectations
- Break assignments into small, clear steps
- Number/order steps for task completion
- Provide templates and models
- Provide due dates for separate steps
- Print assignments for students who struggle with online resources
- Well managed transitions

## **Motivational Strategies**

- Have goal-setting as an all class activity
- Personalized written comments provided to reinforce effort and positive gains
- Provide consistent positive oral comments for positive social skills and study skills
- Determine student interests and learning styles and then design flexible activities accordingly
- Build student contracts and allow the student to determine contract requirements
- Avoid marking responses that are wrong instead highlighting those that are right
- Provide the student with formative feedback within the classroom

## **Behavioral Strategies**

- Change seating
- Provide incentives
- Develop behavior plan/charts
- Define clear and consistent expectations
- Help students identify and build relationships with trusting adults within the school community
- At the elementary level use T-Charts that clearly define what expected behaviors look and sound like
- Allow student movement breaks outside the classroom when possible
- Frequent communication with parents
- Allow student to see counselor when needed
- Develop student/teacher contract
- Be mobile around the teaching space

## **Assessment Strategies**

- Provide study guides
- Provide alternative assessment options (ex: allow for oral assessment)
- Preview test vocabulary/concepts
- Pass/fail grades
- Extended time if needed
- Administer tests in short periods
- Provide examples of proficient work
- Test in alternative site
- Provide reference sheet, manipulatives, and calculator, when applicable

## **Instructional Strategies**

- Multi modal presentation of information
- Hands on learning activities
- Include transition cues
- Break tasks into smaller units or chunks
- Provide wait time for responding to questions or formulation discussion thoughts
- Use technology-assisted instruction
- Minimize assignments requiring copying
- Use rubrics
- Record lectures/discussion for replay
- Provide models, templates and graphic organizers
- Use vocabulary/word banks
- Reduce assignments for copying tasks
- Repeat or re-teach key concepts
- Frequent checks for understanding
- Scaffold
- Don't assume prior knowledge
- Teach vocabulary
- Provide an overview of the lesson before beginning
- Check for prior knowledge
- Differentiate instruction based on formative assessment results

## **Attentional Strategies**

- Change activities frequently to accommodate short attention spans
- Consider a different furniture options
- Use a timer
- Allow the use of technology
- When lecturing, talk for no more than five minutes and then have a student-directed activity and check for understanding
- Plan varied activities during class period including at least one that allows for movement
- Give directions and information in small units
- Establish relevance and purpose for learning by relating to previous experiences
- Shape approximations of desired behavior by providing direct reinforcement such as praise or immediate feedback for correct answers
- Seat student close to teacher
- Make a positive personal comment every time the student shows any evidence of interest Make frequent checks for assignment progress/completion
- Give advance warning of when a transition is going to take place

- Use physical proximity and verbal redirection to help student refocus
- Provide an overview of the lesson before beginning

### **Modifying the Presentation of Material**

- Break assignment into segments of shorter tasks with visual models/instructions
- Use concrete examples of concepts before teaching the abstract
- Pre-teach vocabulary prior to lessons and vocabulary available visually in the classroom (age appropriate)
- Relate information to the student's experiential base
- Reduce the number of concepts presented at one time
- Monitor the student's comprehension of language used during instruction
- Schedule frequent short conferences with the student to check for comprehension
- Provide consistent review of any lesson before introducing new information
- Allow student to obtain and report information utilizing: cassette recorders, dictation, calculators, typewriters/computers, interviews, and fact sheets
- Highlight important concepts to be learned in text of material
- Monitor the rate at which material is presented
- Give additional presentation by varying the methods using repetition, simpler explanations, more examples and modeling
- Require verbal responses to indicate comprehension
- Give frequent reminders of homework assignments
- Provide clear, concise directions and concrete visual examples for homework assignments
- Assign tasks at an appropriate reading level
- Allow for the oral administration of tests
- Check assignment sheet for accuracy
- Reduce the number of items on a page
- Enlarge space for answers

### **Modifying the Environment**

- Seat student in an area free of distractions
- Use preferential seating (please specify individual child preference for optimal learning)
- Help keep student's work area free of unnecessary materials
- Provide a variety of learning spaces within the room (ex. Quiet space, study offices, headphones, etc)
- Use checklists to help the student get organized
- Schedule of day or class should be posted visually
- Individual student menus provided as needed



- Frequently check the organization of the student's notebook
- Monitor the student's use and accuracy of his/her assignment book
- Provide opportunities for movement
- Organize to simplify transitions and collaborative activity
- Be attentive to the noise level in the room
- Alternative seating such as standing at a table, prone or seated in a quiet area of the room with a clipboard during independent work time or writing time

### **Modifying Time Demands**

- Increase time allowed for completion of tests or assignments
- Reduce the amount of work or length of tests
- Prioritize assignments and/or steps to completing assignments for the student
- Space short work periods with breaks or change of tasks
- Consistently follow a specific routine
- Alternate quiet and active tasks
- Set time limits for specific task completion

## **Modification of Materials for Students With Specific Concerns**

### **Written Expression Problems**

- Reduce the amount of copying from text and board
- Allow student use either cursive or manuscript
- Set realistic and mutually agreed upon expectations for neatness
- Let student type, record, or give answers orally instead of writing
- Avoid pressures of speed and accuracy
- Provide copies of notes
- Provide larger spaces for responses
- Use thinking maps or graphic organizers
- Accept key word responses instead of complete sentence

### **Visual Processing Problems**

- Highlight information to be learned
- Keep written assignments and workspace free from extraneous and/or irrelevant distractions
- Provide clear and well-defined worksheets
- Go over visual task with student and make sure student has a clear understanding of all parts of the assignment from the beginning
- Avoid having student copy from the board
- Have student verbalize instructions before beginning task

- Avoid crowded, cluttered worksheets by utilizing techniques such as blocking (blocking assignments into smaller segments), cutting (cut worksheets into sections), folding (fold worksheets into sections), and highlighting, color coding, or underlining

### **Organizational Problems**

- Provide an established daily routine
- Provide clear rules and consistently enforce them
- Contract with student and use rewards for completion of contract
- Check the student's notebook to ensure the use of dividers, assignment sheet, and calendar
- Provide due date on written assignments
- Provide a specific place for turning in completed assignments

### **Language Processing Problems**

- Give written directions to supplement verbal directions
- Slow the rate of presentations
- Paraphrase information
- Keep statements short and to the point
- Avoid use of abstract language such as metaphors, idioms, and puns
- Keep sentence structures simple
- Encourage feedback from student to check for understanding
- Familiarize student with new vocabulary before beginning the lesson
- Reduce the amount of extraneous noise such as conversation, radio, TV, outside noises, etc.
- Alert student's attention before expressing key points
- Ensure the readability levels of the textbooks are commensurate with the student's language level
- Utilize visual aids such as charts and graphs
- Utilize manipulative, hands-on activities whenever possible
- Always demonstrate how new materials relate to previously learned information
- Cue students by calling their names before asking questions

### **Use of Groups and Peers**

- Utilize cooperative learning strategies when appropriate
- Assign a peer helper to check understanding of directions
- Assign a peer helper to read important directions and essential information
- Assign a peer tutor to record material dictated by the student

### **Assisting the Reluctant Starter**

- Give a personal cue to begin work
- Walk the student through the first task and ensure understanding
- Give work in smaller units
- Provide immediate reinforcements and feedback
- Introduce the assignment in sequential steps
- Check student for understanding of instructions
- Check on progress often in the first few minutes of work
- Provide time suggestions for each task
- Provide a checklist for long detailed tasks

### **Dealing with Inappropriate Behavior**

- Establish clear and concise classroom expectations and consequences with class
- Consistently reinforce expectations
- Avoid the use of confrontational techniques
- Provide student with alternatives
- Designate a “cooling off” location within the classroom
- Assign activities which require some movement
- Use praise generously
- Avoid power struggles
- Ignore attention-getting behavior for a short time
- Avoid criticizing the student in front of others
- Communicate frequently with parents
- Monitor levels of tolerance and be mindful of signs of frustration
- Speak privately, without the audience of peers, to student about inappropriate behavior

**HWRSD Building Based Resources:**

Each building in the District provides a variety of resources to support general education students with academic and social emotional challenges. Resources include the following:

All Buildings	Buker Elementary	Cutler Elementary	Winthrop Elementary	MRMS	HWRHS
School Psychologist, School Adjustment Counselor, OT, PT, SLP and Assistive Technology consultation	Behavior Specialist	Behavior Specialist	Behavior Specialist	Guidance or school adjustment counseling – Individual and small group	Guidance or school adjustment counseling – Individual and small group
Instructional Support Team	Tutors for MCAS intervention in grades 4 and 5	Tutors for MCAS intervention in grades 4 and 5	Tutors for MCAS intervention in grades 4 and 5	Academic support time	Writing Center
Reading Specialist Consultation	Intervention-ists for math and ELA.	Intervention-ists for math and ELA.	Intervention-ists for math and ELA.	Technology Integration Specialist	Technology Integration Specialist
	Language arts assistants to support the reading specialists with literacy interventions	Language arts assistants to support the reading specialists with literacy interventions	Language arts assistants to support the reading specialists with literacy interventions		