



# **District Curriculum Accommodations Plan (DCAP)**

(Revised 2023)

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## DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATION PLAN OVERVIEW

### What is a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)?

Massachusetts General Laws require the adoption and implementation of a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). This plan is intended to guide principals in ensuring that all possible efforts are made to meet student needs in general education classrooms.

### 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 the 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 programming, 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.”*

### *School Councils and District Accommodation Plan, Ch. 71 Section 59C -Amended Language*

*“The school council, including the school principal, shall meet regularly and shall assist in the identification of the educational needs of all students attending the school, shall make recommendations to the principal for the development, implementation and assessment of the Curriculum Accommodation Plan required pursuant to Section 38Q1/2, shall assist in the review of the annual school budget and in the formulation of a School Improvement Plan.”*

### What is the purpose of the DCAP?

The Needham Public Schools District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) is a resource for all educators to assist with meeting the needs of ALL learners including students with and without disabilities and students at varying levels of English language proficiency. Specifically, the DCAP is intended to aid educators in identifying and accommodating the wide range of student learning abilities and needs that exist in any school or classroom including

- Assists teachers in analyzing, assessing, and accommodating the diverse learning styles of students within the general classroom
- Provides examples of accommodations, strategies, and services within a multi-tiered system of support that can be used within a general education classroom to meet the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs of all learners
- Provides examples of resources available to teachers in the areas of student support, mentoring, professional development, and coaching
- Encourages parental involvement in their student’s education
- Ensures administrative consultation between the principals and the administrator of special education when accommodations have not met the intended goal

### How does the DCAP help teacher instruction and practices, students, and parents?

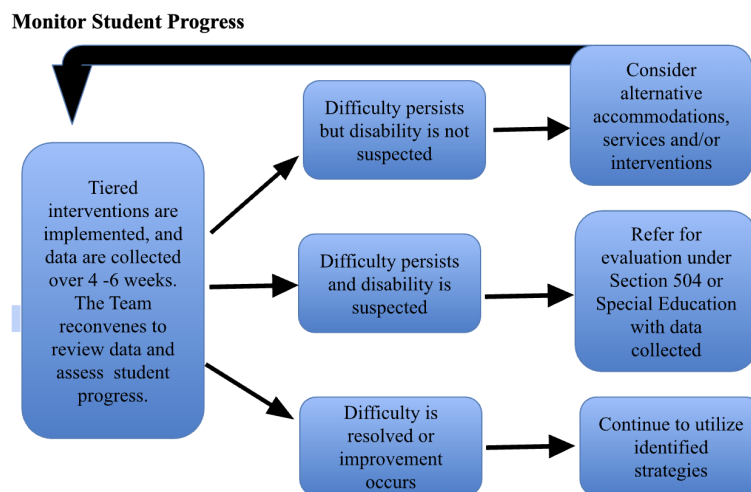


The DCAP is a great resource to identify strategies and accommodations that can be provided to all students in the general education classroom. No two students are the same; we accommodate and differentiate our instruction and curriculum to meet students where they are. It is expected that across content areas and grade levels, students will need various levels of support. Needing accommodations does not mean a student is at-risk in their learning; all individuals vary in their needs based on content, age, development, social/emotional well-being, external factors, and more. The DCAP can be a reference and resource to school staff, as well as a resource for parents to see the wide range of supports that their students can receive within the general education setting, and clarify the difference between regular accommodations that can be provided to students and those more significant accommodations and modifications that require an IEP or 504 plan.

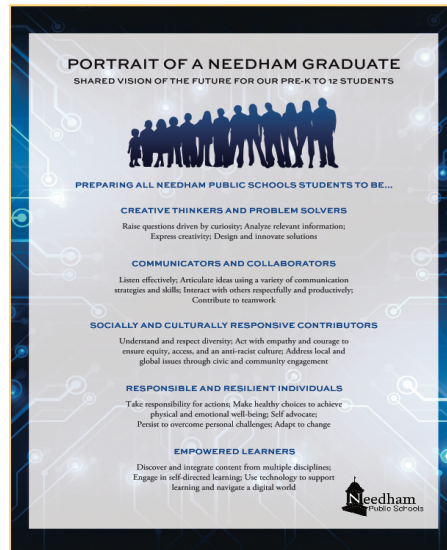
### **How do students gain access to the supports, interventions, and accommodations noted within the DCAP?**

All staff may provide individual accommodations to students on an as-needed basis and specific to the content or situation. This document includes curriculum accommodations for elementary, middle, and high school. The DCAP includes suggestions for accommodating concerns regarding academic progress as well as strategies and interventions designed to resolve social and behavioral issues. While it lists best practices, sample strategies, and other actions from which the teachers and collaborating staff may select appropriate accommodations for individual students, in no way does the DCAP limit the accommodations that staff may choose to implement in order to meet a student's needs.

**Student Success Teams (SST)** meet on a regular basis to review data and provide general education teachers the opportunity to work together to identify accommodations and interventions designed to meet the needs of students. Consult with specialists who can provide important information and expertise to the general education teacher are a common part of the SST meetings. These support teams use a problem-solving process to discuss specific students who encounter learning and behavioral challenges, analyze the potential reasons for the challenge, develop and implement a plan to overcome the challenge, and monitor progress. Our schools employ the services of many specialists for the purpose of assisting students who need extra support. Parent/Guardian communication is an important part of the process as well. Establishing home/school connections is a strategy that is often implemented as a result of referral to these support teams.



## DCAP CORE BELIEFS



The DCAP supports our vision for all students as outlined in the Portrait of a Needham Graduate and is guided by the following five core beliefs:

### **Core Belief 1: ALL students can learn**

The Needham Public Schools believe that all students can learn and succeed when given the right conditions for learning. We acknowledge the diverse social identities and learning styles of the students we serve. Curriculum must be designed from the margins, ensuring that we are meeting the needs of all students in particular: English language learners, low-income students, students from diverse cultural backgrounds, and students with disabilities. We also know that students acquire skills and express their learning in a myriad of ways. Providing a variety of pathways for students to approach learning tasks and demonstrate understanding is not only essential to the learning process but also gives students choices and options that can fuel their desire for lifelong learning.

### **Core Belief 2: High-Quality Classroom Instruction grounded in standards-based practices is essential**

We believe that each student must have the opportunity to experience high-quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices that enable them to be engaged in challenging, creative, and rigorous learning activities.

- a. Instructional practices are guided by a well-articulated, engaging curriculum that is aligned to standards, delivered in a way that ensures students acquire both content and skills and provides students with a range of opportunities to demonstrate their learning.
- b. Differentiation is essential to instruction and maintains rigor in standards-based practice. Differentiation increases flexibility and adaptation to student needs so that all students can learn



from instructional practices and materials that are accessible to them, including the ways in which they take in information, process as they learn, show what they have learned, and engage with instruction and materials.

- c. Developing competencies in social-emotional learning is critical for student success in life. Social emotional learning practices in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making are specifically taught and embedded throughout the school day. Students' ability to learn well depends not just on instruction but also on factors such as the classroom climate, school culture, a sense of belonging with peers, positive relationships with teachers, and the feedback they receive.
- d. Assessment practices are in place that monitor student progress as well as the efficacy of instruction. Teachers monitor progress frequently to make decisions about changes to instruction that best address student needs. Universal screenings and diagnostic assessments are included as some of the tools used to inform differentiated instructional practices. Data from these assessment tools is analyzed on a regular basis to inform day-to-day practices as well as to measure the success of identified interventions.
- e. Students are taught and have multiple opportunities to practice being reflective about their own progress and influence their own learning. Learning targets are explicit, students are able to gauge their progress towards those targets and are able to identify strategies that would enable them to advance their own learning.

**Core Belief 3: All teaching practices and interventions are universally designed and equity-focused as part of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework**

We are expanding the use of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework across the district to support schools with proactively identifying and addressing the strengths and needs of all students by optimizing data-driven decision-making, progress monitoring, and the use of evidence-based supports and strategies with increasing intensity to sustain student growth.

**Core Belief 4: A Culture of Continuous Learning Strengthens our Capacity to Support All Students**

We are committed to fostering a teaching culture that champions continuous learning, improvement, and high performance. Professional learning is embedded in collaborative team culture and team time is structured and used to support these efforts. All teachers and support staff share collective ownership of and responsibility for the learning of all students.

**Core Belief 5: Parent Engagement and Communication are key to student success**

Parent and teacher partnerships and involvement with the school are key to the overall success of our students. We have much to learn about our students from their families and life experiences that can enhance and support the learning process. It is also our responsibility to partner with parents in a way that strengthens everyone's understanding of academic and social-emotional expectations and guides the process of supporting each child's educational experience.

## MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

The district is in process of articulating the continuum of practices, strategies and support available across all classrooms and schools through a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework. The MTSS tiers represent the level of support a student may need at any point in their schooling. All tiers are evidenced-based, universally designed, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, and equity-focused to





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ensure equitable access for all students. MTSS is not just about tiered interventions, but rather how all the systems in our schools fit together to support students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral health needs.

## TIER ONE UNIVERSAL PROMOTION AND PREVENTION



Tier One universal promotion and prevention practices are high-impact evidence-based practices available to ALL students. When implemented effectively through a trauma-informed, universally designed, developmentally responsive, and equity-focused approach to teaching and learning we should see most students (80%) respond positively in Tier One.

## TIER TWO TARGETED SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION



Tier Two Targeted Support and Intervention addresses the needs of students who have been identified through a systematic data collection process. These students are identified as needing additional, equitable support in both academics and social-emotional development.

Tier Two support is provided in ADDITION to Tier One. Typically, a small number of students (10-15%) need the additional support provided through Tier Two. Tier Two is not a location or placement for students. Support and interventions should be provided

whenever it has been identified as necessary to address individual student needs.

## TIER THREE INTENSIVE INTERVENTION



Tier Three Targeted Support and Intervention are individualized to specific student needs based on data and previous tier 2 interventions. Tier 3 supports include services provided by trained school professionals.

Tier Three intervention is provided in ADDITION to Tier One. Typically a few students (1-5%) need this level of support. Intervention should be provided whenever it has been identified as necessary to address individual student needs. Tier Three intervention is

explicit, skills-based, focused interventions that occur individually or in very small groups.

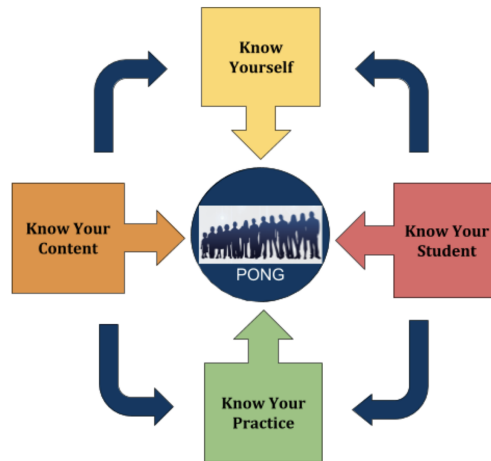
## OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

As a Needham Public Schools Community we are committed to ensuring a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and equitable learning experience for all students, their families, and our faculty. Recognizing that we all enter this work with different perspectives, understandings, and lived experiences, our goal is to offer information, resources, and learning opportunities geared toward deepening understanding and strengthening practice no matter where you are on your journey toward becoming a culturally responsive, antiracist, and anti-biased member of our school community. Most importantly, we honor and celebrate our collective power as educators and community members to enact change and hope that this website can also serve as a growing



professional learning community with opportunities for individuals to contribute their ideas, resources, and expertise.

## Roadmap for Becoming a Culturally Responsive Educator



The [Roadmap for Becoming a Culturally Responsive Educator](#) is a tool developed by the REAL Coalition to assist Needham educators along their journey toward becoming culturally and linguistically responsive. We suggest educators use the tool to

- Deepen self-reflection practices
- Form SMART goals
- Develop professional learning plans
- Design curriculum and instruction
- Engage in conversations with students, families, and colleagues

## UNIVERSALLY DESIGNED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

ACADEMIC	SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reading support</li> <li>● Small group classroom teacher instruction in literacy &amp; math</li> <li>● Literacy/Math coaches work with individual/small groups of students who struggle with literacy or math. Instruction is both pull-out and push-in.</li> <li>● Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) materials used as appropriate</li> <li>● Literacy and Math Coaches co-teach and provide support to students in classrooms</li> <li>● K-3 FOUNDATIONS phonics instruction common assessments lead to “double dose” of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explicit SEL curriculum</li> <li>● Evidenced Based</li> <li>● Sequenced, Active, Focused, Explicit</li> <li>● SEL integrated into academic instruction</li> <li>● Classrooms are supportive, culturally responsive, and focused on building relationships and community.</li> <li>● Small group instruction focused on developing social and emotional skills</li> <li>● Brief individualized interventions</li> <li>● Mentoring, and/or low-intensity classroom-based supports such as a daily</li> </ul>





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<p>instruction as needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Title 1 teachers provide reading support in eligible schools</li><li>• Summer programs to maintain progress in literacy for students entering grades 1-5</li><li>• METCO tutoring</li><li>• METCO Enrichment Programs</li><li>• ELL Instruction</li><li>• ELL Tutoring</li><li>• After-school teacher support for individuals and small groups</li><li>• Small group math intervention</li><li>• Launching Scholars program (summer &amp; after school) to provide support and self-confidence in math learning (secondary level)</li><li>• Flexible scheduling (e.g. Middle School FLEX &amp; STRETCH blocks)</li><li>• MCAS tutoring</li><li>• Peer tutoring</li><li>• Freshman &amp; Sophomore Academy (High School)</li><li>• Personal Learning Center for academic support services for general education students (High School)</li><li>• Technology resources with a range of literacy and math applications that support classroom instruction are readily available to students</li></ul>	<p>report card, daily teacher check-in, and/or home-school note system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Intensive Individual counseling</li><li>• Individual, group, or family counseling</li><li>• Trauma-specific treatment</li></ul>
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## DATA DRIVEN INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Universal screening assessments</li><li>• Common math assessments administered after each instructional unit</li><li>• Literacy/Math coaches and EL teachers help to administer assessments, interpret results and design instruction to meet student needs</li><li>• Data analyzed to inform instruction, develop instructional groups and monitor student progress</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student performance data held in common repository for monitoring individual progress and trends in grade level student learning</li><li>• Student placement in leveled math classes informed by multiple data points (secondary level)</li><li>• Student/Teacher Support Teams assist teachers in analyzing student performance and implementing evidence-based interventions to support student learning outcomes</li></ul>
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## CONSULTATION AND DIRECT SERVICES FOR STAFF

- Psychologists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) and special education teachers provide behavior support and can assist in development of student/classroom support plans
- School Counselors provide individual and small group counseling
- CARE Teams (Crisis Avoidance and Response Expert Teams) assist teachers with problem solving, developing support plans, and monitoring progress for students experiencing behavioral challenges
- Safety Care Teams trained in de-escalation and behavioral interventions including, as a last resort, physical restraint
- Collaborative Planning Time
- Consultation with Literacy & Math Coaches/Specialists
- Consultation with Library/Media and Instructional Technology Specialists for additional reading or technology supports
- Consultation with colleagues (e.g. grade level meetings, cluster meetings, department meetings)
- Meeting with Mentor Teacher (new teachers)
- Consultation with guidance counselors, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Psychologists, & Special Educators and administrators
- Consultation with Curriculum Coordinators
- Consultation with ELL Teachers
- Literacy/Math coaches provide
- Ongoing training/coaching cycles
- Demonstration lessons in classrooms
- In-class student support
- Training in formalized reading programs and assessments (e.g. FOUNDATIONS program, Fountas & Pinnell reading)
- Data informed decision making protocols to inform instruction
- Job-embedded professional learning during faculty meeting, school and district early release time
- Ongoing training for staff on Cultural Proficiency
- Ongoing training for staff on Social Emotional Learning (e.g. Responsive Classroom, Mindfulness, etc)
- Professional Learning Communities

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## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT STRUCTURES

### General Communication

- District websites
- School websites
- Classroom webpages
- Email, phone, and face-to-face contact

### Homework Support

- Websites provide information on assignments, classroom calendars, & additional resources
- Online learning platforms support skill development beyond the school setting

### Progress Monitoring

- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Progress reports
- Report cards
- Ongoing communication from teachers

### Parent Involvement

- Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
- Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC)
- School Council
- METCO Parent Advisory Committee
- English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC)

### Community Partnerships

- Needham Youth and Family Services
- Department of Health
- Riverside Community Care
- Needham Youth Service Network
- Needham Housing Authority
- Charles River YMCA
- Needham Community Council

### Parent Education

- Afterschool and evening presentations
- Parent educational workshops

## CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations are ways to assist students in accessing the curriculum more effectively. Accommodations are provided within the general education classroom and may be available to any/all students. Such changes are made to provide a student with equal access to learning along with an equal opportunity to be able to show what he/she knows or can do.

Accommodations do **NOT** change the instructional level or content, delivery of instruction or performance criteria. These latter changes are called modifications or “specially designed instruction” and those are only appropriate for students on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

The following list of accommodations highlights possibilities for teachers to use within their classroom instruction. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather a starting point for teachers as they consider how to best reach and teach all students.

## ASSESSMENT ACCOMMODATIONS

### Format

- Fill-In-the-Blanks: (blanks at the end of sentence)
- Graphic organizers
- Word bank
- Short answers rather than essay

### Administration

- Clarify directions
- Test in alternative location
- Permit breaks during testing
- Extend time
- Monitor test progress



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer answer choices (multiple choice and matching)</li> <li>• Reduced number of items/problems</li> <li>• Open-note or open-book</li> <li>• Simplified directions</li> <li>• Chunking</li> <li>• Simplified vocabulary</li> <li>• Alternative assessment (oral, project, performance)</li> <li>• Easier numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide incremental testing</li> <li>• Set time limits</li> <li>• Modify pacing</li> <li>• Provide wait time</li> <li>• work/performance examples</li> </ul>
<b>Reference Tools</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calculator</li> <li>• Formulas</li> <li>• Reference sheet</li> <li>• Multiplication chart</li> <li>• Word banks</li> <li>• Study guides</li> <li>• Dictionaries</li> <li>• Graphic Organizers</li> </ul>	<b>Visual Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write directly on test</li> <li>• Use additional white space</li> <li>• Bold or underline key words</li> <li>• Highlight or color code material</li> <li>• Provide larger print</li> <li>• Provide lines on test</li> </ul>
<b>Assistive Technology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word processing</li> <li>• Calculator</li> <li>• Audio Books</li> <li>• Speech to text</li> </ul>	<b>Other</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiz or test corrections</li> <li>• Retakes for tests and quizzes</li> <li>• Use of assessment checklists, scoring rubrics, and multiple examples of annotated student allow oral elaboration</li> </ul>

## INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

<b>Pacing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend time</li> <li>• Chunk information</li> <li>• Provide wait time</li> <li>• Set limit</li> <li>• Allow breaks</li> </ul>	<b>Additional Instruction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After school</li> <li>• Extra review and practice</li> <li>• Drill and practice</li> <li>• Pre-teach vocabulary</li> <li>• Pre-teach critical prerequisite concepts</li> <li>• Target small group instruction</li> </ul>
<b>Emphasize Main Ideas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight</li> <li>• Repeat</li> <li>• Bold</li> </ul>	<b>Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vary lesson activities</li> <li>• Connect to prior knowledge</li> <li>• Use multi-sensory input</li> <li>• Preview the lesson</li> <li>• Provide wait time</li> <li>• Story webs</li> <li>• Outlining tools</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Concept mapping tools</li> <li>● Chunk information into smaller elements</li> </ul>
<b>Alter Visual Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Display fewer items per page</li> <li>● Include visuals</li> <li>● Vary format</li> <li>● Bold, underline, highlight</li> <li>● Provide lines/boxes on test</li> </ul>	<b>Assistive Technology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Word processing</li> <li>● Calculator</li> <li>● Audio Books</li> <li>● Speech to text</li> <li>● Spell check, grammar check</li> <li>● Word prediction software</li> <li>● Provide electronic translation tools</li> <li>● Provide links to multilingual glossaries on web</li> </ul>
<b>Modeling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide exemplars</li> <li>● Provide examples/non-examples</li> <li>● Demonstrate processes</li> <li>● Provide sentence starters or sentence strips</li> <li>● Use cues and prompts to draw attention to critical features</li> </ul>	<b>Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Checklists</li> <li>● Study guides</li> <li>● Guided notes</li> <li>● Rubrics</li> <li>● Graphic organizers</li> <li>● Mnemonic aids</li> <li>● Extra textbook</li> </ul>
<b>Monitor</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cue student</li> <li>● Check progress</li> <li>● Circulate</li> <li>● Check for understanding</li> <li>● Preferential Seating</li> </ul>	

## BEHAVIORAL/ SOCIAL EMOTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

<b>Classroom Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clearly defined expectations</li> <li>● Create class routines</li> <li>● Breaks, as needed</li> <li>● Cueing behavior</li> <li>● Alerts and previews that can help learners anticipate and prepare for changes in activities, schedules, and novel events</li> <li>● Create an accepting and supportive classroom climate</li> <li>● Vary the level of novelty or risk             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Charts, calendars, schedules, visible timers, cues, etc that can increase the predictability of daily activities and transitions</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Create school-wide programs of positive behavior support with differentiated</li> </ul>	<b>Behavior Modifications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Plans</li> <li>● Checklists</li> <li>● Contracts</li> <li>● Charts</li> <li>● Incentives</li> <li>● Provide prompts, reminders, guides, rubrics, checklists that focus on:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ self regulatory goals like reducing the frequency of aggressive outbursts in response to frustration</li> <li>○ Increasing the length of on-task orientation in the face of distractions</li> <li>○ Elevating the frequency of self-reflection and self-reinforcements</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Verbal/Written feedback</li> <li>● Embed prompts to “stop and think” before</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>objectives and supports</li> <li>• Provide prompts that guide learners in when and how to ask peers and/or teachers for help</li> <li>• Encourage and support opportunities for peer interactions and supports (e.g. peer tutors)</li> <li>• Create expectations for group work (e.g. rubrics, norms, etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acting as well as adequate space</li> <li>• Variation in pace of work, length of work sessions, availability of breaks</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow access to other specialists (pupil services, special ed, nurse)</li> <li>• Guidance/School Counselor check in</li> <li>• Embed coaches or mentors that model think-alouds of the process</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transitions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directions</li> <li>• Advanced notifications for change of daily routines leaving early</li> </ul>

## ORGANIZATION-EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING ACCOMMODATIONS

<p><b>Monitor Management of Material</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locker</li> <li>• Binder</li> <li>• Backpacks</li> <li>• Agenda check in</li> </ul>	<p><b>Time Management Tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break down assignments</li> <li>• Provide guides for breaking long-term goals into reachable short-term objectives</li> <li>• Provide incremental due dates feedback</li> <li>• Provide checklists and project planning templates for understanding the problem, setting up prioritization, sequences, and schedules of steps</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checklists</li> <li>• Label</li> <li>• Color Code</li> <li>• Sticky notes</li> <li>• Electronic reminders</li> <li>• Provide extra set of books at home</li> <li>• Use advanced organizers (e.g. KWL methods, concept methods)</li> <li>• Use of outlines</li> <li>• Use of graphic organizers</li> <li>• Provide templates, concept maps, checklists to support note taking</li> </ul>	





## INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

### Purpose

To provide the necessary instruction in English language development and content area support to students who know a language other than English. We aim to provide culturally responsive, customized instruction and a learning environment where students feel connected, valued and loved. We believe that bilingualism and multilingualism are important and necessary assets that strengthen connections in the brain and prepare students to be effective global citizens.

### Eligibility

The Needham Public Schools is committed to identifying students who may be eligible for English language support services in school. We are also committed to working with parents/guardians and ensuring accurate placements in the ELL program. Students who may be eligible are identified through our registration process. At registration, a student's parent or guardian fills out a Home Language Survey. If the survey indicates that a language other than English is spoken in the home, the student's English proficiency is assessed. If the student has transferred from another district in Massachusetts, we review records in EDWIN to determine whether the student is already identified as an English Learner (EL) or Former English Learner (FEL). If the student has transferred from another WIDA state, we contact their previous school and review any existing ACCESS scores. When there are no ACCESS scores or information from the previous school,, we follow the ELL identification procedures and criteria outlined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

1. Trained EL staff administer the appropriate screener for the student's grade level (Pre-IPT, WIDA K Screener, or WIDA Screener 1-12).
2. The student's scores are reviewed and compared with the current DESE guidance document to determine eligibility for the EL program.
3. Parents/guardians are notified of the student's score and whether or not they have been placed into EL programming. Needham uses the letter provided by DESE. The letter includes information about opting out of EL programming.

### Instruction

English Language Development instruction is individualized according to each student's English proficiency and other academic needs. Multilingual learner staff work on developing students' ability to understand, speak, read, and write in English. We also consult with classroom and subject area teachers in order to support and reinforce work in their content area classrooms. At the elementary level, instruction is provided in flexible groups either within a classroom (push-in) or in a separate space (pull-out). Students may work with an EL teacher one to one or in a small group. At the secondary level, instruction is provided in EL classes by grade level and/or by proficiency level.

### Progress Monitoring

Each spring, ACCESS for ELLs test scores are reviewed to identify whether students are making expected growth in English language proficiency. If students do not meet the growth target identified by DESE, the EL teacher works with the EL Director and school-based team to review the student's progress and make a support plan. Supports may include, but are not limited to, general education literacy and/or math support,



adjustments to EL instruction, referral to a school-based support team, collaboration with special education teams, or tutoring. In addition, student progress is monitored throughout the school year and progress is reported to families through progress reports, grades, comments, and meetings.

## **Reclassification**

Each year, ACCESS for ELLs test scores are reviewed to identify students who have met the reclassification threshold identified by DESE (currently an overall score of 4.2 and a literacy score of 3.9). Students who have met this criteria are considered for exit. The EL teacher consults with stakeholders (other EL teachers, general education teachers, special education teachers, guidance counselors, families, and students) and reviews other data (grades, MCAS scores, local assessment, etc) to determine whether a student is ready to be reclassified. When a student is reclassified, they are identified as a FEL (former English Learner) in our internal student information system, and their progress is monitored for four years, per DESE requirements.

## **The Seal of Biliteracy**

Needham strongly believes in the value of multilingualism. Each year, students at the high school have the opportunity to take assessments to demonstrate their proficiency in a language other than English and to potentially qualify for the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy. EL teachers share information with families about the Seal of Biliteracy beginning in elementary school. We aim to empower families to maintain and grow their use of languages other than English at home.

## **Parent/Guardian Involvement**

Partnership with parents/guardians is essential for student success. We provide many different ways for families to connect and become involved. We utilize in-person meetings, phone calls, emails, and paper flyers to maintain connections. In order to ensure access, we provide interpreters for meetings and use written translation as needed. In addition, we have access to a phone translation service, so anyone in the district can pick up the phone and talk to families in a language they understand. Finally, parents of current and former English learners are invited to participate in ELPAC meetings and events throughout the school year.

