



Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District

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District Curriculum Accommodation Plan DCAP

The information contained in this report describes an accommodation plan, which meets the regulatory requirement for each school to develop a District Accommodation Plan (DCAP). ***The intent of the District Accommodation Plan is to assist school leaders in planning and providing a general education program that is able to accommodate students' diverse learning needs and avoid unnecessary referrals to special education.*** The DCAP assists the Principal in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in general education. The plan is 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 program:

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 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 program 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.*

Located in this document please find:

- Accommodations/Intervention Strategies for struggling learners, by grade span (pp. 2-4)
- List of Professional Development activities offered by the District (pp. 5)
- List of support personnel available in each grade span (pp. 6-9)
- Reference for variety of learning styles (pp. 10-15)
- Description of Child Study Team (CST) process (pp.16-17)

*<http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section38Q1~2>. This regulation was amended in May 2012.

Accommodations/Intervention Strategies for struggling learners, by grade span

ELEMENTARY

<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange preferred seating Incorporate stress-release activities Use visual/auditory aids Experiment with use of space Remove distractions Consider a better student/teacher match <p>Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide multi-modal presentations of materials Utilize differentiated instruction Develop alternate assessments Repeat or re-teach concepts Offer peer teaching/group activities Provide individual help in the classroom Include study skills strategies Utilize transition cues Develop teacher-student contacts Incorporate incentives/rewards Utilize technology/computer assisted instruction Provide challenging projects Offer oral/un-timed testing Utilize multiple intelligence/learning style approaches Model use of graphic organizers Develop integrated curriculum projects MCAS Preparation ELL support High expectations for all students Leveled books 	<p>Organizational Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide school-wide agenda system Develop flexible/modified schedule Utilize flexible grouping Utilize team teaching Utilize a progress reporting system Cooperative teaching <p>Consult and co-planning by grade level teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide study guides Modified assessments <p>Behavioral Intervention Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange seating accommodations Develop student-teacher contacts Develop behavioral plans Include positive reinforcement/incentives/rewards Utilize charts and graphs to monitor expectations Adjust classroom management strategies Facilitate parent support/communication Consult with school psychologist, adjustment counselor, special needs staff Individual and small group social skills Classroom interventions by school adjustment counselor and counseling
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MIDDLE SCHOOL

<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Arrange preferred seatingIncorporate stress-release activitiesUse visual/auditory aidsExperiment with use of spaceRemove distractionsConsider a better student/teacher match <p>Organizational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Rotate the student's scheduleInvite parental assistanceArrange parent workshopsInsist upon frequent progress reports <p>Remedial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Offer after-school supportImprove parental communicationFind a buddy readerArrange peer tutoringTake advantage of mentoringUtilize study groupsProvide assistance with note taking <p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Incorporate appropriate softwareSchedule computer-assisted instructionProvide calculatorsOffer research assistanceTake advantage of computer labsArrange e-mail communication	<p>Behavioral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Change seatsUtilize chartsProvide a mentorRefer parents to agencyProvide a set of rewardsUse simple corrective measuresProvide ongoing positive reinforcementArrange alternative programs <p>Instruction/Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Give extended time on testsEncourage peer tutorAllow oral testingProvide manipulativesUse alternative assessmentsVary teaching strategiesIdentify student's learning styleAssign mentorsProvide visual cuesProvide effective study guidesBreak down tasksShorten assignmentsArrange small group instructionReduce workloadMake contracts with studentsInclude tactile activitiesUtilize agenda booksInsist upon graphic organizersTeach test-taking strategies and provide practiceInclude study skill strategies
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HIGH SCHOOL

<p>Physical Arrange preferred seating Use visual/auditory aids Experiment with use of space Remove distractions Consider a better student/teacher match</p> <p>Structural Change levels Change instructors Use contract learning Cross grade levels Develop alternate assignments</p> <p>Organizational Experiment with a flexible schedule Rotate the student's schedule Reduce the student's schedule Invite parental assistance Progress reports</p> <p>Remedial Offer after-school support Schedule counselor meetings Improve parental communication Arrange peer tutoring Utilize study groups Provide assistance with note taking</p> <p>Technology Incorporate appropriate software Schedule computer-assisted instruction Provide calculators Tape record lessons Offer research assistance Take advantage of computer labs Arrange e-mail communication</p>	<p>Behavioral Change seats Utilize charts Refer parents to outside professionals Provide a set of rewards Plan parental programs Adjust classroom management Use simple corrective measures Provide ongoing positive reinforcement Arrange alternative programs</p> <p>Instruction/Assessment Give extended time on tests Encourage peer tutor Allow oral testing Provide manipulatives Use alternate assessments Vary teaching strategies Identify student's learning style Assign mentors Provide visual cues Include transition cues Provide effective study guides Break down tasks Shorten assignments Provide individual help within the classroom Reduce workload Make contracts with students Include tactile activities Utilize homework logs Provide reference tools Insist upon graphic organizers Teach test-taking strategies and provide practice Incorporate reading strategies Include study skills strategies</p>
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Professional Development

The following activities will assist the regular education classroom teacher to analyze and accommodate various students' learning needs and to manage student behavior. These activities are offered by the District and occur in all schools.

- Consultations from communication and behavioral specialists
- Professional library resource at each school
- Mandated district wide trainings including restraint, special education law, civil rights, bullying, and sexual harassment trainings.
- Mandated training around the obligations to students with IEPs, 504 plans, and ELL accommodation plans and the use of paraprofessionals in the classroom
- Mentoring by regular and special education staff; new teachers and/or new assignments
- Study groups for curriculum topics
- Technology offerings
- Sharing of best practices
- Development of individual professional development goals that align with the individual schools and District goals.

The Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District acknowledges the diverse learners in our community. We have responded by providing professional development that offers a balance between high standards for all and sensitivity to individual needs. Professional Development offerings have included:

- RETELL training for Core academic teachers, administrators evaluating those teachers, and abridged training for teachers with previous SEI category training
- Curriculum Alignment and the Common Core
- Assessment Training (DIBELS, Lexia, Star Math and Reading)
- Use of electronic books; Junior Great Books
- 6 Traits of Writing
- "Foundations" Training (elementary)
- Formative Assessment
- Performance Assessment
- Math workshops with Dr. Mahesh Sharma
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Social Thinking (Michele Garcia Winner)

Supportive Services

Elementary Level:

I. Support 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.

- A. School Adjustment counselor provides social skills and/or conflict resolution training program appropriate to grade level.
- B. The Second Step Anti-Violence Program has been implemented in each classroom.
- C. Behavioral consultations and parent training are arranged when in house resources have not been sufficient.
- D. Teaching assistants are deployed to assist students in the regular education program and in K.
- E. Classroom accommodations are available to all students. An accommodation guide is provided. Consultation with special educators is available & encouraged.

II. Direct and Systematic Instruction in Reading for All Students

- A. Teachers utilize skills and strategies that recognize various learning styles.
- B. Teachers utilize a variety of assessment techniques to document instruction and progress.
- C. Teachers integrate higher order thinking skills in the planning and teaching of daily lessons and units.
- D. Title 1 services are provided in language arts.
- E. An ELL teacher in each school is provided for students who are English Language Learners.

III. Encouragement of Teacher Mentoring and Collaboration

- A. New teachers meet with mentors on a regular basis.
- B. Teachers share best practices regarding curriculum alignment, enrichment, and assessment analysis.
- C. New teachers are systematically introduced to curriculum that may be new to them.
- D. There is a one-day orientation for new teachers prior to the beginning of the school year.
- E. Every school has a teacher handbook to help teachers learn the norms and procedures of the school.

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

- A. Each school reviews MCAS results and regularly discusses the need for power standards and formative assessments.
- B. A systematic review of all curriculum documents is ongoing.
- C. Professional development is provided for all teachers in how to use the curriculum documents.
- D. Teams of teachers work to align curriculum both horizontally and vertically in each subject area.

V. Review of School Policies and Discipline Codes

- A. Administration maintains and tracks student discipline records including in house suspensions, out of school suspensions, vandalism, and discipline referrals.
- B. Administration, with the help of the School Council, updates school handbooks yearly
- C. The Principal holds assemblies at least twice per year to discuss rules, policies and disciplinary procedures.
- D. In-school suspension is given to students who consistently break rules or who commit a serious offence.
- E. The Principal goes into classrooms where there are behavior issues and review school rules and discipline codes.

Middle Level:

I. Support 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.

- A. School adjustment counselor works with students individually and in small groups to help settle conflicts.
- B. The Principal and/or Assistant Principal do periodic assemblies with students to explain the norms of the school.
- C. Behavioral consultations with a BCBA or school psychologist are available to staff and families.
- D. Teaching assistants are deployed to assist students in certain regular education classrooms.
- E. An after school homework club is available to students.
- F. Classroom accommodations are available to all students. An accommodation guide is provided. Consultation with special educators is available & encouraged.
- G. A community service component exists to help students take ownership of their school and their community.
- H. The Principal and/or Assistant Principal work to ensure that students with behavioral issues get the support they need.

II. Direct and Systematic Instruction in Reading, Writing and Math for All Students

- A. Teachers utilize skills and strategies that recognize various learning styles.
- B. Teachers utilize a variety of assessment techniques to document instruction and progress.
- C. Teachers integrate higher order thinking skills in the planning and teaching of daily lessons and units.
- D. ELL teacher is provided for students who are English Language Learners.
- E. Reading: Who needs it? Students with and without IEP's who have been tested and meet the qualifications of the reading program. A reading teacher provides direct instruction with students who are identified as needing this support.
- F. Trimester Math and Writing Labs: Who needs them? Students who will develop the grade level skills in math or writing within a 30 day period of intensive intervention.
- G. 60 Day intensive math and writing labs: Who needs them? Students who are below grade level in math or written language and need intensive instruction in one or both of these subject areas. These students may or may not reach grade level skills at the end of the intervention.
- H. Learning Center: Every other day or daily depending on the level of student need. Who needs it? Students who are able to attend grade level classes, but who may require additional support to fully understand grade level reading, written language skills and/or math concepts. Designed to support the re-teaching of concepts presented in classes using the current course work, and to assist with organization/study skills so that students' can meet success in their regular education classes
- I. Alternate day Science and Social Studies Classes: Who needs them? Non-special education students who are unable to meet the academic demands of a full course load or students who require such a significant level of special education interventions that their schedules do not allow for a full coursework in these areas.

III. Encouragement of Teacher Mentoring and Collaboration

- A. New teachers meet with mentors on a regular basis.
- B. Teachers share best practices regarding curriculum alignment, enrichment, and assessment analysis.
- C. New teachers are systematically introduced to curriculum that may be new to them.
- D. There is a one-day orientation for new teachers prior to the beginning of the school year.
- E. Every school has a teacher handbook to help teachers learn the norms and procedures of the school.

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

- A. Each school reviews MCAS results and regularly discusses the need for power standards and formative assessments.
- B. A systematic review of all curriculum documents is ongoing.
- C. Professional development is provided for all teachers in how to use the curriculum documents.
- D. Teams of teachers work to align curriculum both horizontally and vertically in each subject area.

V. Review of School Policies and Discipline Codes

- A. Administration maintains and tracks student discipline records including in house suspensions, out of school suspensions, vandalism, and discipline referrals.
- B. Administration, with the help of the School Council, updates school handbooks yearly.
- C. The Principal or Assistant Principal hold assemblies at least twice per year to discuss rules, policies and disciplinary procedures.
- D. In-school suspension is given to students who consistently break rules or who commit a serious offense.

High School Level:

I. Support 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.

- A. Guidance counselor work with students individually and in small groups to help settle conflicts.
- B. A school adjustment counselor works with students to help develop a coordinated effort to serve the needs of the student.
- C. The Principal, Assistant Principal and Dean do periodic assemblies with students to explain the norms of the school.
- D. Behavioral consultations with a BCBA or school psychologist are available to staff and families
- E. Teaching assistants are deployed to assist students in certain regular education classrooms
- F. Classroom accommodations are available to all students. An accommodation guide is provided. Consultation with special educators is available & encouraged.
- G. Numerous service organizations (Peer Leaders, NHS, the Friends Club, Environment Club, GSA, etc.) are at the high school to help students develop a sense of belonging to their school and their community.
- H. MCAS review classes are held after-school for those students who need MCAS remediation. An essential concepts biology class is available for students who have failed MCAS or may need additional preparation.

II. Direct and Systematic Instruction in Reading for All Students

- A. Teachers utilize skills and strategies that recognize various learning styles.
- B. Teachers utilize a variety of assessment techniques to document instruction and progress.
- C. Teachers integrate higher order thinking skills in the planning and teaching of daily lessons and units.
- D. An ELL teacher is provided for students who are English Language Learners.

III. Encouragement of Teacher Mentoring and Collaboration

- A. New teachers meet with mentors on a regular basis.
- B. Teachers share best practices regarding curriculum alignment, enrichment, and assessment analysis.
- C. New teachers are systematically introduced to curriculum that may be new to them.
- D. There is a one-day orientation for new teachers prior to the beginning of the school year.
- E. Every school has a teacher handbook to help teachers learn the norms and procedures of the school.

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

- A. The high school staff review MCAS results and regularly discusses the need for formative assessments.
- B. A systematic review of all curriculum documents is ongoing.
- C. Professional development is provided for all teachers in how to use the curriculum documents.
- D. Teams of teachers work to align curriculum both horizontally and vertically in each subject area.

V. Review of School Policies and Discipline Codes

- A. Administration maintains and tracks student discipline records including in house suspensions, out of school suspensions, vandalism, and discipline referrals.
- B. Administration, with the help of the School Council, updates school handbooks yearly.
- C. The Principal, Assistant Principal and Dean hold assemblies at least twice per year to discuss rules, policies and disciplinary procedures.
- D. In-school suspension is given to students who consistently break rules or who commit a serious offence. During this time, the ISSP monitor ensures that students get caught up on work and that they understand the seriousness of their offense.

Learning Styles & Differences

Visual Learners

Visual learners learn through seeing. They rely on a sense of sight and are able to create and manipulate mental images and/or pictures. They learn best from visual displays.

Characteristics:

- Active imagination
- Forming mental images
- Finding your way in space
- Image manipulations
- Graphic representation
- Recognizing relationships of objects in space
- Accurate perceptions from different angles

Suggested Accommodations

- provide outlines for lessons
- peer/teacher notes
- daily/weekly agenda
- weekly syllabus
- flow charts and templates
- write important information on blackboard or overhead during focused instruction
- preferential seating
- written directions/assignments
- guided written examples
- video tapes
- trade books to enhance instruction
- charts, graphs, maps, visual organizers, manipulatives
- computer
- display calendar with upcoming events/deadlines
- print rich environment
- use visual cues to emphasize important items (bold print, italics, color)
- provide completed models
- demonstrate expectations

Auditory Learners

Auditory learners learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through, person-to-person relationships and communication. They interpret the meaning of speech through listening to the tone of voice, pitch, and speed. Written information may have little meaning until it is heard.

Characteristics:

- Effective verbal / non-verbal communication
- Sensitivity to other's moods, temperaments, motivations, and feelings
- Working cooperatively in a group
- Ability to discern other's underlying intentions and behavior
- Ability to empathize with others

Auditory Learners (continued)

Accommodations:

- audio taped lessons
- restating directions/objectives
- pre and post discussions
- limiting outside auditory distractions
- technology
- oral assessments
- auditory cueing
- cooperative grouping
- access to books on tape, Kurzweil
- pairing auditory information with written
- put information to music; rhythm
- preferential seating

Tactile / Kinesthetic Learners

Tactile / kinesthetic learners learn best through a hands-on approach, actively exploring the physical world around them. They may find it difficult to sit still for any length of time.

Characteristics:

- Improved body functioning
- Imitative abilities
- Mind and body connection
- Fine and gross motor coordination
- Expanding awareness through the body

Accommodations

- use of manipulative
- tactile object to manipulate quietly
- hands-on experimentation
- expressing emotions through use of body
- allow student to sit/stand at desk / table / floor
- provide opportunities for movement in the classroom
- provide frequent breaks
- written output rather than oral

When thinking about reading instruction, consider the following practices:

- Pair-share
- Provide examples
- Use cross-age tutors
- Use multi-sensory teaching strategies
- Identify strengths
- Extended time
- Use cooperative learning
- Multi-age groups
- Introduce tools and materials prior to use in a specific task (guided discovery)
- Practice with tools and materials in class before use
- Accessible format for texts (Kurzweil, Learning Ally, audiobooks, podcasts, read aloud computer options)
- Questions read

- Highlight key words
- Pre-read strategies
- Preteach vocabulary
- Discussions
- Tape record directions
- Study guide
- Outline main ideas
- Tracking device, place marker
- Word walls
- Incorporate currently popular themes / characters into assignments for motivation
- Use peer checkers to review completed work
- Peer tutor program
- Technology – Kurzweil
- Opportunities to read at independent level
- Activate prior knowledge, such as KWL charts
- Set reading purposes

When thinking about spelling, consider the following:

- Pair share
- Cooperative learning
- Use different media
- Use verbal cues
- Circle misspelled words and have students self-correct, proof read sentences, or paragraphs backwards word by word
- Chaining (remember, remember, remember)
- Word families
- Mnemonics
- Use visual cues for reversals
- Encourage dictionary use
- Create sight word list or list of frequently used words
- Post word banks or word walls for subject areas
- Peer editing
- Break words down into syllables
- Label objects
- Create word games
- Visualize words within a word
- Review/teach phonics, sound symbol relationships
- Review/teach vowels (both long and short) and spelling rules
- Create a spelling list around theme of subject area
- Provide more practice trials
- Flashcards
- Morphology study; root words, prefixes, suffixes
- Individual spellers
- Use of color and tactile practices

When thinking about Mathematics, consider the following:

- Use manipulatives including Cuisenaire rods and Invicta scales
- Highlight verb in word problems and simple operations
- Step by step directions for multiple step problems incorporating visual displays of the problem solving steps
- Mnemonics
- Use of tables in multiplication and division
- Provide critical vocabulary lists
- Provide student with legible notes from teacher
- Provide additional/guided examples
- Review procedures just prior to testing
- Provide a variety of activities to teach a concept
- Repeat instructions
- Work sample problems
- Technology
- Continual review and assessment
- Alternate assignment
- Cross age tutors
- Use journals
- Keep math notebook for definitions/examples
- Modify the number of required problems
- Create timelines for lengthy assignments
- Use of calculator for completing or checking work
- Pair share or buddy checks
- Instruct student at a level at which success can be achieved
- Provide additional spacing to solve problems
- Graph and/or lined paper to help with organization
- Cooperative learning
- Use inverse operation to check for correct answer
- Use of drama to act out word problems
- Use of hundreds chart, number lines

General strategies for study and organization:

- Modify subject matter to exclude extraneous information
- Regular review (weekly or biweekly)
- Prioritize lessons to master basic skills
- Pre reading questions to focus attention on essential Information using individual follow-up after class instruction
- Accessible format for texts (Kurzweil, Learning Ally, audiobooks, podcasts, read aloud computer options)
- Highlight important information, details
- Simplify language
- Give additional language
- Modify assignments
- Use multi-sensory materials (verbal, kinesthetic, written)
- Refer back to concrete examples to which they can relate
- Use timers to show allocated time
- Shorten project assignment into daily tasks
- Use self-teaching and/or self-correcting materials
- Technology

- Provide content/lecture summaries
- Reduce visual stimuli for tasks
- Scaffold information with prior knowledge
- Peer tutor program
- Have student summarize at the end of a lesson
- Cueing
- Study guide
- Check for understanding
- Provide extra text when possible
- Parent-teacher communication through planners or folders, with parental sign off
- Complete chapter summaries

Suggested strategies for dealing with anxious students:

- Give advance notice of changes
- Daily agendas- individual and class
- Notify student of change and check for understanding
- Notify others involved (parent/guardian, teachers, support staff) and check for understanding
- Assist with transition when change is made and request student feedback
- Provide oral and written notification of change
- Allow response time and/or feedback
- Appropriate response to any change should be reinforced with positive feedback
- Advance notice of all tests and quizzes
- Model expected behaviors
- Discourage competition between students
- Allow breaks as needed
- Watch for and anticipate unasked questions
- Let students know that mistakes are OK and better than non-participation
- Adjust assignment / test criteria
- Reduce the total number of questions or problems
- Break assignments / tasks / tests into workable amount
- Provide corrective feedback before moving to the next step
- Cooperative learning groups and/or pair with a buddy
- Teach acceptance and respect
- Focus on pride in individual progress rather than comparisons with other students
- Emphasize positive before critiquing work
- Conference with students for personal explanation of corrections
- Provide alternatives for returning failing grades
- Encourage self-advocacy or verbalization of answers

Strategies for addressing hyperactivity:

- Allow for movement
- Allow for changing of seating during class
- Allow to stand, walk or sit
- Frequent breaks
- Holding of a tactile object in student's hand
- Shortened sessions
- Work with the family to implement home/school behavior plan
- Modify class time to allow for frequent change of activities
- Provide alternate testing/location
- Consult school based support team
- Use hands on activities for learning whenever possible

- Use computer as a teaching tool
- Seat student in close proximity to teacher
- Structured environment
- Additional activities to reduce down time
- Provide positive, scheduled reinforcement

Strategies for addressing attention deficiency & auditory processing:

- Provide study carrels
- Use room dividers
- Speak slowly
- Provide headsets to muffle noise
- Quiet location with minimal distractions
- Give short, simple oral directions and ask for student to restate
- Preferential seating
- Wait time
- Minimize distractions
- Checklist for completing tasks
- Small group instruction
- Provide opportunities for hands on
- Frequent breaks
- Provide anticipation cues
- Timer
- Shorten assignments
- Frequently check for understanding using the student's name
- Repeat major points
- When working in groups give job to help student stay on task
- Model and encourage visualization strategies

Pause to think about potential stressors in the home environment...

- Be sensitive to different family units
- Provide opportunities for success
- Provide counseling formally or informally
- Provide structured environment
- Be sensitive to curricula issues that may evoke emotional reactions
- Give advance notice of change or any possible stressful situations
- Home/school communication
- Be sensitive to student reluctance to participate in new interpersonal relationships
- Allow breaks as needed
- Be consistent
- State realistic consequences clearly
- Use a progression of consequences
- Encourage ownership in choice Involve the school based support team
- Use follow-up procedures after an incident to discuss actions, consequences, and alternative behaviors
- Provide a daily agenda
- Provide positive reinforcement
- At end of day, teacher/student conference to review the day

Pre-referral Process

Education Intervention

Districts should take positive steps to promote responsive school environments.

"All schools are required to have sound instructional practices and instructional supports that are responsive to the needs of all students. A variety of practices and supports should be tried and the results of each attempted strategy should be documented and placed in the student's record. If a student is subsequently evaluated to determine special education eligibility, documentation of instructional supports that have been tried should be made available for review by the Team when determining eligibility."*

Overview of the Child Study Team Process: The Child Study Team (CST) process was designed to provide support to the student and teacher through a collaborative approach. It is based on the premise that "two heads are better than one" when developing plans for students who are having difficulty in school. When approached in a positive manner, the CST can be a valuable tool in providing for an effective educational program for students. Child Study Teams are most effective in schools in which all school staff have responsibility for all students and are skilled at engaging in collaborative problem solving. The process involves six basic steps that focus on individual student needs, learning styles, program effectiveness, and home/school communication.

Who makes up the Child Study Team?

Three is the minimum number of CST participants. These may include an administrator, counselor, regular education teacher, special education teacher, parent, ELL teacher, school psychologist and others, as appropriate for the case under review.

Topics for discussion at the CST meeting:

- ✓ Academic history
- ✓ History of frequent absences
- ✓ MCAS results
- ✓ Significant life changes
- ✓ Disruptive family situations
- ✓ Medical history
- ✓ Primary language
- ✓ Work samples
- ✓ Special Education services, if applicable

*Massachusetts Department of Education / June 2001, IEP PROCESS GUIDE page 6.
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iep/proguide.pdf#search=%22services%22>. Accessed May 21, 2013.

Steps in the Child Study Team Process

1. Gathering of Information

Prior to and during the first meeting, team members gather as much relevant information as possible regarding the student's past and present educational and/or behavioral performance. Information should be gathered from a variety of sources including parents, official school records, and anecdotal records.

2. Assessment (if necessary) and Evaluation of Data

The team meets to discuss and interpret the information available to them. The team may decide that more information is needed and develop a plan for obtaining the information.

3. Development of an Individual Plan

After evaluating the existing information, the team develops an individual plan specific to the student's strengths and weaknesses. Strategies and techniques are brainstormed and agreed upon by all those involved in the implementation process. A timeline for follow-up and evaluation of progress is established.

4. Implementation of the Plan

The student's plan is implemented for a specified time period, approximately 4-6 weeks; however the time period may vary with each individual. Additional data is gathered if needed. Throughout the implementation period, ongoing documentation of progress is essential. This will make it possible, at the follow-up meeting, to review the student's progress as a result of the interventions.

5. Evaluation of Progress

The CST reconvenes to discuss progress and additional data. The plan is changed as needed. Further course of action is discussed.

6. Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

The CST monitors student progress and alters the plan as is necessary. If the plan is effective and no disability is suspected, the team should meet periodically to discuss the student's progress. At any time during this process, if the team has sufficient evidence that the student has a disability, the team should determine whether an evaluation or 504 Plan is necessary. For students with obvious severe disabilities and/or crisis and for whom delay of referral to special education or other supplemental or support services would be detrimental to the student, the CST may bypass implementation of alternative strategies prior to referral. The reason(s) for bypassing this process must be clearly documented in the CST minutes. When a student makes sufficient progress and/or modifications are no longer needed, the CST may dismiss the student from the process. Records of the CST activity are part of the student's permanent record and thus should follow the student as he/she progresses through the educational system.