

MELROSE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMODATION PLAN REVISED 2009



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* Special acknowledgement is given to Marc Kerble, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum in Winchester for his collaboration in the creation of this document.

Melrose Public Schools

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)

Introduction

This document is an instructional guide for teachers and administrators. Its use ensures a system-wide, uniform approach to the process of: a) identifying general education students with specific learning needs, b) selecting and utilizing accommodations focused on student improvement and achievement, and c) assisting in the implementation of state law, Chapter 71, Section 38Q1/2.

The spirit of the DCAP resides in the commitment and responsibility of all staff to help each student reach his or her personal goals by cultivating an environment that responds to the needs of diverse learners. To that end, our plan reflects the Mission Statement of the Melrose Public Schools in its desire to help all students reach their maximum potential and become life-long learners and successful participants in a global community through the dedicated efforts of caring educators and the support of family.

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

This law requires that each school district in the Commonwealth develop and implement a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan, or DCAP. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that "...all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in regular education." The plan acts as a guide to administrators and teachers as they analyze and accommodate a wide variety of learning needs within the general education classroom. The plan also defines available resources within the school system and suggests how to utilize these resources. An effective DCAP encourages staff collaboration, mentoring and parental involvement.

Components of an Effective DCAP

The Curriculum Accommodation Plan should encompass the following:

- Analysis of diverse learning styles within the regular education classroom
- Accommodation of various students' learning needs, including the specific needs of our English Language Learners and students whose behaviors may interfere with student learning
- Provision of appropriate services and support within the regular education classroom
- Provision of direct and systematic reading instruction if necessary
- Parental involvement
- Teacher collaboration and mentoring
- Professional development if necessary

DCAP Flow Chart

A student is having difficulty in school with any or all of the following:
Academics
Social Functioning
Emotional/Behavioral Functioning

1. Identify the areas of concern

2. Complete a Student Information Form and Accommodation Checklist (Appendix). You may want to use the Academic and Behavioral Checklist (Appendix) to help you complete the Student Information Form. Submit these documents to the person in your building who is responsible for the DCAP. Typically this is the building principal. This will initiate the Instructional Support Team (IST) process.

3. Prior to the IST meeting, review student records and cumulative folders. Consult with past and present teachers. Contact parents/school nurse/guidance counselor for any necessary or applicable information.

4. Bring this information to the IST Team meeting. Discuss student concerns in light of the information gathered. As a team, consider alternative strategies and accommodations not yet tried. Review Accommodation Checklist for assistance with this step. Decide on proposed intervention strategies and list these on the Documentation Log Form (Appendix). Determine follow-up meeting date and conduct meeting to review success of planned strategies.

Plan was successful.
Continue/discontinue
accommodations and
supports.

Plan was not successful. Revise/add new strategies.
Conduct observations/consultations if necessary. Plan
additional follow-up meeting and conduct to review
success of new strategies.

Plan was successful.
Continue/discontinue
accommodations and supports.

Plan was not successful. Revise/add new strategies if
recommended by the team and consult with the
building's DCAP administrator.

Executive Summary

The following plan was developed in order to meet the requirements of Section 38Q of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws. In keeping with the spirit of this law, it is the intent of this plan, “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 plan of the Melrose Public School system to comply with the above regulations is a comprehensive one. It involves the following components:

- 1) Each school has a designated **Instructional Support Team** that meets on a regular basis and provides regular education teachers the opportunity to collaboratively work together to find accommodations to meet the needs of students with diverse learning abilities. The philosophy of the Instructional Support team is attached, along with all the forms currently in use by the teams at each school. Copies of the IST Manual are housed at each school as well as in the Policy and Procedure Manual at our Parent Pupil Services Department. Each year, principals remind staff members of the purpose and procedures involving IST Referrals. Consults with specialists who can provide important information and expertise to the regular education teacher are a common part of the IST meeting. Parents are often an important part of the IST process as well. Establishing home/school connections is a strategy that is often implemented as a result of referral to the IST.
- 2) Our school employs the services of many **specialists** for the purpose of assisting students, who need extra support. Careful assessment and remediation is planned. Collaboration with the regular education classroom teacher is an important component of the success of this collaboration, which hopefully decreases our number of special education referrals. For example, Reading Specialists not only work with selected students but also model effective reading lessons for teachers to use with their entire class. Title I Tutors may provide specific phonemic awareness instruction to students needing it. Health Education Services specialists may consult with our teachers to provide specific behavioral suggestions and accommodations for students. Parents are often notified of regular education specialist services that are being provided to their child so that a true partnership and increased support may transpire.
- 3) Melrose has a formal **Mentor Program**, whereby veteran teachers assist those who are new to our system. Teachers meet weekly in a collaborative fashion so that answers to questions on how to best serve the needs of all students may be addressed. Veteran teachers model effective teaching techniques for protégés who are encouraged to observe their classrooms. Mentors also make helpful recommendations based on informal observations of the protégés’ instructional techniques.

- 4) **Professional development** is seen as an important part of our District-Wide Accommodation Plan. Regular education teachers and paraprofessionals are offered workshops on ways to differentiate instruction. Effective behavior modification techniques for all students are also taught. Considering multiple intelligences and providing flexible and cluster grouping are encouraged in curriculum and lesson planning.
- 5) **An Accommodation Checklist** (Appendix) can be used for ANY student to ensure a smooth transition from one grade level or teacher to the next by documenting effective accommodations that have been used by staff members in the past.
- 6) The services of an **English as a Second Language** teacher are offered to all students from K-12 who are in need of language support due to diverse native language backgrounds.
- 7) Our district provides **ongoing academic support** through before and after-school programs for students. These programs are often funded through grants made possible by the Department of Education. The goal of these programs is to increase the knowledge base and confidence levels of our students so that they can successfully apply skills learned to testing and real-life situations. Teachers in Grades K-8 are also contractually obligated to provide extra help for students needing extra support.
- 8) Teachers offer a **variety of instructional practices and assessment** that includes: differentiation, consideration of the multiple intelligences, flexible and cluster grouping, sound developmental practices, the use of rubrics, and the use of technology.

APPENDIX

Melrose Public Schools

Instructional Support Team (IST)
Manual

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Philosophy of the Instructional Support Team (IST)

The purpose of the Instructional Support team (IST) is to provide successful instructional interventions and accommodations to meet the needs of each child in the general education classroom.

We believe and expect that all students can learn to a high degree. We are committed to the philosophy that student success is the result of a partnership, which includes students, teachers and parents/guardians. At the classroom level, the purpose of the IST process is to identify aspects of the student-teacher partnership where accommodation in the classroom can help the student experience improved success and make effective progress. We do this by improving learning and instruction through the effective use of all our district's resources.

Our school community embraces the IST as a valuable intervention to be initiated when a student is experiencing difficulty in regard to achieving his/her personal or learning goals. Through teamwork, the IST can assist a teacher and student in acquiring strategies that resolve learning issues within the regular education setting. In the event however, that a variety of instructional interventions and strategies have been implemented consistently over time in the general education setting, and a student is still not making effective progress, the IST will consult with the building's DCAP Coordinator to discuss next steps.

Overview

IST is a group problem solving process with the task of meeting student needs through the general education program. **Thorough documentation is a critical component of this process.** Each team member contributes to the process of:

1. Collecting and reviewing student data
2. Defining and prioritizing concerns
3. Reviewing accommodations/interventions previously tried
4. Developing new accommodations/interventions
5. Reviewing and analyzing results
6. Determining appropriate next steps.

Goal

Any teacher, counselor, administrator, or other staff member who recognizes difficulties that a particular student is experiencing in school may initiate referral to an IST. The goal of this referral is to initiate a process to develop accommodations/interventions that will allow the student to be successful in the regular education setting. These accommodations/interventions will provide teachers with additional instructional strategies and supports to be more effective and ensure student success.

The IST process is one of confidentiality and respect. It is extremely important that the IST acts in a collaborative and supportive manner. Meetings should always take into account the feelings of each participant, especially those of the student who has been referred, as well as those of the referring teacher or other educational professionals. Outcomes of the IST should be by consensus. If any recommendation is in contention, the principal, as the instructional leader of the building, is responsible for making the final choice.

Meeting Schedule

Instructional Support team meetings are scheduled by the building principal at the beginning of the school year, to be held on a regular monthly basis. Intermediary meetings will take place on an as needed basis. All IST members will be notified in writing by the principal/facilitator in a timely manner. Principals should be cognizant of specialists' schedules when arranging IST meetings.

Membership

Membership on the Instructional Support Team varies, depending upon each individual student and teacher, his or her needs, and grade level. Common to the IST at all grade levels are the roles of:

- Facilitator
- Recorder
- Referring Teacher
- Other Relevant Staff

Elementary School:

- Principal, or his/her designee as Facilitator
- 2 Teachers (1:K-2, 1:3-5)
- Referring Teacher(s)
- Other Staff: (only as needed after initial meeting)
 - Special Needs Teacher
 - Reading Teacher
 - Specialists (Art, Music, Physical Education)
 - School Nurse
 - Psychologist/school adjustment counselor
 - Occupational Therapist/Physical Therapist
 - Speech and Language Therapist
 - Any Other Consulting Staff

Middle School:

- Principal or his/her designee as facilitator
- Referring Teacher(s)
- Guidance Counselor
- Team Leader (as recorder)
- Special Education Liaison
- Teachers on the student's instructional team
- Other Relevant Staff:
 - School Nurse
 - Psychologist
 - Occupational Therapist/Physical Therapist
 - Speech and Language Therapist
 - Other Consulting Staff

High School:

- Principal or his/her designee as facilitator
- Referring Teacher(s)
- Guidance Counselor (recorder)
- Special Education Liaison
- Teachers on the student's instructional team
- Other Relevant Staff:
 - School Nurse (continued)

- Psychologist
- Occupational Therapist/Physical Therapist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Other Consulting Staff

1. Once a teacher has determined there is a concern about a specific student, that teacher should meet with the IST facilitator with any informal documentation to begin the dialogue for referral. Upon agreement of need, the teacher will receive a Student Information Form and an Accommodation Checklist to complete. This begins the formal documentation of the student's need.
2. When writing an IST referral, appropriate anecdotal narrative or samples of student work should be retained. Teachers should complete the checklist provided that shows the variety of accommodations/interventions the teacher has already used prior to writing the referral. All of this information should be provided to the facilitator for distribution **prior to** the scheduled IST meeting. If necessary, an emergency meeting will be called. Whenever possible, IST members should be given at least a one-week notice.
3. Once team members receive the forms, they should prepare for the meeting by reviewing the materials and developing possible responses.
4. At the Initial Meeting (meeting #1), all members will review the nature of the concern, and develop strategies for accommodation/interventions. A set of strategies will be identified and documented. The referring teacher may request that a member of the team or a specialist complete an observation during the IST process. This Observation Form is included in this Appendix.
5. A date for the First Review meeting (meeting #2) will be set.
6. At the First Review (meeting #2), the IST will review the outcome of the intervention plan. At this point, a variety of options may be implemented. If the plan has been successful, the process may be terminated, with the successful strategies being continued or discontinued. If the plan has not been successful, the IST will develop an additional set of interventions. This alternative plan will be documented on the Documentation Log and a date for the Follow-Up Meeting (meeting #3) set.
7. The above process will continue for a minimum of 3 meetings. If, after consistent application of decided upon strategies and interventions, the student is still not experiencing success, the IST Coordinator will consult with the building's DCAP Coordinator (typically the building principal) to determine next steps.

Referring Staff Member's Responsibilities

- Identify student's strengths and needs
- Gather work samples
- Review educational history
- Review curriculum based assessments
- Research family history
- Review medical history
- Consult with student, family members and other professionals
- Implement regular education support services
- Apply recommended accommodations/strategies/interventions
- Keep documentation of your application

IST Forms

**Melrose Public Schools
Instructional Support Team**

Student Information Form

(To be completed by the referring staff member and returned to building principal for distribution to the IST.)

Student Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____ YOG: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Parents/Guardians: _____

Age: _____ DOB: _____ Primary Language: _____

1. Identify the student's academic and non-academic strengths:

2. Briefly describe this student's primary area of difficulty within the classroom setting.

3. Check all the curriculum areas affected below.
(Provide appropriate work samples for all checked areas.)

- Mathematics
- History and Social Sciences
- English Language Arts
- Circle any that apply: Language Composition Reading Spelling
- Science and Technology/Engineering
- Music Art
- Health Physical Education
- Other Curriculum areas

Check all other areas of concern:

- Handwriting Attention Physical Well-Being
- Attendance Behavior

4. Medical/Health Concerns: (Please specify and include any medications.)

5. Please include all current test and/or achievement scores and a copy of the most recent report card.

6. Briefly outline/describe your teaching style and how the classroom is run.

7. Additional comments.

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Counselor's Signature: _____ Date: _____
(H.S. Only-cc: Principal)

**Melrose Public Schools
Instructional Support Team**

Accommodation Check List

(To be completed by the referring teacher and returned to building principal for distribution to the IST.)

Student Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____ YOG: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Parents/Guardians: _____

Age: _____ DOB: _____ Primary Language: _____

Check all accommodations that you already apply consistently to this student.

Instructional Strategy:

- _____ Extend time requirement
- _____ Vary activities
- _____ Allow breaks
- _____ Reduce assignments requiring copying
- _____ Develop alternate assessments
- _____ Use rubrics
- _____ Use transition cues
- _____ Use technology assisted instruction
- _____ Provide after or before school help regularly
- _____ Flexible grouping
- _____ Cluster grouping
- _____ Co-teaching

Differentiating Instruction:

- _____ Tape lectures/discussions for replay
- _____ NCR paper for peer to provide notes
- _____ Present demonstration model
- _____ Utilize manipulatives (across curriculum)
- _____ Pre-teach vocabulary
- _____ Make/use vocabulary files
- _____ Peer tutoring/support
- _____ Repeat/clarify directions
- _____ Other

Materials:

- _____ Arrangement of material on page
- _____ Taped texts
- _____ Highlight test/study guides
- _____ Use supplementary materials
- _____ Typed teacher material
- _____ Large print
- _____ Marker to guide reading
- _____ Large graph paper for Math
- _____ Pencil grips
- _____ Graphic organizers
- _____ Assignment notebook
- _____ Special Equipment (e.g., FM Monitor, Computer, Headphones)
- _____ Calculator

Assignments:

- _____ Give directions in small distinct steps (written/picture/verbal)
- _____ Reduce paper and pencil tasks
- _____ Use pictorial directions
- _____ Give extra cues and prompts
- _____ Allow student to record or type assignment
- _____ Adapt worksheets, packets
- _____ Other

Self Management/Organization:

- _____ Visual daily calendars and/or agenda
- _____ Check often for understanding/review
- _____ Have student repeat directions
- _____ Use study sheets to organize material
- _____ Design/write/use long-term assignment timelines
- _____ Buddy system
- _____ Other

Testing Adaptations:

- _____ Oral
- _____ Alternate tests
- _____ Taped
- _____ Pictures
- _____ Read test to student
- _____ Preview language of test questions
- _____ Extend time limits
- _____ Administer in short periods
- _____ Change format visually
- _____ Administer in large print format
- _____ Answers dictated to scribe
- _____ Other

Behavioral Strategies

- _____ Develop self-monitoring strategies
- _____ Change seating
- _____ Increase student-teacher interaction
- _____ Develop behavior plan with motivating incentives
- _____ Initiate a behavior analysis plan
- _____ Adjust classroom management techniques
- _____ Parent communication
- _____ Define clear and consistent expectations
- _____ Consult with school psychologist
- _____ Use charts and graphs to monitor expectations

Motivation and Reinforcement:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| _____ Verbal | _____ Offer Choice |
| _____ Non-Verbal | _____ Use strengths/interests often |
| _____ Positive Reinforcement | _____ Reinforce initiative |
| _____ Concrete Reinforcement | _____ Other: _____ |

**Melrose Public Schools
Instructional Support Team**

Documentation Log Form
(To be completed by the IST recorder.)

Student Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____ YOG: _____

Results Code: C=To be Continued; D=To be Discontinued; R=To be Revised

Meeting #1

Date: _____

Primary Areas of Concern:

Intervention Strategies:

Staff Member Responsible

1.

2.

3.

First Review (Meeting #2)

Date: _____

Provide results for each intervention listed above. (Include work samples.)

Results
(See Code)

1.

2.

3.

Revise and/or Add Intervention Strategies:

Staff Member Responsible

1.

2.

3.

Results Code: C=To Be Continued; D=To be Discontinued; R=To be Revised

Follow-up (Meeting #3)

Date: _____

Provide results for each intervention listed above. (Include work samples.)

**Results
(See Code)**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Revise and/or Add Intervention Strategies:

Staff Member Responsible

1.

2.

3.

Final Recommendation of IST

Date: _____

**Melrose Public Schools
Instructional Support Team**

Observation Sheet

(To be completed by the observing staff member.)

Student Name: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____ YOG: _____

Classroom teacher:

Date of observation: _____ Time: _____

Observer: _____

Focus of observation:

State activity student is involved in:

Describe student behavior during this activity: (i.e. attention, organization, interest, independence)

Is this student using materials appropriately? (Please explain.)

Academic and Behavioral Descriptors

You may find this sheet helpful as you complete the Student Information Form.

Language Arts:

Writing:

Spelling
Sentence Structure
Paragraph Construction
Essay Construction
Expository
Narrative
Persuasive
Descriptive

Reading (oral/silent):

Fluency
Vocabulary
Literal comprehension
Inferential comprehension
Narrative vs. Text

Listening:

Attention
Receptive Language
Expressive Language

Mathematics:

Number Sense
Analytical Application
Computation

Concrete Application
Number Sequencing

Classroom Issues:

Homework
Class Work
Quizzes and Tests
Group Work

Oral Presentation
Note Taking
Organizational Skills
Long Term Projects

School Attendance

Truancy
Class Cuts
Excessive Absenteeism
Tardiness

Social/Emotional:

Isolation from Peers
Scapegoat Victim
Bullying Behavior
Lack of Self Control

Home Issues:

Recent Illness/Death in Family
Changing Family Dynamics
Separation/Divorce
New Adult in the Household
New Child in Family
Financial Change/Job Loss
Undesired Relocation
Foreclosure

Psychological Well Being:

Self Control
Anxiety
Depression
Withdrawn
Attitudinal Changes
Anger Management

Physical Well Being

Nutrition
Cleanliness/Hygiene

Behaviors:

In Class:

Verbal Outbursts
Wandering
Inappropriate Language
Physical Contact

Non-Class Time:

Running in Halls
Late to Class
Lunchroom Misbehavior
Destruction of Property