

Stoneham Public Schools

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) Overview



Mission Statement

Anticipating the challenges and opportunities of a 21st century world, the Stoneham Public Schools develop students who:

- Are creative, critical and independent thinkers
- Demonstrate respect for and acceptance of self and others
- Know and apply communication and information literacy skills
- Are responsible contributors to the local community

Core Values

All members of the school community:

- Support a safe, inclusive educational environment
- Foster and hold high expectations for student learning
- Share responsibility for the success of our students

What is the DCAP?

The Stoneham Public Schools in compliance with the Massachusetts General Law has developed a District Curriculum Accommodations Plan (DCAP). The intent of this plan is to provide a guidance document for school staff to ensure that all students in general education classes are provided with the tools and strategies to be successful. The DCAP is aimed at assisting teachers and specialists in providing differentiated learning experiences to ensure that students can improve learning through the use of various teaching modalities. The DCAP guidance document describes accommodations, instructional supports, and interventions that are provided for students who are experiencing difficulty mastering content.

According to Chapter 71 Massachusetts General Law: Section 38Q ½:

“A school district shall adopt and implement a curriculum accommodation plan to assist principals in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in regular education. The plan shall be designed to assist the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all children in the regular classroom and in providing appropriate services and support within the regular education program including, but not limited to, direct and systematic instruction in reading and provision of services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning, or who do not qualify for special education services under chapter 71B. The curriculum accommodation plan shall include provisions encouraging teacher mentoring and collaboration and parental involvement.”

What is the goal of the DCAP?

The goal of the DCAP is to describe the strategies and resources that classroom teachers and specialists are expected to use to address the diverse learning needs of all students. Our goal is to create a learning environment where students receive a variety of identified supports and accommodations in order to access instruction and assessment. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, adjustments in curriculum, teaching strategies, teaching materials and the use of various assessments where students have an opportunity to demonstrate learning. Since we should utilize available general education supports and accommodations prior to referring a child for a special education evaluation, Student Support Teams(SST) should monitor the effectiveness of these strategies over time.

For students with existing 504 plans or IEPs, the team should ensure that any accommodations that are required due to the student’s specific disability should still be listed in the IEP or 504 plans, regardless of whether or not they are listed in the DCAP and available to all students. This ensures that if students leave Stoneham to move to another district or graduate, the receiving school has the information necessary to develop an appropriate plan for that student.

“The instructional support system should consist of ongoing systematic efforts to accommodate any student’s learning needs within the general education classroom. Instructional support must be viewed as a viable intervention strategy; one that is expected to occur for any student encountering difficulties in learning.” (MA Department of Education, “Is Special Education the Right Service? A Technical Assistance Guide,” pp. 5-6 3/01.)

The foundation of Stoneham’s DCAP is based on Universal Design for Learning, or UDL.

Direct and Systematic Reading Instruction

Systematic reading instruction refers to a carefully-planned sequence for instruction. Systematic instruction is clearly linked within, as well as across, the five major areas of reading instruction:

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

For systematic instruction, lessons are scaffolded on previously taught information, from simple to complex, with clear, concise student objectives that are driven by ongoing assessment. Students are provided appropriate practice opportunities which directly reflect instruction. Direct instruction is an instructional approach that utilizes explicit and structured teaching routines. A teacher using direct instruction models, explains, and guides students through extended practice of a skill or concept until mastery is achieved. Direct, explicit instruction is appropriate for all learners, in all five components of reading, and across all settings, including whole group, small group, and one-on-one. *(Adapted from Florida Center for Reading Research)*

What is Universal Design for Learning and how can it facilitate student success?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-based, concrete educational framework that helps guide the design of learning environments in order to make them accessible and effective for all. Through UDL, educators provide multiple means of representation (the “what” of learning), action/expression (the “how” of learning), and engagement (the “why” of learning). UDL can be applied to any discipline or domain and ensures that all learners have access and the ability to participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities. The [National Center on Universal Design for Learning](#) describes the three UDL frames as follows:

Multiple Means of Representation: Learners differ in the ways that they perceive and comprehend information that is presented to them. For example, those with sensory disabilities (e.g., blindness or deafness); learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia); language

or cultural differences, and so forth may all require different ways of approaching content. Others may simply grasp information quicker or more efficiently through visual or auditory means rather than printed text. Also learning, and transfer of learning, occurs when multiple representations are used, because they allow students to make connections within, as well as between, concepts. In short, there is not one means of representation that will be optimal for all learners; providing options for representation is essential.

Multiple Means of Action/Expression: Learners differ in the ways that they can navigate a learning environment and express what they know. For example, individuals with significant movement impairments (e.g., cerebral palsy), those who struggle with strategic and organizational abilities (executive function disorders), those who have language barriers, and so forth approach learning tasks very differently. Some may be able to express themselves well in written text but not speech, and vice versa. It should also be recognized that action and expression require a great deal of strategy, practice, and organization, and this is another area in which learners can differ. In reality, there is not one means of action and expression that will be optimal for all learners; providing options for action and expression is essential.

Multiple Means of Engagement: Affect represents a crucial element to learning, and learners differ markedly in the ways in which they can be engaged or motivated to learn. There are a variety of sources that can influence individual variation in affect including neurology, culture, personal relevance, subjectivity, and background knowledge, along with a variety of other factors. Some learners are highly engaged by spontaneity and novelty, while others are disengaged, even frightened, by those aspects, preferring strict routine. Some learners might like to work alone, while others prefer to work with their peers. In reality, there is not one means of engagement that will be optimal for all learners in all contexts; providing multiple options for engagement is essential.

Supports have been put in place to ensure that the three UDL frames (the *what*, *how*, and *why* of learning is available to all students through a variety of supports.

ACADEMIC/INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS				
Assessment Accommodations ☆ = evidence-based practice for multilingual learners		Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
1	Use data analysis to inform instruction and modify instruction based on student needs	X	X	
2	☆ Allow extended time			X
3	Provide alternate forms of assessments (e.g., oral, project-based, demonstration, retellings, drawings) ☆		X	
4	☆ Provide varied assessments	X		
5	Teach test-taking strategies		X	
6	Use alternative setting for assessments			X
7	Provide timely and specific feedback about student performance	X		
8	Communicate frequently with parents			X
9	☆ Clarify directions			X
10	Provide rubrics to clarify expectations		X	
11	Include a portfolio system for collecting student work samples and assessing progress over time ☆		X	
12	☆ Allow open-book tests	X	X	
Instructional Accommodations ☆ = evidence-based practice for multilingual learners		Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
1	Identify essential questions students should be able to answer at the end of a lesson/unit of study			X
2	☆ Provide varied assignments			
3	Build a context for learning			X
4	☆ Preview new concepts			X
5	Clearly articulate learning goals for students			X
6	Identify key vocabulary and provide a word bank with vocabulary words and visuals when appropriate ☆			X
7	☆ Provide multimodal presentations	X		

8	Emphasize points within written text/material (e.g. use ☆ page numbers)	X		
9	Point to visuals while speaking, use hands to clearly ☆ indicate the image that corresponds to words			X
10	Scaffold complex concepts and provide leveled problems ☆ for multiple entry points			X
11	Vary grouping in the classroom for different purposes ☆ (homogeneous and heterogeneous)			X
12	Explicitly teach reading strategies	X		
13	Clearly model steps, procedures, and questions to ask ☆ when solving problems	X		
14	Provide models or examples of end products ☆	X		
15	Frequently check for understanding ☆			X
16	Clarify directions or questions ☆			X
17	Use “think alouds” and other metacognitive strategies ☆	X		

18	Help students access subjects in varied ways ☆		X	X
19	Provide access to technology/assistive technology	X		X
Instructional Accommodations (cont'd.) ☆ = evidence-based practice for multilingual learners		Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
20	Provide access to leveled libraries and varied reading materials	X		
21	Provide books digitally/where available ☆	X		
22	Shorten reading assignments ☆	X		X
23	Reduce text so print is not as dense on the page ☆	X		X
24	Utilize team and co-teaching			X
25	Provide copy of class notes, handouts, summaries of ☆ content	X		
26	Provide enlarged copies if needed	X		
27	Provide manipulatives, concrete models, hands-on ☆ activities	X		

28	Provide learning aids (i.e. calculators, graphic organizers, ☆ etc.)	X		
29	Use sentence frames to support oral and written ☆ responses	X	X	X
30	Assign a peer tutor (for multilingual learners, same ☆ language or English-speaking)		X	X
31	Allow use of a bilingual dictionary for multilingual ☆ learners	X	X	X
32	Adapt homework and assignments to reflect language ☆ proficiency (multilingual learners)		X	X
33	Provide study guides ☆		X	
34	Provide visual and transition cues	X		
35	Provide wait time ☆		X	
36	Use small groups for instruction			X
37	Provide a variety of ways to respond: orally, visually, ☆ physically, etc.	X		
38	Pre-teach concepts and vocabulary ☆	X		
39	Provide student conferencing time			X
40	Frequently communicate with families ☆		X	X
41	Offer Parent/Teacher conferences ☆			X

42	Offer before/after school academic tutoring support		X	X
43	Utilize teacher/district website and Bright Arrow to ☆ communicate expectations with families	X		
Organizational Accommodations ☆ = evidence-based practice for multilingual learners		Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
1	Establish clear routines			X
2	Use time management tools (i.e. daily planner, assignment sheet, calendar, timers, agendas, etc.)		X	
3	Provide a variety of templates/graphic organizers ☆		X	
4	Ensure written assignments have enough workspace	X		
5	Post homework assignments consistently			X

6	Share apps that help students/families stay organized		X	
7	Explicitly teach organizational and study skill strategies		X	

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

Social/Emotional Accommodations ☆ = evidence-based practice for ELs/FELs		Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
1	Utilize School-Wide Positive Behavior and Supports (Responsive Classroom) strategies			X
2	Implement a Behavior Intervention Plan			X
3	Cue student for change of behavior			X
4	Develop strategies for behavior modification, e.g., charts, contracts, checklists, behavior plans, etc.			X
5	Establish clear routines/expectations			X
6	Use transition cues prior to any changes			X
7	Use diverse classroom management strategies			X
8	Provide breaks as needed			X
9	Offer lunch groups			X
10	Utilize school counselor			X
Health/Medical Accommodations (for temporary health or medical issues- 504 not necessary)		Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
1	Provide access to nurse's office and bathroom			X
2	Allow student to leave class 2-3 minutes early			X
3	Provide supportive seating	X		
4	Provide access to content materials (books, electronic version of books, etc.) from home			X
5	Allow snacks			X
6	Provide a scribe when needed	X		
Physical/Structural Accommodations		Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
1	Allow alternate workspace, such as study carrel or dividers			X

2	☆ Allow for movement and sensory break			X
3	Experiment with use of space			X
4	☆ Limit distractions (auditory and visual)			X
5	Offer flexible seating choices/arrangement			X
6	Provide strategic seating			X
7	☆ Use visual, auditory and transitional supports	X		
8	Use transition cues for space changes			X
9	☆			X

	Set clearly defined standards for behavior			
10	Establish clear routines: behavioral, social, emotional			X
11	Allow alternative setting for testing		X	
12	Use data analysis to monitor positive behavior changes		X	
13	Communicate frequently with parents ☆			X

STAFF SUPPORTS

Human Resources for Consultation and Support to Educators, Principals, and Families:

Elementary Lead Teachers
Elementary Coaches for STEM, UDL
Secondary Technology Integration Specialist
High School UDL Coaches
Related services specialists (i.e. counselor, Assistant Principal, nurse, department heads Program Supervisors, etc.)
Special Education Coordinators
English Language Educators
Elementary and Middle School Reading Specialists
Middle School Math Specialist
Elementary Interventionists
Library/Media Specialist (SHS)
Library Aides (Elementary & Middle Schools)
Special Educators
Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)
Student Support Team
ESP's (Education Support Professionals)
Professional Development in Universal Design for Learning
<i>Other Resources:</i>
Beginning Teacher Support Program (Mentoring Program)
Schoolwide professional learning/curriculum/dept. meetings
Teacher-selected professional learning
District-wide professional learning
Faculty meetings
Curriculum maps
Grade-level or department team meetings
Common planning time