

## DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATION PLAN

### SPENCER-EAST BROOKFIELD REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



#### Introduction

Each school district in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is required to develop a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) to assist school leaders in planning and providing a general education program that is able to accommodate students' diverse learning needs. The Massachusetts General Laws related to DCAP are provided in Appendix A. Together, these two sections require that the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan be adopted by the district and individualized for each of its school buildings. The purpose of this planning is to continually strengthen and improve the general education program for the benefit of all students.

The DCAP addresses various strategies that will help to achieve that objective, including:

*Classroom Teacher Support* - Assistance would include such things as professional development that will help them to analyze and accommodate various students' learning needs, including students who are English language learners, and to manage students' behavior effectively.

*Support Services* - These would include services that are available to students through the regular education program, including services to address the needs of students whose behavior may interfere with learning.

*Title I:* Wire Village School, Knox Trail Middle School

*Reading Services* - This means the direct and systematic instruction in reading for all students.

*Mentoring and Collaboration* – This set of strategies includes those that encourage teacher mentoring and collaboration.

*Parental Involvement* - This includes workshops/presentations and strategies that encourage parental involvement in their children's education.

While not required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, this plan seeks to identify strategies in several other areas:

*School Organization* - Included here are such things as changes to the school schedule (such as additional instructional time or block scheduling), review of school policies and discipline codes, pre-referral activities before students are evaluated to determine eligibility for special education, after-school options (such as homework assistance and peer coaching.) and behavioral interventions including Bullying Programs/Bullying Curriculum.

*Curriculum Alignment* - These strategies provide for a review of local curriculum in relation to state learning standards.

*Additional Support Services* - Services that provide additional staffing or consultation on behavioral issues and on literacy development are included in this category.

*Community Involvement* - These include youth placed at-risk meetings and strategies for using or increasing the use of community agencies and volunteers to assist students and teachers.

## **Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District District Curriculum Accommodation Plan**

Spencer-East Brookfield Regional Schools is an inclusive school district. As such, we are a collaborative culture that welcomes all members into our learning community. Recognizing that students share more similarities than differences, our learning community respects each individual's unique contributions. As an inclusive school district, it is expected that all adults share the responsibility for providing every student 'with access to and participation in high quality general education.

With that philosophy and our mission in mind we have developed the District Curriculum Accommodation plan in accordance with MGL c.71, S38Q. The plan is designed to increase the accessibility of curriculum for all students and parents and provide additional options and protocols for students experiencing difficulty accessing the curriculum through traditional methods and protocols for consulting with Special Education when those methods have been exhausted.

## **Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District District Curriculum Accommodation Plan**

The Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District (SEBRSD) Curriculum Accommodation Plan has been designed to provide guidelines for assisting all students, including those with special learning needs, meet Massachusetts and District standards and to demonstrate success on assessments. The fundamental goal of the plan is to provide the regular classroom teacher with the tools needed to analyze and accommodate the diverse learning styles of all children in the classroom. It emphasizes the provision of appropriate services and support within the regular education program. These services include, but are not limited to, direct and systematic instruction 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.

Each principal in the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District has a building-based support team, in addition to District-wide consultative services for the administration and teachers to ensure that adequate instructional assistance is available. Appropriate services and interventions are both promoted and documented to verify substantiation and accommodations for each student in the system. The SEBRSD curriculum encourages the continual planning, managing, delivery, and evaluation of the instructional process to ensure that the District's curriculum is effective for every child. Accommodation to the diverse learning styles and individual needs of each student is inherent within the SEBRSD Curriculum Guidelines.

The Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District encourages the use of performance assessments and teacher created assessments to provide evidence of the student's progress through the curriculum. The District believes that knowledge of pupil performance on curriculum-based measures is integral in noting gaps in students' skill development and for designing acceleration and remedial interventions.

The SEBRSD Curriculum Accommodation Plan has been prepared for principals, classroom teachers and student assistance teams to use as a resource. It includes guidelines gleaned from the PRIM (Pre-Referral Intervention Manual).

Located within the SEBRSD Curriculum Accommodation Plan are suggestions for the following:

- Classroom Practices
- Assessment Practices
- Implementation Options
- Possible Modifications in the Classroom

## **Classroom Practices**

Classroom practices are the range of instructional practices and strategies that are employed to assist a given special population of students to learn. These include, but are not limited to: time, space, modality, grouping, presentation, classroom organization and behavior management, materials, equipment, technology and environment.

**With the needs of diverse learners in mind, educators need to promote:**

1. **Setting for Instruction and Learning**
  - Promote supportive and responsive climates that facilitate social and cultural learning and allow students to take risks and learn from failure. Provide opportunities and environments for meaningful participation of all students in instructional and social activities.
  - Adapt physical environments to match the learning needs of students.
  
2. **Instructional Practice**
  - Choose teaching and learning methods that match the learning needs and styles of the student.
  - Incorporate direct instruction of how-to-learn skills and thinking skills throughout the curriculum.
  - Make sure the language of instruction effectively communicates and promotes student understanding for students with special needs.
  - Use methods to promote active learning, including hands-on learning, real-world and experiential learning, community-based learning, and learning involving student choice.
  - Use learning materials, equipment, and media tailored to the unique learning needs of students.
  - Design and implement specific opportunities for students to apply and transfer learning to a variety of situations, both familiar and novel.
  - Use varied and flexible grouping strategies for instructional purposes.
  - Use flexibility in pacing of instruction, scheduling, and time-usage based on the needs of individual students.
  - Communicate and collaborate with other teachers, specialists, students, families, and appropriate agencies in planning and implementing effective instruction.
  
3. **Student Self-Management**
  - Use strategies designed to promote student self-management and independence.
  - Provide consistency, structure, and clear expectations.

- Provide appropriate positive learning reinforcement, feedback, and recognition for student accomplishment.

### **Assessment Practices**

Assessment practices include the accommodations and adaptations necessary for a given special population to adequately demonstrate knowledge and skills.

#### **In assessing the learning of diverse learners, educators need to:**

1. Allow for a variety of assessments that evaluate what is being taught. This may include:
  - Assessment of daily work
  - Observations
  - Self and peer evaluations, demonstrations and projects
  - Oral tests
  - Cooperative group assessments
  - Portfolios
2. Ensure that the language used in assessment is consistent with the language used during instruction and use the student's preferred mode of communication. When assessing, always consider:
  - Student's culture/preferred language
  - Clarity of instructions
  - Verbal and non-verbal options (e.g., sign language)
3. Consider the student's unique needs when determining the content of the assessment:
  - Identify the skills or content to be assessed and ensure that assessments test only the content taught.
  - Design assessments to determine what the student knows as opposed to what the student does not know
  - Utilize student's prior knowledge to determine instruction and subsequent assessments.
  - Identify individual learning styles and design assessments to elicit a variety of thinking and application skills.
4. Design assessment procedures and accommodations to meet individual student needs:
  - Assess in student's primary communication mode (i.e., Braille, sign language, picture board).
  - Utilize technology for presentation of assessment and student response.

5. Allow flexibility in the time and scheduling of assessments.
  - Allow extended time.
  - Allow the student to take breaks.
  - Divide assessment into smaller segments.
  - Schedule assessment when student can perform best.
  - Utilize untimed assessments.
  
6. Allow for a variety of assessment environments. Consider the purpose of the assessment and the student's unique needs and choose the environment, which fits best.
  - Consider student's physical condition, endurance, emotional state, attention span and distractibility, medical condition, etc., at time of assessment.
  - Control for distractions.
  - Create supportive settings that encourage student participation.
  - Use preferential seating.
  - Use real life settings and other alternative environments.
  
7. Consider the evaluation criteria that will be utilized when designing assessments and set the criteria prior to assessment.
  - Make expectations and criteria clear and explicit.
  - Provide a variety of grading methods, including: individual grading scale, narrative reports, and group grades.
  - Involve others.
  - Provide family and others the opportunity to assist in determining the realistic expectations and goals for the student and in interpreting assessment results.

## **Implementation Options**

Implementation options are ways of organizing people and materials to supply and deliver educational opportunities, accommodations and supports so that students are able to be successful learners.

### **In order to provide all students with adequate opportunities to learn, schools need to:**

1. Use shared and flexible resources, including personnel, fiscal, facility, program, time, and administrative process to meet students' needs and offer appropriate services by providers with specific expertise.
2. Offer curriculum and instruction that is diversified through a variety of modifications using alternative scheduling, accessibility, optimal learning environments, grouping, accommodation of multiple learning styles, setting appropriate expectations, student: teacher ratios, and using a variety of instructional techniques.
3. Support collaborative planning with individual students, team members, family members, the community, and other agencies with the management of time and resources.
4. Design support services for students that help them with life management including safety, health, wellness, social relationships, and learning.
5. Assure that school professionals, families, and students use technology competently to maximize learning.
6. Offer support services for students to assist in managing behavior, expressing needs, developing friendships, resolving conflicts, and making choices and planning their lives.
7. Assure students the opportunity to plan and prepare for successful life adjustment after high school including career development, community involvement, post-secondary education, recreation and leisure choices, and daily living activities.

## **Modifications to Assist in Implementation of the Curriculum: A Collection of Possibilities**

The following is a collection of *suggestions* for staff to utilize when modifying materials, classroom environment, and student demands, or in the development of strategies when dealing with inappropriate behavior and focusing on student attention. Please refer to the PRIM (Pre-Referral Intervention Manual) for additional suggestions.

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

Break assignment into segments of shorter tasks.

Use concrete examples of concepts before teaching the abstract.

Relate information to the student's experiential base.

Reduce the number of concepts presented at one time.

Provide an overview of the lesson before beginning.

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 examples for homework assignments. Assign tasks at an appropriate reading level.

Allow for the oral administration of tests.

Check assignment sheet for accuracy.

### **Modifying the Environment**

Seat student in an area free of distractions.

Use preferential seating to direct instruction.

Help keep student's work area free of unnecessary materials.

Use checklists to help the student get organized.

Frequently check the organization of the student's notebook.

Monitor the student's use of his/her assignment book.

Check the assignment book for accuracy.

Provide opportunities for movement.

## **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.

## **Modifying the Materials for Students With Specific Concerns**

### **Visual Motor Integration and 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.
- Accept key word responses instead of complete sentences.

### **Visual Processing Problems**

- Highlight information to be learned.
- Keep written assignments and workspace free from extraneous and/or irrelevant distracters.
- 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.

## **Helping Focus Attention**

Establish relevancy 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 touch to help student refocus.

## **Assisting the Reluctant Starter**

Give a personal cue to begin work.

Give work in smaller units.

Provide immediate reinforcers 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**

Provide clear and concise classroom expectations and consequences.

Consistently reinforce the rules.

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.

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.