

Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District

McCann Technical School



District Curriculum Accommodation Plan September 2023

INTRODUCTION

All school districts are required by Massachusetts Special Education Law to develop a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). The purpose of the DCAP is to ensure that every effort has been made to meet the needs of all students within regular education classes and ensure their access to the regular education curriculum. This document represents a systemic plan that is adopted by the Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District to increase McCann's capacity to meet the individual needs of diverse learners. The DCAP is an inclusive document designed to benefit all students, and is not intended solely or specifically for students receiving special education services. School administrators, the school council, and the Special Education Parent Advisory Council are involved in developing and implementing the DCAP, and will be involved in its periodic review and revision.

The district curriculum accommodation plan has been developed to provide guidelines for helping all McCann students, including those with special needs and special talents, meet the Massachusetts standards as outlined in the Curriculum Frameworks, and demonstrate school success. Its primary purpose is to serve as a resource for classroom teachers. The plan is designed to assist classroom teachers in analyzing and accommodating the needs of diverse learners and to provide differentiated instruction strategies. The DCAP is aligned with the annual priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan and also encourages teacher mentoring, collaboration, and parental involvement.

MISSION

The mission of McCann Technical School is to graduate technically skilled, academically prepared, and socially responsible individuals ready to meet the demands of the 21st century.

VISION

McCann Technical School is committed to being the leader of quality technical education and academic achievement in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The school community will create a learning environment that motivates and actively engages all students in mastering rigorous academic and technical curricula. Our educational philosophy is sustained by faculty, staff, and administrators dedicated to a student-centered focus through continuous improvement. Student growth and development are promoted by instilling the following core values in our students:

Respect- for self, others, and the learning environment promotes a positive learning experience for all students.

Effort- is demonstrated through an applied work ethic that includes punctuality, improvement, and a determination to succeed.

Accountability- develops personal responsibility for both behavior and learning.

Communication- facilitates collaboration, promotes self-advocacy, and develops positive relationships.

Honor- requires students to act with integrity, honesty, positivity, and empathy for others.

GOALS

- To increase the percentage of students performing at the proficient and advanced levels.
- To increase the utilization of data to improve student performance.
- To engage students through dynamic and technologically integrated teaching strategies.
- To implement a rigorous and relevant curriculum that is aligned to the academic and technical Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core standards.
- To align technical programs to national standards and accreditation requirements, allowing students to obtain relevant licensure/certifications.
- Utilizing SkillsUSA as a platform, develop career-ready students with the skills and professionalism to

- succeed in the workplace.
- To develop recruiting strategies to expand community awareness.

DCAP OBJECTIVES

- Encourage teachers to establish classroom, instructional, and assessment practices that are effective in reaching a broad range of student needs.
- Assist teachers in analyzing and accommodating the diverse needs of their students.
- Outline resources available to teaching staff, students, and families, in the areas of student support, teacher mentoring, curriculum differentiation, professional development, coaching, and effectively managing student behavior and social-emotional challenges.
- Provide a list of accommodations as a resource to meet the needs of a variety of learners.
- Provide support services that effectively manage student behavior and social-emotional challenges.
- Advocate for teacher mentoring, collaboration, and continued professional development.
- Support family communication and involvement in the educational experience.

HOW DOES THE DCAP HELP TEACHER INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICES, STUDENTS, AND FAMILIES?

The DCAP is a great resource to identify techniques/accommodations that can be provided to all students in the general education classroom. No two students are the same; McCann Technical School accommodates and differentiates 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 wellbeing, external factors, and more. The DCAP can be a reference and resource to school staff, as well as a resource for families to see the wide range of support their students can receive within the general education setting. It clarifies the difference between regular accommodations that can be provided to students and those more significant accommodations and modifications that require an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Accommodation Plan.

WHAT ARE ACCOMMODATIONS?

Accommodations are strategies 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. Accommodations 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. The list of accommodations found in each school's DCAP can be thought of as best educational practices. Accommodations typically fall under four key categories:

- **Setting** (location) – Examples include: small group, preferential seating, quiet location, etc.
- **Presentation** (how the teacher shares information) – Examples include: visuals provided for verbal information, preview/repeat, provide models, etc.
- **Timing** (any consideration of time within the learning) – Examples include: time of day, length of time, extended time for assignments, “chunking” into smaller parts, planning for time with student, etc.
- **Response** (how the student responds back to show understanding) – Examples include: graphic organizers, alternative writing utensils, access to technology, limit number of repeat question types, etc.

Accommodations do **NOT** change the instructional level or content, delivery of instruction, or performance criteria. These changes are called modifications or “specially designed instruction” and are only appropriate for students on an IEP receiving special education services.

DCAP PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

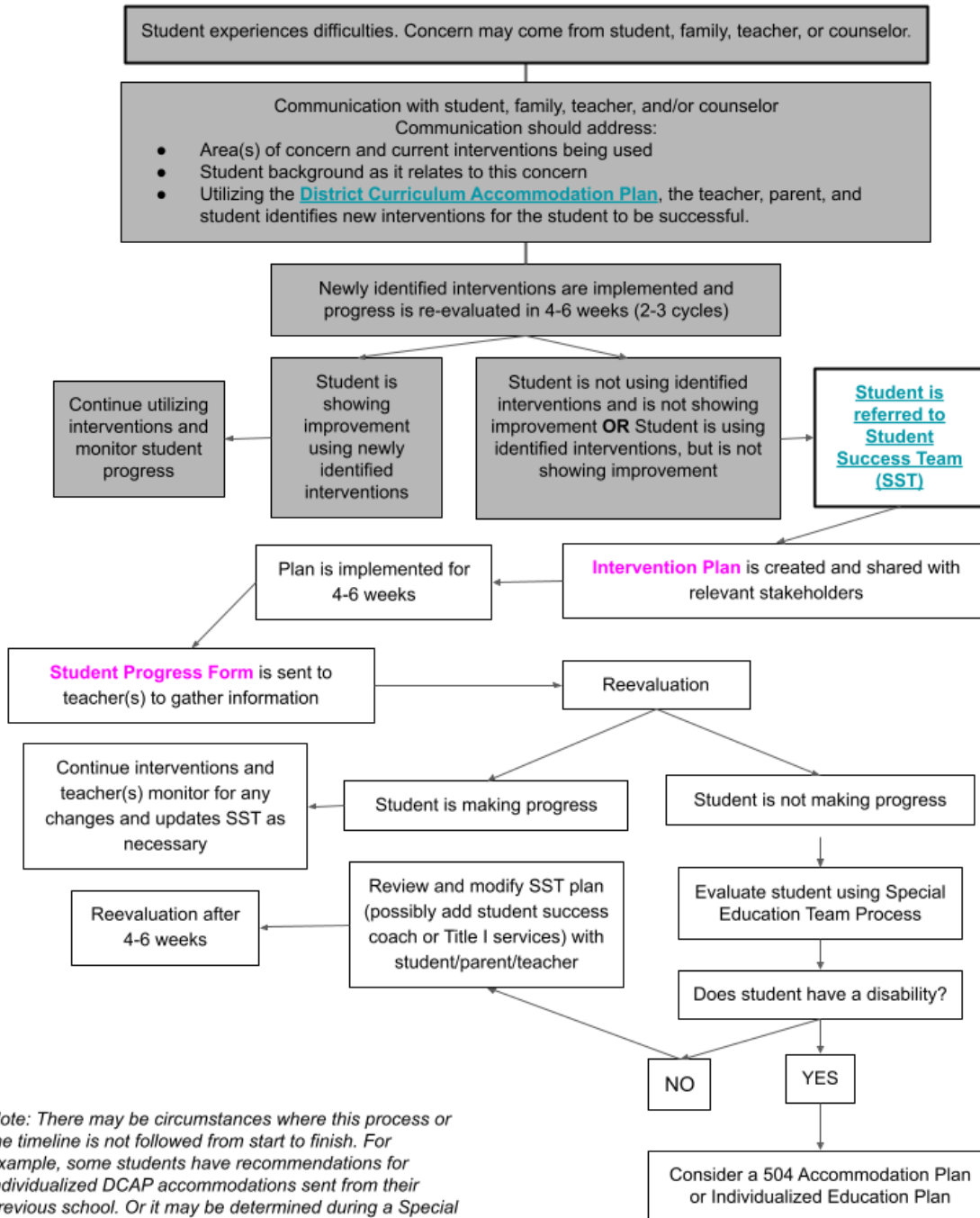
When a student is struggling in a class or technical area, teachers should first refer to the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) for interventions to support the student, as well as notify the family that additional support is required for their student. This contact can occur in an email format or via phone conversation. In the event that a student family contact does not respond to an email, the teacher should place a phone call to the family. The teacher should also communicate with the student's school counselor who can help determine whether or not this is an isolated or larger student issue.

If the student responds well to the interventions provided from the DCAP, the teacher should continue utilizing those supports with the student in the regular education program.

After trying interventions from the DCAP, if the student continues to exhibit challenges to meet district standards for academics, vocational, behavior, attendance, etc., the teacher should make a referral to the Student Success Team. The Student Success Team (SST) consists of a diverse group of school representatives and meets on a bi-weekly basis to discuss student concerns related to academic and vocational challenges, unusual or worrisome behavior, poor attendance, social-emotional or safety concerns, or any other aspects of the students that currently present as needing assistance. The chart below outlines the SST intervention process. [CLICK HERE](#) to view a copy of the SST chart including links to the SST Referral Form and Intervention Plan.

Student Success Team Intervention Flow Chart

McCann Tech faculty provide interventions for students who are experiencing difficulties. The following guideline is recommended when a more structured intervention is necessary.



Note: There may be circumstances where this process or the timeline is not followed from start to finish. For example, some students have recommendations for individualized DCAP accommodations sent from their previous school. Or it may be determined during a Special Education or 504 meeting that individualized accommodations are appropriate for a student.

CLASSROOM PRACTICES

The range of instructional strategies and techniques that teachers employ to assist their students to learn are considered classroom practices. These include, but are not limited to, the use of the following: time, space or physical environment, groupings, classroom organization, behavior management with an emphasis on proactive and preventive techniques, content curriculum, materials/equipment, modalities/use of multiple intelligences, and technology.

With the needs of diverse students in mind, educators need to consider the following:

- An environment that provides consistency, structure, and clear expectations.
- An environment that provides opportunities for meaningful participation of all students in instructional and social activities, at a variety of challenging levels.
- An environment that promotes student self-management and independence, as well as healthy interdependence.
- An environment that facilitates social and cultural learning and allows students to take risks.
- An environment that provides constructive feedback and recognition for effort as well as accomplishment.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Effective instructional practices are integral to achieving desired student outcomes. Developing engaging lessons, while meeting the needs of each learner, requires teachers to utilize strong instructional practices. Creating relevant learning experiences for the students will naturally lead students to success in the classroom.

Instructional practices that have been proven to be effective for students with a broad range of needs include:

- Teaching and learning methods and materials that match the learning needs and styles of the students.
- Promotion of critical thinking skills, at a variety of levels (i.e., Blooms Taxonomy).
- Methods that promote active learning, including project-based learning, experiential learning, community-based instruction, and learning involving student choice.
- Promotion of life skills, social interaction skills, multicultural education, and skills in self-advocacy throughout the curriculum.
- The use of flexible grouping.
- Flexibility of instruction, in terms of pacing, scheduling, and time-usage, based on the needs of individual students.
- Use of a range of assessment tools and strategies, including authentic assessment as well as standardized methods.
- Opportunities for students to apply and transfer learning to a variety of situations, both familiar and novel.
- Communication and collaboration with other teachers, students, families, and outside resources to enhance instruction.

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Assessment must allow for each student to adequately demonstrate the essential knowledge and skills that he/she has acquired. In assessing the learning of diverse learners, teachers need to provide a range of ways for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills.

Teachers can incorporate the following assessment practices into their classrooms to allow students with diverse needs to showcase their gained knowledge:

- Written tests, using a range of styles (multiple choice, matching, essays, etc.)
- Oral tests
- Observations
- Portfolio assessments of daily work
- Demonstrations and/or projects
- Self and peer evaluations
- Cooperative group assessments

- Outside evaluators – community experts, employers, specialist groups, etc.

When planning assessments, teachers should consider the students' unique needs in the following ways:

- What are the essential skills or content for each student?
- Is the assessment designed to determine what the student knows as opposed to what he/she does not know?
- Is background/ prior knowledge an issue? In what way does this help/hinder?
- Does the assessment elicit a variety of thinking and application skills?
- Do certain students need technology to fairly demonstrate what they know?
- Do certain students need extended time, breaks, small groups or different environments, assessments divided into smaller segments, help such as word banks or graphic organizers?

Evaluation criteria should also be considered when teachers are designing assessments, and they should set the criteria prior to the assessment, keeping the following in mind:

- What are realistic expectations and goals for certain students, or groups of students?
- Are the expectations and criteria clear and explicit? Does every student understand the expectations and criteria as it applies to him/her? Would the student(s) be helped by the use of a rubric?
- How will the assessment be graded or how will feedback be given? Is the goal mastery? Will there be an opportunity for remediation/ retesting? How will the results of the assessment be shared with the students?

ACCOMMODATING THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS

To ensure the success of all students in an inclusive classroom, it is necessary for teachers to modify their curriculum and provide accommodations to ensure equitable access to the curriculum. Building relationships with students, as well as understanding each student and their unique learning styles and needs, will allow teachers to effectively provide accommodations to support students reaching success in their classrooms.

The list below includes accommodations that can be used by teachers with all students to support achievement and success.

- **Classroom Accommodations:**
 - Provide a posted daily agenda for students
 - Establish clear routines
 - Use of computer for all written work
 - Utilize technology (audiobooks, videos, amplification systems, etc.)
 - Preferential seating, at point of least distraction, or point of best access to learning environment
 - Incorporate stress-release activities or movement breaks
 - Utilize transition cues
 - Experiment with use of space
 - Remove distractions
 - Develop redirecting cues (tap desk, eye contact, or signal word/phrase, etc.)
 - Model and support organizational skills
 - Give extra time to organize material during class
 - Implement a frequent progress monitoring system with students (checking grades/missing assignments in Aspen-X2 student portal)
 - Develop a communication system between school and home (Aspen-X2 parent portal, emails, online classroom, website, or blog, Remind web-app, etc.)
 - Inform parents of student concerns in a timely manner and also ask for input/suggestions/feedback
 - Offer regular teacher extra-help sessions
- **Instructional Accommodations:**
 - Provide a posted daily agenda for students
 - Use auditory and visual cues and aids when presenting information

- Have students repeat back directions to show understanding
- Present critical classroom information orally and in writing
- Previewing of important information prior to an assignment
- Provide clear expectations/student exemplars
- Multi-modal presentations of materials (manipulatives, visuals, etc.)
- Make use of multiple intelligence/learning style approaches by utilizing differentiated instruction techniques
- Check for understanding frequently, ask students to repeat information
- Provide wait time/time to process information
- Copies of teacher notes and expect students to highlight important information (or provide guided notes/outlines)
- Provide reference tools and study guides
- Utilize available technology/computer assisted instruction
- Offer calculators when appropriate
- Use of graphic organizers and templates
- Cooperative learning/small group strategies
- Break long-term assignments into smaller, more manageable parts, with intermediate due dates
- Provide checklists for multi-step tasks
- Repeat or re-teach concepts and information with a different approach
- **Assessment Accommodations:**
 - Develop and offer alternate assessments (projects, presentations, demonstrations, etc.)
 - Evaluate student understanding using multiple formats
 - Provide rubrics when evaluating student performance
 - Provide specific written feedback
 - Provide opportunities for student revision of work
 - Allow students to expand orally on written responses
 - Provide extra time for completing assignments, with reasonable deadlines
 - Adjust or reduce assignments
 - Provide word banks
 - Provide extra time for testing
 - Modify test format
 - Give credit for accuracy (score according to number correct over number attempted for slower working students)
 - Allow for the use of resource materials on tests (notes, textbook, reference sheets, etc.)
 - Testing in a small group/alternative setting
 - Allow retakes on tests and quizzes

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES

Students who have challenging behaviors and that struggle with their emotions can benefit from basic classroom routines and procedures, including many of those accommodations listed above. Teachers should strive to be proactive and preventive, which can often stop a problem before it occurs. Positive interactions and the ability to re-direct student behavior and attention helps to de-escalate troubling behavior. Employing consistent classroom management techniques is also essential for teachers to best support students with behavioral and social emotional challenges.

The list below includes accommodations that can be used by teachers with all students to support behavioral and social-emotional challenges.

- Discuss and post consistent classroom expectations with logical consequences
- Use diverse classroom management strategies
- Provide breaks as needed

- Allow for the use of fidget toys to help with focus and concentration (stress balls, doodling, etc.)
- Cue student for change of behavior and/or venue
- Recognize student successes and accomplishments
- Provide positive reinforcement and praise
- Provide positive, active supervision
- Avoid pressures of speed and accuracy
- Avoid power struggles and criticism of student
- Encourage any participation and engagement with classroom activities, even if a student is reluctant to fully join in
- Build on strengths and create opportunities for success
- Develop strategies for behavior modification (charts, checklists, behavior/success plan, incentives, etc.)
- Provide specific and timely behavioral feedback
- Speak to student privately when possible
- Allow for or recommend student to visit school counselor in guidance office
- Allow for or recommend student to other professional personnel (school psychologist, behavior specialist, school counselor, nurse, principal, assistant principal, director of student services, etc.)

TEACHER MENTORING, COLLABORATION, AND CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

McCann Technical School strongly advocates for experienced teachers to mentor their colleagues that are new to the field, collaboration amongst staff in all aspects of the teaching profession, and for continued professional development throughout an educator's career. Instilling a school culture in which professional staff are encouraged to regularly share resources, ideas, and experiences will lead to continued improvement of teaching practice and also model a collaborative community for students in each classroom. Consulting and communicating frequently with various resource staff (school counselors, special education liaisons, school nurse, administrators) is essential for classroom teachers to support student progress in their classrooms.

The list below includes examples of how McCann Technical School helps to support teachers with mentoring, collaboration, and professional development:

- New teacher orientation and mentoring program
- Four annual in-service/professional development days included in school calendar
- Monthly early dismissals for collaboration on curriculum review, lesson planning, and assessment data analysis, by department
- Bi-annual Vocational Advisory Board meetings
- Opportunities for course reimbursement
- Staff attendance at seminars, workshops, and conferences
- Staff presentations on best practices
- Staff led after school professional development series based on various topics (technology, data analysis, special education, etc.)

SUPPORTING FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT

All faculty and staff at McCann Technical School are encouraged to create, support, and enhance family and community engagement through partnerships with families, businesses, organizations, agencies, and members of the regional communities of the Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District. By providing easy access to school information, student progress, and scheduled events, McCann Technical School offers a welcoming and supportive environment for our students' families.

McCann Technical School provides communication with families and opportunities for family involvement in the school in the following ways:

- Aspen-X2 Family portal (password access to student's attendance, discipline, upcoming assignments, and grades)
- Frequent updates to school website
- Teacher websites and online classrooms provide course specific information
- All-call system to inform families of various school events

- End of quarter letters from school counselors to inform families of a failing course grade and to invite student to participate in on-time remediation program
- Parent-teacher conferences held in November
- Showcase to Success (open house community event)
- Athletic Booster Club, Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), Vocational Advisory Boards, School Council, and various community service events provide opportunities for family members to volunteer
- Annually reviewed Student/Parent Handbook

SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATION REFERRAL

School personnel may not refer a child for an evaluation for special education services until their academic progress has been reviewed through the SST process. During SST meetings, specific interventions are identified and data collection specified, analyzed and documented before a child can be referred for a special education (TEAM) evaluation following the special education process. The Student Success Team will complete the standard referral forms, which will be reviewed by the director of student services. The special education (TEAM) evaluation will determine whether or not a specific disability, as defined in federal and state special education statutes, exists and whether that disability is interfering with the student's ability to make effective progress. If the TEAM evaluation determines there is a disability, that disability is the cause of the student's lack of effective progress, and the student requires specialized instruction, then the TEAM will develop an Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

In the event the TEAM determines the student does not have a disability under special education regulations, the following options result: The student continues in the regular education program, and the SST Action Plan is reviewed and modified by the SST Team.

The student may qualify for accommodations under Section 504 of the National Rehabilitation Act. A 504 Team is convened to determine eligibility. If the Team determines disability under 504 exists, then a specific 504 Accommodation Plan will be developed. If the 504 Team does not determine a disability under the provisions of 504, the SST Team and teachers will continue to modify and review the Student Success Team Action Plan.

CONCLUSION

The Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District is committed to meeting the educational needs of diverse learners through a curriculum that is aligned with the standards presented in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The intent of this District Curriculum Accommodation Plan is to continually strengthen and improve the educational program at McCann Technical School by increasing its effectiveness and accessibility to all students. This is achieved through shared decision-making, on-going professional development, support services in regular education settings, direct and systematic instruction to all students in both academic and vocational disciplines, teacher mentoring, collaboration, and family involvement in the McCann community. This DCAP includes an overview of suggestions and guidelines for teachers to incorporate into their practice. Materials and resources with greater depth, as well as suggestions and recommendations, are readily available from the office of student services, as well as from the school counseling and special education departments.