

Hopkinton Public Schools

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan

The Hopkinton School System curriculum accommodation plan helps principals, teachers, and staff professionals ensure that all efforts are made to meet students' needs in regular education. The plan calls for a high level of professional development activities to assist the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all students in the regular classroom and in providing appropriate services within the regular classroom.

This plan also calls for a focus on direct and systematic instruction in reading and mathematics and interventions to address the needs of children whose behavior or social/emotional needs may interfere with learning. The plan focuses on interventions for students with learning needs who do not qualify for Special Education or for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The plan also reflects a commitment to providing adequate instructional support to students and teachers, including remedial instruction for students, consultative services for teachers, appropriate staff development and training, availability of appropriate reading instruction for students, and appropriate services for linguistic minority students.

If a student is referred for an evaluation for eligibility for special education or if a student is referred for an eligibility determination under Section 504, this plan requires that documentation on the use of instructional support services is provided as part of the evaluation information reviewed by the Teams when determining eligibility.

BUILDING-BASED LEARNING SUPPORT TEAMS

Each school in Hopkinton investigates learning difficulties in a proactive and systematic manner. We recognize that students have diverse learning styles and needs. Instruction needs to be differentiated according to these diverse learning styles and needs. For some students, particular instructional styles or classroom accommodations can be identified as helpful or an important support.

Each school's Learning Support Team (LST) is a group of professional staff members who come together to identify strategies and accommodations that will assist a teacher or teachers and a student when a learning or school difficulty has been identified that cannot be sufficiently addressed by the teacher alone. The team may consist of teachers, administrators, specialists, counselors, or any staff member who knows the student, has expertise in the suspected area of difficulty, or has knowledge of the types of regular education assistance available.

The LST and the Learning Support Process will be essentially consistent among all of our schools. There will be some variations on forms and process only when it makes good educational sense due to the different developmental needs of students in elementary or secondary levels. The process will be the same for all elementary schools (K-5). An important product of consistency will be easier and more effective communication among parents, students, and staff as students move up through the school system.

The Learning Support Process is a framework that accomplishes the following:

1. Provides an opportunity to differentiate between students who can be helped through adaptations and accommodations made in the regular classroom and those who require the more comprehensive evaluation provided by special education or the accommodations and modifications required by a §504 plan,
2. Provides strategies and resources necessary to reduce or avert learning difficulties or behavioral problems, lessening their impact and preventing them from becoming a disability to the student,
3. Provides needed accommodations and strategies to students who have learning needs and do not qualify under Special Education or §504. Additionally, the LST process can help students with different learning styles and/or preferences to better succeed in the classroom,
4. Helps to identify learner characteristics, learning strengths and weaknesses, and helpful accommodations that will be valuable if and when the student needs to be evaluated for a suspected disability,
5. Supports parent/school communication and collaboration around learning and school difficulties by sharing school and home observations and other information, and
6. Makes effective referrals for evaluation of disabilities under the special education laws or §504 when needed and strengthens these evaluations by contributing information, observations and the results of collaboration among staff and parents around learning or school issues

DISTRICT INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT THE DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATION PLAN (CAP)

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Improvements

- All curricula have been aligned with the state Curriculum Frameworks.
- The School Committee adopted a Curriculum Development/Adoption/Review Policy in 2001 that expressly requires that all curricula “meet the academic, social, and personal needs of all students.”
- Math materials used at the elementary and middle school levels utilize a multi-modal approach to learning and research-based strategies.
- Guidelines have been established for instructional time allocation at the elementary level.
- The district has focused on early literacy with its emphasis on phonemic awareness and specialized reading instruction in Orton-Gillingham, Wilson, Project Read, and Reading Recovery.
- A District Assessment Plan has been developed to integrate state, norm-referenced, and local assessments.
- The district has made a commitment to focus on diverse learning needs of all students in the selection of any new curriculum or purchase of any new instructional materials
- The district has made a commitment to providing an increasing level of support positions for early literacy and mathematics.

Professional Development

- Hopkinton has funded professional development at a level that exceeds state-mandated requirements.
- A Five-Year Professional Development Plan has been developed that emphasizes content area knowledge, differentiated instruction, technology of learning, and effective teaching strategies.
- Contractual incentives have been collectively bargained with the Hopkinton Teachers Association (HTA) to reimburse teachers for graduate level coursework.
- Coursework has been offered through both the Accept Collaborative and The Education Cooperative (TEC) on meeting the diverse learning needs of students.
- The district has made a commitment to continue high level of funding for professional development
- The district has made a commitment to focusing professional development on differentiated instruction, improved and expanded assessment, and instructional development that supports students with diverse learning needs

Staff Recruitment and Retention

- The district has a well-established Teacher Mentoring Program.
- A District Recruiting Plan focuses on building our internal infrastructure, expanding recruiting avenues, establishing a stronger district image, and maintaining a competitive advantage.
- A New Teacher Orientation facilitates teachers' transition to the district.
- The district participates in a TEC initiative to provide a licensure program for new teachers.
- Longevity incentives for veteran teachers and a bonus for teachers completing five years of service have been collectively bargained with the HTA.
- An increased emphasis has been placed on staff recognition.
- The school system is committed in its recruiting and hiring practices to hire dual certified teachers whenever possible.
- The district will commit increasing resources and energies to the recruitment of talented staff and continue its investment in our experienced staff.

Student Support Services

- An English as a Second Language (ESL) program was implemented in 2001-2002. A teacher/coordinator of ESL (part-time) was hired in September 2002. Procedures are being developed to identify students in need of ESL services and interpreters will be provided for parents as needed.
- Counseling and psychological services are offered to students in K-12; additional counselors and psychologists were added in 2001-02 at the middle and high school levels to maintain recommended counselor-student ratios.
- Inclusive special education programs have been implemented throughout the district.
- New programs have been developed to meet the varying needs of our students as evidenced by the Alternative Program at the High School and the full-day kindergarten program for severely disabled students at the Center School.
- An extensive MCAS Remediation Program has been implemented at the High School.
- To effectively provide behavioral intervention, seventeen staff members representing all schools were trained in restraint during a two-day program designed to address new state regulations; two staff members have completed additional training and are certified as trainers. All school staff will be trained annually consistent with state requirements.
- The District is committed to expanding regular education assistance in order to support students with diverse learning needs in regular education.

This District Accommodation Plan describes selected activities taking place in all five schools that support the concepts of the CAP. Each school will individualize the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan and publish its own Building Accommodation Plan.

BUILDING ACCOMODATION PLANS (BCAP)

These plans will demonstrate commitment on the part of the school staff and the School Council in each school to strive for improving and growing efforts to meet the needs of students with diverse needs in the regular classroom. The plans will describe services and accommodations available to students with need, and identify areas in which additional resources and training are needed. Each school will categorize the programs and services that are offered in the regular education program that potentially assist students with diverse learning needs. The building plan will outline initiatives in four program areas: classroom strategies, support services, professional development, and peer-student programs. Each school will also describe its outreach efforts to parents and students and explain how students can access these programs. The School Council in each school will consider needs identified by the BCAP during its annual budget cycle work.

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