

Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)



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DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATION PLAN

Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School: Mission

The Advanced Math and Science Academy will create an atmosphere of celebration of knowledge where children of all backgrounds and abilities excel in all subjects, especially in math, science, and technology, empowering them to succeed in the workplace in our modern high-tech world.

Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School : Core Values

Integrity - At AMSA, we model integrity by being truthful in our work and caring in our relationships with people.

Excellence - At AMSA, we pursue excellence by embracing the joy of learning, by being curious, by working hard, by persevering in the face of obstacles, by embracing creativity and innovation and by constantly striving to improve.

Community - At AMSA, we foster community by being good citizens - by helping others, by appreciating and celebrating diversity, and by collaborating kindly and supportively.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE DCAP?

Massachusetts General Laws require the adoption and implementation of a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). This plan is intended to guide administrators and staff in ensuring that all possible efforts are made to meet the needs of all students in the general education setting. The DCAP is aimed at assisting staff in providing differentiated learning experiences to ensure that students can improve learning through the use of various teaching modalities. The DCAP guidance document describes the accommodations, instructional supports, and interventions that are provided for students who are experiencing difficulty mastering content.

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 student's 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.”

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

The DCAP is a great resource of accommodations that can be provided to all students in the general education classroom. 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 serves as 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 clarifying the difference between regular accommodations that can be provided to students and those more individualized 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?

Based on the content and/or situation all staff may provide accommodations and/or differentiated instruction to students on an as-needed basis. While the DCAP lists best practices 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. It is the expectation that all staff will use their professional judgment in determining what accommodations, if any, are necessary to support an individual student.

AMSA's Student Support Teams (SST) meet on a regular basis and provide general education teachers the opportunity to work together to identify accommodations and interventions designed to meet the needs of students. Consultation with specialists who can provide important information and expertise to the general education teacher is a common part of the SST meetings. Student 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. AMSA employs 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 a referral to SST.

WHAT ARE 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 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 they know or can do. For many, the suggested list of accommodations found in each school's accommodation plan would simply be thought of as the best educational practices. Accommodations typically fall under four key categories;

Setting (location)

Examples include small groups, 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 the student, etc.

Response (How the student shows understanding)

Examples include using graphic organizers, alternative writing utensils, keyboarding, limiting number of repeat question types, etc.

“Accommodations” do **NOT** change the instructional level or content, delivery of instruction, or performance criteria. “Modifications” or “specially designed instruction” make these kinds of changes and are only appropriate for students on an Individualized Education Program (IEP.)

Accommodations to Assist Students in Accessing the Core Curriculum

This list of accommodations is designed to help support teachers in the instruction of ALL students who are experiencing challenges in the regular education classroom. Please review this information and employ these strategies where appropriate.

Organizational and Behavioral Strategies

Lower School Specific - ↓ Upper School Specific - ↑

- Clear expectations and established routines
- Clear instructions delivered verbally, written on board & assignment with supporting images as appropriate
- Daily task lists/agendas on board
- Rotating schedule for students
- Upcoming assignments posted online and on board in classroom
- Written instructions on board and additional visual cues
- Use of study guides, graphic organizers, and guided notes
- Use of turn-in bins/trays for submitting assignments

- Intentional groupings (eg. mixed-ability groups)
- Organizing materials so students know where to find them
- Explicit daily and weekly goals
- Checklists for long term projects
- Laminated schedules
- Prompts to turn in missing assignments
- Heads-up to students on routine adjustments or changes
- Access to online resources on Google Classroom
- Assignment board for all major assignments/tests/projects
- Ordered tasks
- Standard procedure for submitting assignments through Google Classroom
- Do Nows/warm up exercises
- Seating charts
- Strategic seating assignments to promote positive peer relationships
- Instructions delivered in multiple modalities
- Deadlines (esp. major ones) reinforced in multiple places – on a white board in the room as well as on Google classroom
- Structured group work
- Opportunities for reflection on learning habits
- Using Think-Pair-Share/Turn and Talk
- Explaining reasoning/purpose behind assignments and activities before starting
- Encouraging perseverance
- Opportunities for reflection through discussion
- Model appropriate discussion techniques
- Break down steps/provide check ins for longer assignments
- Frequent check-ins on binder usage/cleanouts (↓)

Instructional Strategies

Lower School Specific - ↓ Upper School Specific - ↑

- Use of Google slides or powerpoint for teacher presentations and classroom materials
- Paired activities and group work
- SEI strategies
- Digital copies of textbook/handouts/slides available
- Graphic organizers
- Small group instruction
- Preferential seating
- Written and verbal expectations
- Checks for understanding (e.g. exit tickets)
- Visual cues and aids with instructions
- Using familiar content to teach next steps
- Individual student check-ins
- Step by step instructions
- Fill-in-the-blank guided notes
- Scaffolded concepts and activities
- Multi-modal activities to engage various learning skills
- Previewing vocabulary
- Deliver lesson in as much of the target language as possible
- Spiraling instruction
- Provide exemplars and examples
- Model/encourage teamwork
- Model expected behavior
- Reduced number of new concepts presented at one time
- Vary instructional groupings
- Provide study guides with ample time before assessment
- Whole class review activities
- Transcripts of videos/captions feature
- Provide opportunities for movement
- Use of visual aids and drawing representations for complex processes
- Removal of digital distractions
- Provide exemplars and examples of the expected outcome of a project
- Provide a variety of ways to respond: oral, choral, student whiteboard, pictures, etc.
- Model think-aloud strategies for completing assignments
- Provide scaffolded in-class note-taking opportunities (↓)
- Model in-class note-taking strategies

Assignment and Assessment Strategies

Lower School Specific - ↓ Upper School Specific - ↑

- Do Nows
- Exit tickets
- Socratic seminars
- Informal questioning during individual/group work
- Observation of rate of progress during individual/group work
- Monitoring of student screens to redirect attention as needed during independent work
- Peer assessment
- Variety of assessments: individual, pair, group
- Formative and summative assessments
- Reflection/revision after assignments
- Extended time
- Chunking projects/big assignments
- Graphic organizers for projects and activities
- Administer test in short periods
- Word banks
- Different types of questions (multiple choice, short answer, open response, etc.)
- Study guides
- Encouragement of collaboration during brainstorming and planning phases
- Clear communication of expectations; identifying what topics will be covered on summative assignments and providing similar question formats to study
- Providing rubrics
- Clarifying test directions
- Optional extra practice on Google Classroom
- Providing teacher's notes
- Quiet testing environment
- Quizzes and tests with retakes or corrections available
- Use of privacy screens (↓)
- Variety of presentation styles (video, front of class, gallery walk, etc.)
- Timely, specific, and actionable feedback, including conference opportunities
- Opportunities for self-assessment and self-reflection following feedback

Literacy Strategies

Lower School Specific - ↓ Upper School Specific - ↑

- Pre-reading strategies – brainstorm, make predictions, review key vocabulary, anticipation sets
- Free choice reading
- Sentence sequencing activities
- Unit vocab on walls
- Explicit instruction on important suffixes and prefixes; prefixes and suffixes walls
- Post-reading strategies: summarize, key takeaways
- Handouts and assignments in dyslexic-friendly fonts & blue paper
- Providing reading summaries and “roadmaps” of the content
- Note-taking from textbook
- Paired in specific groups to help with literacy levels
- Repetition and direct instruction of keywords
- Discussion about reading/ideas
- Paraphrasing reading
- Identifying cognates
- Whole group, small group, partner, and volunteer reading
- Sentence starters to help kickstart written responses
- Academic vocab lists
- Encourage annotations, highlighting of class texts
- Identifying and explaining key and unfamiliar vocabulary
- Verbal and written repetition of new vocabulary during instruction
- Providing word banks for definitions check
- Models and samples of written work visible for reference
- Spiral Reviews
- Selective use of audio books
- Plot mapping to help students understand sequences of events in literature
- Model reading comprehension strategies
- Model annotation for comprehension
- Create videos when students request explanations

Fine Motor/Visual Motor Integration Strategies

Lower School Specific - ↓ Upper School Specific - ↑

Note-Taking Support:

- Fill in the blank notes/graphic organizers
- Provide a teacher copy of notes

Writing Tools and Aids:

- Pencil grips
- Use of circle tracers and rulers
- Provide lined paper

Hands-On Learning:

- Hands-on activities in class to summarize learning

Movement and Breaks:

- Movement breaks
- No pressures of speed

Technological Options:

- Option to write and submit work on the computer

Sensory Aids:

- Access to school/teacher-approved fidgets

Lower School-Specific Accommodations:

- Specific time set aside for typing practice
- Modify equipment
- Fill in blanks - handwritten notes (↓)
- Provide lines to write on (↓)
- Continue to provide paper-based assignments to promote small muscle development and to build endurance (↓)

Science Lab Strategies

Organizational

- Lab Stations have procedures taped to the station table top
- Use of Lab Reports to organize lab data
- Clear labeling of chemicals used during labs.

Instructional

- Lab work is mostly group/ paired.
- Lab Procedures graphics of important technique steps
- Lab Techniques are modeled before the lab
- Safety procedures are reviewed and signed at the beginning of the year; relevant safety precautions are reviewed before the start of the lab.

Assessment

- Lab reports
- Science Night: research students present their findings via poster board presentations

Literacy

- Visuals at specific lab stations to help students understand the required task

Fine Motor

- Labs involving specific techniques to the subject in which the lab is reinforcing

STUDENT SUPPORT PERSONNEL: Providing Consultation/Support/Intervention in the General Education Setting

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST

The Assistive Technology specialist supports students with assistive technology needs. The specialist conducts district evaluations and is available to conduct training for staff.

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

The Department Chairs support the teachers and the administration in achieving the vision and goals of the school. Along with teaching, department chairs supervise and evaluate faculty in their respective departments, and support teachers regarding student concerns.

BOARD CERTIFIED BEHAVIOR ANALYST (BCBA)

Behavior Specialists are responsible for behavior consultation and interventions with students and management strategies for teachers. They are also responsible for Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA's).

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS

ELL teachers provide direct services for identified English Language Learners (ELL).

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

The School Counselors work closely with students, parents, and school staff in matters related to academics, social-emotional supports, and achieving post-high school goals.

NURSES

The nurses provide consultation to staff, communication and consultation with parents, direct service to individual students and staff, as well as vision, hearing, and BMI screenings.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

The Licensed School Psychologists administer psychological and academic testing as part of the special education and 504 process. They collaborate with students, parents, and staff to develop and implement appropriate interventions for students.

SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT COUNSELORS

The School Adjustment Counselors provide individual and group counseling related to school matters, conduct crisis assessments, teach social skills groups and serve as a liaison between the school district, parents, and other agencies involved with students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

The main role of the special education teacher is to provide instruction and support which facilitates the participation of students with disabilities in the regular classroom.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

The district employs a team of licensed and certified speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. These professionals provide direct services to students and are available for teacher consultation and informal screenings.

PARAPROFESSIONALS

The Paraprofessionals assist teachers by performing a variety of tasks that promote student learning and well-being. Their responsibilities include working with students individually and in small groups, reinforcing instructions, motivating learning, and assisting with classroom management.

PRINCIPAL AND VICE PRINCIPAL

The Principal and Vice Principal provide articulation and modeling of the mission, values, and expectations of the school, supervise and evaluate staff, provide oversight for teaching and learning, and collaborate and communicate with staff and community stakeholders.

DEANS OF STUDENTS

The Deans of Students collaborate with teachers, counselors, and families to address student disciplinary and school culture concerns. They work to ensure AMSA remains a safe learning environment where the school's core values are lived by members of the school community.

TEACHER AND STAFF SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Support for teachers to help them analyze and accommodate various students' learning needs and support teacher collaboration.

- New Teacher Orientation
- New Teacher Mentoring Program
- Professional Development
- Student Support Team (SST)
- Department Meetings
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Faculty Meetings
- School–Counseling Support Teams
- Common Assessments/Common Measures
- Teacher Evaluation and Goal–Setting
- Mid-Year Exams
- Curriculum Maps
- Opportunities for peer observation
- Counseling Supervision Meetings
- Grade level team meetings
- Instructional Leadership Team Meetings (Department Chair Meetings)

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Promotes the learning and growth of all students through effective partnerships with families, caregivers, community members, and organizations.

- Principal Councils
- PTO Meetings and PTO sponsored events
- Curriculum Nights/Open Houses
- Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences
- Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)
- Parent Information Nights for transitions (middle & high school)
- School messaging system
- Student Information System and Educational Portal
- District and individual school web pages and newsletters
- Teacher/classroom-based communications (Websites, Google Classroom, Newsletters, etc.)
- Parent/Guardian Surveys
- Academic grading reports
- Student performances
- Volunteer opportunities
- Curriculum Maps
- Student Support Team (SST)
- Student Government
- Advisory program