

Why do we have a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)?

It is the law.

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 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.

Mass General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 59C

The school council, including the school principal, shall meet regularly and shall assist in the identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school, 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, as provided below.

What does a DCAP ensure?

Changes in the Massachusetts Special Education Laws require school districts to implement Curriculum Accommodation Plans (CAPs) to help ensure all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in general education. The plan should encompass efforts as follows:

- Analysis of diverse learning styles within the general classroom;
- Accommodations to meet the needs of the diverse learning styles within a general education class;
- Provision of appropriate services and supports within the general education classroom;
- Services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning;
- Encouragement of parental involvement in their children's education;
- Encouragement of teacher mentoring and collaboration;
- Assistance to general education staff through professional development and collaboration.

This Curriculum Accommodation Plan details procedures, programs, and supports available and implemented within the individual schools of the district. The DCAP is directly connected to procedures that are currently in place to strengthen and improve the general education program **for the benefit of all students.**

What is in Auburn Public Schools' DCAP?

The Auburn Public Schools' DCAP is a **comprehensive plan** that includes the following components:

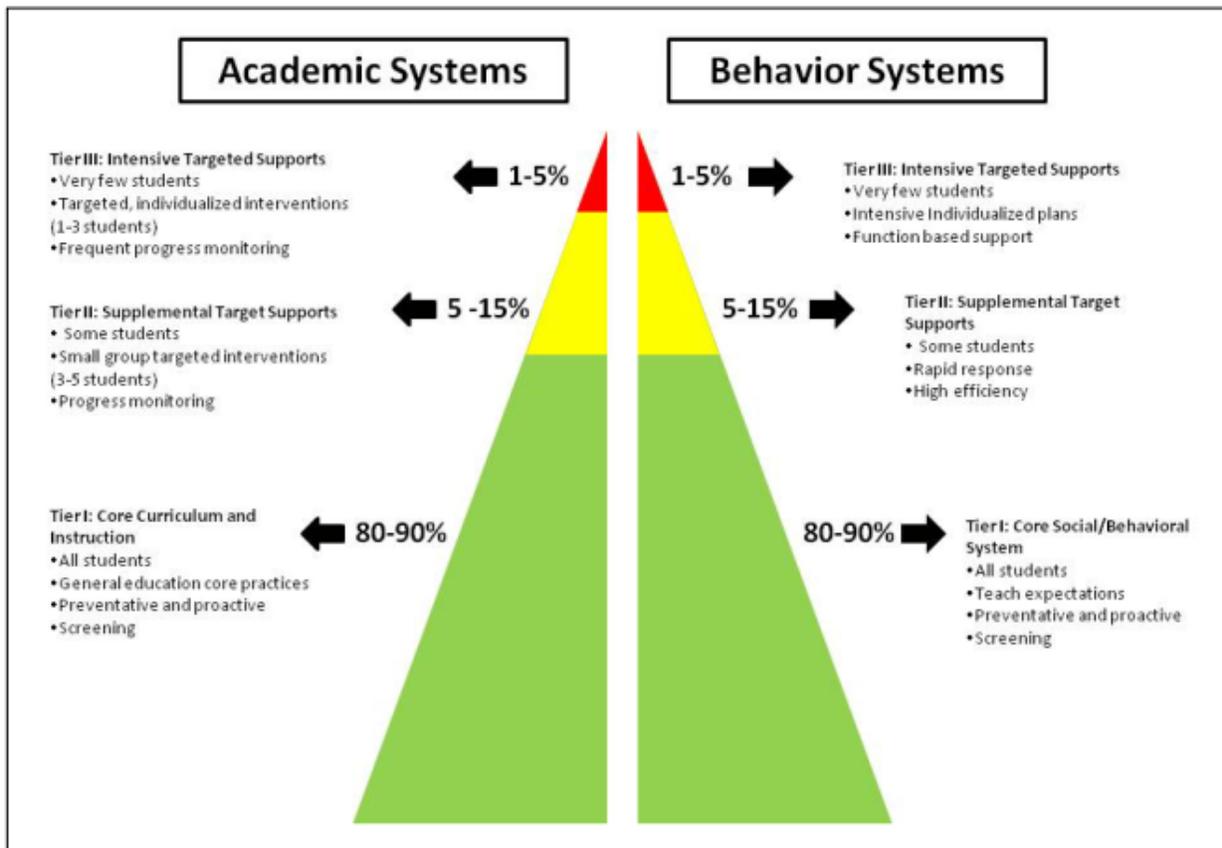
- **Building-Based Response to Intervention/Instructional Support Teams** that meet on a weekly basis and provide general education teachers the opportunity to collaboratively work together to find accommodations and interventions to meet the needs of all students. The Team consults with specialists who can provide important information and expertise to the general education teachers. Families are often 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 the team.
- Our schools employ the **services of many specialists** for the purpose of assisting students who need extra support. Careful assessment and intervention takes place, and collaboration with the general education teacher is an important component of the success of the plan. For example, reading specialists not only work with selected students but also co-teach and model effective reading lessons for teachers to use with their entire class.
- Auburn Public Schools provides a **mentoring program for all first-year educators**. Year one staff participate in a year-long Induction Program as well as work with a veteran teacher on a one-to-one basis. Additionally, APS extends mentoring for additional time when warranted.
- **Professional Development** is an important goal for our district, providing staff with an opportunity to collaborate and to participate in workshops both within the district and at regional and statewide meetings and conferences. A wide array of topics ranging from instructional and behavioral strategies for special populations to current trends in curriculum and assessment to state regulations may be covered in these professional development offerings.
- **Ongoing academic support** is available at the building level. These opportunities are provided by Title I, individual grants, specialists and teachers. The goal of these programs is to increase the skills and confidence of our students so they can successfully apply their knowledge to classroom and real-life situations.
- Staff are able to provide **individual accommodations to students on an as needed basis and specific to the content of a 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, specific strategies and other actions from which the teachers and collaborating staff may select for 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**.

The DCAP is intended to **address various strategies at each level** including:

- **Accommodations to address various students' learning needs**, including students who are identified as English Language Learners, at risk, Title I, special education, and those requiring behavioral supports.
- **Support services** that are available to students **through the general education programs**, including services to address the needs of students whose behavior may interfere with learning.
- **Direct and systematic reading instruction** for all students.

What is RTI?

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a three-tiered system of instruction for all students in which there is a greater level of intervention provided. See the chart below.



Note: Both sides of the triangle feature the same level of prevention and support: Core, Supplemental, and Intensive Supports. Figure 1 was adapted from the *Handbook of Positive Behavior Support* (Sailor, Dunlop, Sugal & Horner, 2008, p.739)

Auburn Public School's Accommodations and Interventions

The accommodations and interventions listed below may be recommended but are not limited to students in the general education program to support success.

Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Preferential seating ● Frequent breaks-movement, sensory ● Writing Aids (Slant board, pencil grips, etc.) ● Stress release activities (squeeze objects, motor breaks, etc.) ● Remove auditory distractions (headphones, etc)
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher builds positive relationships with each student ● Teach model and practice classroom routines and expectations for behavior ● Positive behavior support plan (goal setting, positive reinforcement, point system, etc.) ● Adult mentor ● Alternative seating ● Logical consequences ● Counseling ● Peer Mediation ● Alternative schedule/restructure demands ● Guidance Group
Instructional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visual Aids and use of exemplars ● Manipulatives and hands-on strategies-multi-sensory ● Additional and varied levels of small group/individual instruction ● Graphic organizers, weekly syllabus, checklists, rubrics ● Study guides/structured notes ● Homework checks/homework help/targeted homework (quantity vs. quality) ● Planner checks ● Alternative assessments ● Work contracts ● Peer tutoring ● Cues for transitions and for class participation ● Visual schedule ● Break down tasks into explicit chunks ● Extra help sessions ● Modified Assignments ● Additional time for assignments and/or assessments ● Provide students with "wait time"
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor classroom noise level ● Limit visual distractions ● Provide appropriate anchor charts ● Create quiet work areas in the classroom ● Maintain a consistent routine ● Preferential seating
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instructional software ● Calculator ● Listening center/audio books ● Videos
Wrap Around	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaboration & Regular communication with the family ● EST teams at each building regularly monitor students needs and progress and make adjustments accordingly

Assistance to regular education classroom teachers, such as professional development, that will help them to analyze and accommodate various students' needs, and to manage students' behavior effectively.

- Instructional skills and strategies are part of all professional development workshops offered on district professional development days.
- Providing professional development training for classroom teachers in strategies that support English Language Learners is a priority in the Auburn Public Schools.
- Each school has an English Language Tutor to assist students who are classified as English Learners. In addition, part of their responsibility is to consult and collaborate with the general education and special education staff.
- Training in classroom techniques for students on the autism spectrum is offered regularly and on an as-needed individual basis.
- System wide workshops on differentiated instruction are an essential part of the professional development agenda.
- Building-based training in *Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)* is offered annually to teachers of grades K-8.
- Annual training in *Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI)* and CPR/AED for District teams is provided.
- Trainings in *Response to Intervention* as well as workshops in current assessment practices are offered.
- Courses and workshops aimed at helping behaviorally challenged learners are offered on professional development days as well as throughout the summer by nearby providers.
- Special education staff consult with and often co-teach with regular education teachers to support and accommodate the range of students' needs.
- Co-teaching training is offered to co-teaching partners in grades K-12.
- All administrators participate in regular professional development for the purpose of facilitating the analysis of students' needs and helping teachers accommodate those needs in the regular classroom.

Support Services are available to students through the regular education program, including services to address the needs of students whose behavior might interfere with learning.

- A comprehensive building-based instructional support team exists in each of the district's five schools. These teams design and provide support for struggling learners who are not on I.E.P.s.
- Intervention blocks are scheduled daily at the elementary level and middle school level.
- At all levels in the system, licensed instructional support personnel work with students needing assistance in the general education setting.
- Tutorial sessions are implemented for some regular education students needing individual assistance.
- Title I and remedial services in mathematics are available for students at the elementary and middle school levels.

- Reading specialists provide one-on-one and small group support to students through both inclusion and pull-out in grades K-8.
- MCAS Academic Support Services are available to high school students identified as needing support in preparation for high stakes testing.
- Before/After School MCAS Prep is available to students needing support in grades 3-8.
- Summer Support Services are available for identified regular education students who might benefit from additional instruction in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- Individual Student Success Plans are completed for each student (Grades 3-8) who scores below the proficiency level on the annual State testing.
- Educational Proficiency Plans are completed for each high school student who scores below the proficiency level on the tenth grade English/language arts or mathematics portions of the MCAS.
- Two licensed Social Workers are on our permanent staff to support the social and emotional needs of identified students.
- A consulting Psychiatrist is in District every other week for 2.5 hours and provides support to teams regarding specific students' needs as well as provides professional development to various staff.
- Two BCBA's, along with a part-time BCABA, support students with behavioral challenges as needed.
- Guidance counselors at each building provide social skills education as well as run support groups for a variety of student needs.
- Four District-Based School Psychologists work with staff, students and parents to support the Social/Emotional Learning of students.

Direct and systematic instruction in reading for all students.

- At the elementary level (K-5) students spend a minimum of sixty minutes per day on direct reading instruction. Beyond direct instruction, additional time is spent each day in guided reading, silent reading and reading aloud.
- A balanced literacy program has been embedded into the curriculum.
- Support for guided reading as well as for leveled-reading with appropriate materials and supplies is available.
- Instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics takes place at the K-2 level.
- Weekly progress monitoring is conducted for students who are below benchmarks and receiving interventions.
- A number of the District's teachers have been trained in Wilson Reading.
- Computer based programs such as *Lexia*, *Read Live* and *iReady* are used to target student weaknesses K-8.
- District-wide reading assessments take place at each elementary grade level and at-risk students in grades 6-8 three times a year. The results are used to plan differentiated and targeted instruction focused on individual student needs.
- At the middle school level (grades 6-8), regular education students who are determined to be reading below grade level receive an intensive reading program.
- A balance of fiction and non-fiction texts is a priority for all student reading programs.

Encouragement of teacher mentoring and collaboration.

- Each year, teachers new to the school system are invited to a Teacher Orientation day in August, prior to the opening of school. This workshop is designed and run by veteran teachers who serve as mentor coordinators in the school system. Topics discussed during this orientation include building-based support teams, professional development opportunities, civil rights obligations, technology training, and the establishment of professional learning communities.
- A mentor program is mandatory for teachers with less than one year of experience in the school system. This mentor program is supported through collaboration between the District Leadership Team and the Auburn Education Association (AEA). Any teacher needing (as requested by the Principal or current mentor) a second year of mentoring is afforded that.
- Documentation of structured meetings between new teachers and members of the mentoring team is required as part of the mentoring and induction program.
- A mentoring and induction coordinating team, consisting of the Assistant Superintendent and the mentor coordinators from the District, meet on a regular basis to refine the program and to ensure that each new teacher is receiving needed support and assistance.
- The importance of peer observations and professional discussions are emphasized in the evaluation instrument approved by the School Committee and AEA and as recommended by DESE.
- Collaboration of regular education and student support staff is a necessary component in the functioning of the comprehensive building-based support teams found in each of the five schools.
- Common Professional Learning Community (PLC) time for teacher collaboration is scheduled in all five schools.

Strategies for using or increasing the use of community agencies and volunteers to assist students and teachers.

- Active School Councils at each building provide feedback to the principals and create a yearly school improvement plan that emphasizes various strategies for student achievement.
- Each school has an active parent group that continually provides resources and assistance on behalf of students.
- Each school welcomes and trains parent volunteers for a myriad of tasks.
- Each school hosts a variety of events for families (i.e. literacy nights, science nights, math nights, curriculum nights, Student Success nights, etc.)
- All schools engage in active Service Learning Projects aimed at creating relationships and positively impacting the community.
- The Auburn Chamber of Commerce partnerships have been invaluable assets in providing resources and volunteers for students and schools.
- Auburn Youth and Family Services works closely with the schools through their school-based programs, after school programs, summer programs, counseling services and extensive community service.

- The Auburn Police Department provides a school resource officer who acts as an important resource for the schools and as an effective liaison between the police, school and community.
- A town-wide Safety Advisory Team consisting of members from the police department, fire department and school department work closely with school-based safety teams to ensure a cohesive and comprehensive plan is in place as well as encouraging the use of their available resources.

Changes to the school schedule/calendar, such as additional instructional time or block scheduling.

- A modified block scheduling system within a trimester model is used at the high school.
- A trimester grading schedule is employed at all schools.
- Full-day preschool programs are available for 4 year olds at a cost which is based on a sliding fee schedule.
- Full-day kindergarten is provided to all students in Auburn at no cost.
- An intervention block is provided daily in grades K-8 to target individual student needs.
- Members of the guidance teams as well as school administrators assist parents and students in finding opportunities for additional instructional time both during the school day and during non-school hours.
- Directed studies with teacher support are utilized at the high school level for regular education as well as special education students.
- After school clubs and/or before school assistance is available at the elementary and middle schools.
- At all levels, academic support and small group instruction is available to any student having difficulty with school work.
- After school programs are available at all elementary schools, and while the primary focus is childcare, each has a homework/support component to it.
- Extended day/year remedial programs are offered for struggling students in grades PreK-8.
- Summer school for credit recovery is available for applicable high school students.

Review of local curriculum in relation to state learning frameworks.

- Curriculum teams (PreK-12) in each area of the curriculum meet on a regular basis. Curriculum alignment to state learning frameworks is ongoing.
- Auburn High School has received NEASC Accreditation (New Association of Schools and Colleges) and the alignment of local curriculum learning standards in relation to the Massachusetts Frameworks takes place as part of this continuous accreditation process.

Review of school policies and discipline codes

- School policies and discipline codes are reviewed annually and appear in the student handbooks.

- Revised School Safety and Crisis Plans have been completed in all buildings.
- The School Committee, along with the Superintendent, reviews District policies on a revolving basis and, when necessary, recommends changes or updates.
- Annually as part of a Leadership Team meeting and a meeting of the Director of Pupil Services with his/her TEAM Chairpersons, Guidance Counselors and School Psychologists, procedures for student records are reviewed and suggested updates are made as state regulations change.
- Civil Rights, Bullying Policy and other pertinent information are required to be reviewed annually by all staff.

Additional staffing or consultation on behavioral issues

- All five schools have engaged the services of outside presenters on issues such as bullying, social competency, development stages and learning.
- District-wide clinical consultation with an outside Psychiatrist is available to regular education and special education teachers at all grade levels and to administrators.
- The district employs two behavior specialists (BCBAs) as well as an assistant (BCABA) who works in conjunction with administrators, parents and teachers to implement strategies that help regulate and improve student behavior.
- School psychologists, guidance counselors, and behavioral specialists are available to conference with classroom teachers to help develop behavioral plans and/or discuss strategies to employ for those students whose behaviors can impede their educational progress.
- The District now employs 4 licensed social workers to support the social and emotional needs of identified students.
- The Director of Pupil Services formally consults with building principals on a monthly basis and on an informal basis, as needed.

In summary

The DCAP is the framework for problem solving at the building level for individual students with diverse learning needs. The above strategies and supports are general education interventions available to all students wherever appropriate. This is not intended to be an inclusive list but only a sampling of what is offered in the District. Final approval of the District Accommodation Plan lies with the Superintendent of Schools.