

Tewksbury Public Schools
Tewksbury, Massachusetts 01876

DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATION PLAN (DCAP)

The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan is written to summarize resources and procedures that are available to teachers and principals to meet the needs of students in the regular education setting.

1. Professional Development to Meet Student Learning Needs

Each year, the district provides three and a half days of focused professional training on topics that have been identified as needs by annual staff development surveys and which meet the needs of the district. A district-wide focus on Differentiated Instruction has provided a K – 12 continuity of training for the past three years. A renewed concern for gifted students has led to a series of workshops and summer courses in DI to support this effort. Literacy programs (guided reading, John Collins Writing Program, Reading Strategies That Work, Using Picture Books to Support Reading Comprehension, and Comprehension Strategies in the Content Areas) focus on teaching and assessment strategies to help identify individual student needs in reading and writing. Grade-level team meetings and common planning time at the building level, along with the ongoing support from reading specialists, supplement these workshop activities. Reading teachers continuously consult with classroom teachers to provide supportive strategies and assistance with particular students.

The Assistant Superintendent has the responsibility for providing professional development and curriculum assistance to all staff members, K – 12. The Assistant Superintendent is also responsible for organizing and overseeing all Subject Area Review Committees (SARC's), which serve as professional development sources for staff participants and provide information about curriculum and instruction. All curriculum materials produced during these meetings are distributed system-wide and updated on an annual basis.

Curriculum Coordinators (Middle School) and Department Heads (High School) also serve as resources to teachers in assessing student needs and helping to identify strategies and resources to meet the needs of *all* learners.

2. The Pre-referral Process ... Section 504 Plans

When teachers have concerns or questions about the learning progress of individual students, they can access support and consultation from a team of educators in their school through the pre-referral process. In this process, the student study team, comprised of regular education teachers, special education teachers, reading specialists and other specialists, are available to discuss the teacher's concerns and offer consultation about strategies that may be tried in the regular classroom.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the school district is committed to protect the rights of any person, student or employee, who has "a physical or mental impairment which

substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.” Section 504 Plans and referral criteria have been developed at the district level, and serve to support children who are covered by this statute.

3. Support Services That Are Available to Students Through Regular Education

In grades K – 12, regular education students who need additional support in reading instruction have access to instructional services provided by elementary reading specialists and from Title One services (in selected schools). At present, the district employs five (5) reading specialists, at least one being housed at each elementary school. At the upper elementary (Ryan School), three full-time reading specialists service the children in Grades 5 & 6 through the Developmental Reading Program.

Title One teachers are supported by grant funds and assist regular education students in reading. Title One services are determined by grant regulations, and are currently available at three K – 4 schools.

A rich and wide variety of materials and equipment is available to accommodate student needs, including developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically sensitive materials, computers, tape recorders, and taped books. Accommodations vary according to the individual needs of the student, but may include such things as an extra set of books at home, oral testing, abbreviated assignments, extra time to complete assignments, a reading buddy, and use of a school agenda to enhance communications between teacher, parent, and student.

At each building, staff members may avail themselves to school-based professional development consultation in addressing needs of students whose behavior may be interfering with learning. A district-wide student support team, led by the Superintendent of Schools, meets monthly with guidance representatives and administration from the high school and middle school to be proactive about emerging behavioral issues with students. At the elementary level, principals meet regularly with the Truancy Officer and Superintendent to identify students with chronic absentee problems.

A school adjustment counselor/school psychologist works in each building at the elementary level. The counselor provides individual and small group counseling, focusing on social, emotional, and behavioral issues that may impact a child’s school experience. Classroom teachers consult with the counselor to develop effective strategies to deal with these issues. The counselor also meets with parents, on an as-needed basis. Each school employs a team approach when dealing with social, emotional, and behavioral issues. Our present Health Curriculum, Health Promotion Wave, contains many components which deal with respect, responsibility, conflict resolution, building relationships, etc. Health instructional time varies across grade levels. In addition, character education programs have been adopted by our elementary schools.

If an elementary child has severe behavioral needs, and the needs are listed on the child’s Individualized Education Plan, he/she may be placed in a Special Education Classroom, whose disability is characterized as social/emotional. Curriculum and instruction in this classroom mirrors the grade-level expectations in which the child is assigned. In addition, the district also

contracts with a behavioral specialist to service children in grades PreK – 12. This specialist provides individual and small group counseling, focusing on social, emotional, and behavioral issues. Throughout our district, a teaching assistant may also be assigned to work with a child in the classroom.

Regular education students in grades three and four may participate in the district supported Saturday School Program (subject to funding). This two-hour weekly session features low student-teacher ratios and individualized support for students in preparation for the March and May MCAS exams.

At the Grades 5 – 8 levels, additional instruction in mathematics is available to students who are falling behind the regular curriculum (insertion of time through team blocks and/or school-wide reading blocks). An MCAS Support Specialist (funded through a grant) is also available to work with students in Grades 5 – 8 who have previously received a “Warning” on an MCAS exam. The high school provides MCAS remediation in Mathematics and English, as well as focused individualized instruction (grant supported) for 11th and 12th grade students who previously failed either a Mathematics and/or English MCAS test.

A comprehensive summer school experience is also available, specifically for students who are having trouble meeting the high standards of the MCAS. Our Academic Support and New Start programs tailor learning experiences in Mathematics and English for students in grades three through twelve.

High school students elected to the National Honor Society fulfill a service requirement by tutoring fellow students who request help with their current course load. Some elementary schools have instituted an after-school homework club for students experiencing academic difficulty.

At all levels, K – 12 teachers are required by contract to assist students in extra help sessions for one hour each week.

4. Teacher Mentors

All teachers receive professional coaching support from the elementary reading specialists, curriculum coordinators, and department heads. Teachers new to the district are assigned a mentor teacher. Each summer, the district organizes a three and a half day workshop for all new teachers to the district. In addition, all mentees and mentors are expected to attend an additional five sessions over the course of the school year. The mentor supports the new teacher in understanding the requirements of the instructional program and the resources available to them. The mentor is also available to provide consultation and coaching regarding teaching and student support. Each participant is given a three-ring binder outlining all aspects and expectations of the mentee/mentor program.

5. Review of Local Curriculum in Relation to State Learning Standards

The Tewksbury Public Schools, conducts every four years, a curriculum review process based on the work of our Subject Area Review Committees (SARC’s). Teams comprised of teachers and

administrators make a four-year commitment to review, pilot, implement, and assess curriculum areas deemed in need of review. The advent of MCAS and the “ever-changing” curriculum frameworks has accelerated both the number and timeline of the SARC process.

The District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans also review student achievement data, such as MCAS and ITBS results, which help to identify areas and strategies for instructional improvement. These strategies, in turn, become the focus of all faculty efforts in the classroom.

The District Professional Development Plan, proposed annually to the Tewksbury School Committee, provides direction to staff members and school councils as they develop their annual School Improvement Plans.

6. District Student Success Plans

The District Student Success Plan describes the procedures for identifying students who have failed and/or received a warning on either the Mathematics or English subtests of the MCAS exam. The plan further describes the procedures for identifying and individualizing instruction, which directly targets the pattern of weaknesses that emerged from detailed item analyses of student MCAS scores. Based on the district plan, three different Student Success Plans have been created – each explicitly designed for specific grade levels. Based on the analyses built into these plans, staff members are able to focus curriculum and instructional strategies on the scripted student needs.

7. Identification and programs for students English Language Learners

For students who have been identified as English Language Learners, English is not his/her first language, the classroom teacher recommends the child for service with our ESL tutor. Each child receives 30 – 60 minutes weekly of language acquisition instruction from our ESL tutor.

8. Encouragement of parental involvement in the child’s education

Parents are encouraged to participate in their child’s education. Many parents, depending on the grade level, volunteer in classrooms, library media centers and the technology centers. Parents are also active in organizing fundraisers, hosting Teacher Appreciation Nights, and other various school-based activities. Parents are active participants in our School Councils, PTO’s, and the Townwide PAC. Many schools conduct Literacy Nights, Social Studies Expo, Science Fairs, College-Career Night, Scholarship Night, etc. and parents are encouraged to attend. The school system also schedules three Parent/Teacher conferences throughout the school year.

Professional Development: Designed to assist regular education teachers in analyzing and accommodating various students' learning needs, including students who are English Language Learners, and managing students' behavior effectively.

- Mentoring Program
- Guided Reading Training
- John Collins Writing Program Training
- Won Way Phonics Training
- TERC Math Training
- Wilson Instruction
- Linda Mood Bell Instruction
- MCAS Analysis Teams
- Differentiated Instruction Training
- Restraint Training
- Technology Integration
- Reading Strategies That Work
- Using Picture Books to Strengthen Reading Comprehension
- Stephenson Instruction
- How to create Literacy Centers workshop
- Meeting Math Standards in the Classroom
- Reading Buddies Program
- Peer Tutoring Program (NHS)
- Title One Program
- Curriculum Alignment Teams (SARC's)
- Grade-level Team meetings
- Section 504 Training
- Consultations with specialists:
 - Reading Specialist
 - School Psychologist / SAC
 - Special Education Specialists
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Physical Therapist
 - Speech and Language Pathologist
- School Crisis Teams
- District-wide Student Assistance Teams
- Kindergarten Screening
- Transitional Programs
- ITBS Testing
- MCAS (Reading and Mathematics) – Grades 3 – 8
- Responsive Classroom
- Destination Imagination
- Enrichment Programs – Grades K – 12
- ESL Support
- Peer observations
- Common Planning Time (select schools)
- Summer Curriculum Work
- Curriculum Chats – Grades K – 6
- Progress Reports / Warning Notices
- ABA Training

The Tewksbury Public Schools encourages parent involvement and participation in their child's education.

- Parent / Teacher Conference Nights two (2) per year
- Report Card distribution
- Parent Literacy Nights
- School Council
- School-based PTO's
- Town-wide PAC
- Parent involvement in long-range district planning
- Budget recommendations
- American Education Week – classrooms open for parent observations
- Parent volunteers
- Progress Reports
- Individual Student Success Plans
- Parent involvement on hiring committees (Administration)
- Production of newsletters
- Updates to school websites
- School Website Coordinators
- Chaperones – School Field Trips