Westwood Public Schools
DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATION PLAN (DCAP)

Portrait of a Graduate | A Vision for Westwood Students PreK-22
Graduates of the Westwood Public Schools will: think critically and creatively, communicate and collaborate, act with integrity, and engage locally and globally.

Rationale

This document is intended to guide school leaders, teachers, and staff in ensuring that all student needs in the general education setting are met. In accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 38Q ½, this plan is intended to support the efforts of educators to accommodate various student learning and behavior presentations. The DCAP details strategies and accommodations that are best instructional practices; any student may be provided any of the accommodations listed, without a formal education plan. Each year, individual School Site Councils shall assist in the review of the DCAP and make recommendations to the principal for the development, implementation, and assessment of the DCAP.

General Education Curriculum Expectations and Interventions

- Westwood strives to provide a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), "a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making"' (ESSA, 2015)." The three Tiers of an MTSS framework provide a continuum of increasing support for students' academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and health needs, and ensure equitable access to grade level instruction.
    - Tier 1: Universal Support - high quality instruction for all students
    - Tier 2: Targeted Support - additional help for those who need it
    - Tier 3: Intensive Support - personalized intervention for specific students (does not require an IEP)

- In Westwood, our Tier 1 Universal Support for all students includes:
    - Curricula that are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks,
    - Instruction provided by highly qualified, licensed teachers,
    - Best-practice pedagogy that incorporates DCAP strategies and Universal Design (UDL) to meet the needs of all learners
    - Data from common assessments and universal screenings to assist teachers and teams in identifying students who may require specific accommodations, and/or additional general education support services to be successful

- General education interventions are provided for students who are presenting with academic and/or social-behavioral skill deficits, and progress is monitored on a regular basis. The provision of general education support services continues until the student is making effective progress.

- If at any time a disability is suspected, the student will be referred for a special education evaluation; however, the general education interventions should continue, since this progress monitoring data becomes an important part of the evaluation process.

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General Education Classroom Accommodations

An accommodation is a change in how a student may access information and demonstrate learning. An accommodation does not substantially change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria. The change is made in order to provide students with equal access to learning and equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge. The following list is not a comprehensive list of all classroom accommodations, but a collection of those that are commonly implemented within the classrooms.

- The strategies outlined below are best practices in the general education classroom setting for all students.
- These strategies can be used regularly during instruction for all students, or may be student-specific when needed.
- A student does not need a formal education plan in order to access any of the identified accommodations within this document.
- Accommodations from the DCAP should be consistently employed and evaluated prior to, or concurrent with, educator referral of a student to the Child Study process.

Universal Instructional Strategies:

- **Task breakdown**: For complex tasks and/or for longer assignments, the teacher can break the task down into smaller steps, offer guidance for a timeline for completing each step, and/or break down the assignment into more manageable chunks.

- **Checks for understanding:** Teacher checks for understanding of instructions prior to the initiation of tasks (i.e. asking student to reflect back teacher directions) and encourages feedback from the student to check for understanding. Teacher may need to clarify/rephrase/bullet the steps for directions.

- **Cueing:** Teacher provides cues to the student prior to calling on them to allow them to prepare a response.

- **Wait time:** Teacher allows for wait time prior to the expectation of an answer.

- **Alternative seating options:**
    - Student is seated in the front, or closest to the point of instruction.
    - Student is seated away from auditory distractions such as doors, windows, vents, etc.
    - Student may stand at desk or try varied working positions to optimize “on-task” behavior.
    - Standing desk, ball chair, cube chair, scoop chair, seat cushion, etc.

- **Assistive technology:** Student utilizes a computer/assistive technology in school (such as audiobooks; voice to text; translation; slant board, timer, type written assignments as needed, finger spacer, pencil grip, reading tracker, calculator).

- **Breaks/Access to sensory tools:** Student has the opportunity to take breaks, as needed.

Student has access to sensory tools (fidget bands, noise canceling headphones, etc.)

- **Communication:** Teacher posts a class schedule or agenda and upcoming assignments, including deadlines.
- **Consultation:** Teacher consults with related service providers, other educators, or supervisors regarding classroom management or possible accommodations.
- **Graphic organizers:** Teacher provides graphic organizers to assist students with classroom tasks, assessments, or note taking. May provide partial notes where students have to fill in minimal information. Teacher may simplify a graphic organizer for a student.
- **Visuals/Auditory/Models**: Teacher provides visual (i.e. strategies to use, steps to take, etc), models or representations of information for students (checklists, recorded directions). Student may require limited information on a page and/or more blank space to show their thinking.
- **Assessment Accommodations:** Could include extended time to complete assessments, use of a privacy folder or other strategies to reduce distractions, reading aloud and/or underlining directions, etc.
- **Explicit Instruction:** Teacher provides students with explicit instruction in how to access different accommodations, and how to make appropriate selections for their own learning styles

Below are more individualized instructional strategies teachers may use to maximize student success in general education classrooms. The strategies are broken down by targeting identified skill development in and beyond the general education setting:

To improve student's ability to attend to verbal information:	**To improve student's work completion:**
☐ Shorten length of listening activities ☐ Reduce visual distractions in the room ☐ Provide pictures and/or other visual cues ☐ Write key vocabulary on the board ☐ Provide copies of classroom presentations ☐ Use graphic organizers ☐ Re-direct student as needed when attention wanes ☐ Use a standing desk ☐ Use closed-captioning	☐ Use student checklists/work assignment lists ☐ Use a timer ☐ Use a reinforcement system ☐ Break complex, long-term assignment into smaller parts ☐ Provide incremental due dates ☐ Reduce assignment ☐ Simplify worksheets/tasks ☐ Allow for periodic breaks ☐ Reduce number of problems to complete ☐ Send unfinished work home to complete ☐ Give choices in tasks or assignments ☐ Provide a set of books for home

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To improve management and transitions between activities:

- ☐ Keep routines structured
- ☐ Post clear expected rules & behavior
- ☐ Post the schedule for the day
- ☐ Provide advance notice for schedule changes
- ☐ Provide checklist
- ☐ Implement/class and/or individual behavior plans
- ☐ Cue student prior to transitions
- ☐ Provide picture schedules
- ☐ Allow the student opportunities for movement
- ☐ Practice transition routines

To improve student's ability to attend to important details:

- ☐ Highlight operational signs/key words and phrases in problems
- ☐ Reduce the amount of problems on a page
- ☐ Explain directions and assignments both orally and in writing
- ☐ Have the student repeat directions
- ☐ Bold print
- ☐ Display fewer items on the page
- ☐ Preview content

To improve positive participation skills:

- ☐ Give specific feedback to student when student was successful
- ☐ Allow rehearsal opportunities
- ☐ Implement a written behavior contract with student
- ☐ Implement regular feedback system between home & school
- ☐ Provide choices for student
- ☐ Problem-solve with the student
- ☐ Connect personally with the student each day
- ☐ Begin with something positive in all feedback to student/parents
- ☐ Establish classroom norms or agreements that intentionally address belonging and safety
- ☐ Intentionally structure partner or group work with clear roles and responsibilities
- ☐ Provide student voice and choice in how students express what they know and need (UDL)
- ☐ Utilize cooperative or collaborative learning strategies

To improve reading comprehension:

- ☐ Pre-read with the student
- ☐ Use questions to guide reading; practice ways to generate questions
- ☐ Practice summarization and elaboration (prediction, prior knowledge)
- ☐ Have student answer reading questions orally or in writing
- ☐ Have student list details of reading
- ☐ Have student illustrate sentences or readings
- ☐ Provide audio and visual texts
- ☐ Simplify vocabulary
- ☐ Think aloud (model for students how a reader thinks through a passage)
- ☐ Place markers within the text for students to stop and check for understanding
- ☐ Provide content-knowledge building opportunities in addition to the text
- ☐ Explicitly map out background knowledge and key vocabulary before and during a task

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To improve written expression:

- ☐ Allow student to verbalize/visualize thoughts before writing
- ☐ Provide graphic organizers/simplify graphic organizer
- ☐ Provide sentence/story starters
- ☐ Provide word wall/word banks
- ☐ Provide models/exemplars
- ☐ Help student get started on written tasks
- ☐ Use checklist(s) for planning, crafting, and proofing written work
- ☐ Break up long written assignments into smaller parts
- ☐ Give student choice(s) about writing topic
- ☐ Read back pieces to student to see if written work makes sense
- ☐ Use pencil grips
- ☐ Use paper with larger spaces

To improve mathematics comprehension:

- ☐ Read problems aloud
- ☐ Provide sentence starters for explanations
- ☐ Create anchor charts of strategies
- ☐ Provide access to manipulatives
- ☐ Provide strategic tools (hundreds chart, number lines, multiplication chart, calculator etc)
- ☐ Create vocabulary walls or charts
- ☐ Teach routines for reading problems
- ☐ Provide more space on page
- ☐ Fewer problems

To improve emotional and behavioral regulation:

- ☐ Access to visual supports (e.g. Feelings scale)
- ☐ Use of common language/tools
- ☐ Establish language, non-verbal signal, methods of communication between student and teacher
- ☐ Opportunities to take brain and body breaks
- ☐ Time and/or space to de-escalate
- ☐ Goal setting with timely feedback
- ☐ Regularly scheduled teacher check-ins
- ☐ Use of positive reinforcement/behavior support plan
- ☐ Access to support staff

To build student agency:

- ☐ Provide visuals, Ready-Do-Done charts, rubrics, or checklists for self-monitoring
- ☐ Provide self-monitoring and reflection sentence starters (“Why am I stuck? What could I do next? One thing I could improve on is…One strength of my work is…”)
- ☐ Institute a “Three Before Me” classroom norm
- ☐ Create project-tracking or assignment chunking graphic organizers; use planners for tracking homework and projects
- ☐ Use visual timers
- ☐ Post daily and/or class agendas
- ☐ Embed scaffolds and/or exemplars into task directions
- ☐ Provide regular opportunities for choice in how students demonstrate what they need and know, and opportunities to reflect on their choices

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General Educator and School Support Systems

Listed in this section are supports, processes, and systems available to all educators in the district, to ensure educators are well-equipped to access and implement DCAP strategies, and support all students to achieve at high levels.

- **Educator Professional Learning:** the district will provide professional development courses and partnerships to support the continuous learning of teachers. Targeted PD opportunities can be provided as needed to support specific needs of the educator, school, and/or district.
- **School, Department, and District Professional Learning:** early release Wednesdays
- **Educator Induction and Mentoring:** new-to-Westwood educators engage in a robust New Teacher Orientation and Mentoring program, with mentorship lasting the first three years of employment in the district.
- **Common Planning Times/Teacher Prep Periods:** time is designated for teacher teams to plan and work collaboratively
- **Data Team Processes:** by which teacher teams collaboratively analyze student data and determine next instructional steps
- **Child Study Processes:** structured process to examine student progress across academic, social emotional, and behavioral metrics and utilize the expertise of the CST team to determine interventions and next steps for the student
- **High Quality Curriculum Materials** and Curriculum Review process

Family Partnership

In Westwood, we view parents/caregivers as critical partners in the work of education. Educators should strive to establish positive, collaborative relationships with all students' families; these positive relationships serve to bolster the impact we have on students. When a student is struggling, efforts should be made to increase connection and communication with families to ensure a cohesive, holistic approach to student support. Family communication and collaboration strategies all educators can use include:

- Beginning-of-the-year introductory communication to all students
- Positive phone calls and/or notes to celebrate student successes (academically, socially, and/or behaviorally)
- Clear communication of classroom structures, expectations, and ways caregivers can be engaged (how to navigate Google Classroom, grading policies, participation expectations, what to look for in Aspen, etc.)
- Periodic classroom/content updates - newsletters, weekly previews, etc.
- Strategic communication around changes in classroom or content
- Phone call to caregivers if you notice a change in their demeanor, academic profile, or social connections (coming from a place of curiosity, eg. "Hi [parent], I'm calling because I've noticed [student] seeming really sleepy in class this week. Have you noticed that they are more tired than usual lately?")
- Back to School Night presentations
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Meetings (virtual or in-person) outside of regular conference times, if needed
- Inviting caregivers into the classroom to participate in learning activities