

A BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION PLAN

I. The Law: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71 Section 38Q1/2, mandate that school districts provide a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) designed to assist principals in ensuring that **all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in regular education, and avoid unnecessary referrals to special education.** The law also mandates that school accommodation plans be developed by individual schools consistent with the DCAP.

II. The Rationale: General access to regular education accommodations is about helping all students achieve at the highest level possible; it's about good and reasonable educational practice; it's about responding to the individual learning styles of the entire spectrum of students; it's about not labeling students as disabled who aren't disabled; it's about closing the achievement gap; it's about leveling the playing field between students with strong advocates, and students without them; it's about avoiding unnecessary contention between the school and the parent; and it's about obeying the law.

The accommodation that is most challenging – philosophically and logistically – is extra time on assessments. **It is also the accommodation most often sought by parents when they refer their child for an evaluation.** Flexibility in timed testing makes sense when 1) it enables a student to more accurately demonstrate his/her learning, and 2) speed is not the skill being assessed.

The BHS Accommodation Plan encourages teachers to utilize a variety of instructional strategies for all students, and modify traditional time constraints on tests for some students. Ideally, teachers will assess students in a variety of ways, creating an academic environment in which students with varied intellectual capabilities and learning styles have the best opportunity to demonstrate their learning.

The BHS Accommodation Plan provides a reasonable way for regular education students to access extra time on testing, satisfying the requirements of Section 38Q1/2, and avoiding unnecessary referrals for evaluations to obtain this accommodation.

III. Regular Education Accommodations at BHS:

The following document – “Providing Regular Education Accommodations at Brookline High” – lists a variety of accommodations teachers may use with students, with or without an IEP or 504 Plan, as part of their regular classroom practice. Many BHS teachers already use these, and a variety of other instructional practices every day. As a result of teachers' creativity and diversification of instruction, the entire spectrum of our population -- from the most capable to those who struggle academically -- learns more successfully.

PROVIDING REGULAR EDUCATION ACCOMMODATIONS AT BROOKLINE HIGH
A Selection of Accommodations Teachers May Employ

*** DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR STUDENTS**

- Personally connect with your students each day.
- Begin with something positive in all feedback with students and parents.
- Learn about who your students are outside of your classroom.

*** DEVELOP A MULTI-MODAL AND ECLECTIC INSTRUCTIONAL REPERTOIRE**

- Explain directions and assignments both orally and in writing.
- Present new or difficult information both visually and auditorily (outlines, key words, notes, agenda).
- Provide models of desired work products.
- Provide active learning experiences in class (demonstrations, dramatic performances, debates, role plays, peer review of student work, etc.) in addition to lecture and to note-taking.

*** PRESENT THE BIG PICTURE...MAKE THE EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY CLEAR**

- Begin with an overview of topics to be covered each day, and a review of the previous lecture/lesson.
- Present overriding topics/themes to provide students with a road map for each unit.
- "Plan backwards" and make explicit what you want the student to know and be able to do by the end of a lesson, unit, course.

ESTABLISH PREDICTABLE CLASSROOM ROUTINES

- Write the daily agenda on the board so students can follow along easily.
- Provide a predictable week so students know what to expect on different days, different parts of days
- Write homework in same place each day, and/or provide homework in hand-outs or on-line
- Give enough time to explain homework assignments fully.

*** PROVIDE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CLASSWORK, HOMEWORK, AND TESTS**

- Help students develop strategies for note-taking, reading challenging texts, outlining, writing a paper or lab report.
- Provide a time-line for long-range assignments suggesting intermediate due dates.
- Provide a unit calendar and/or weekly syllabus; include critical information such as reading deadlines, quizzes, tests, and project due dates.
- Provide a checklist students can use to organize themselves for assignments, homework and notes.
- Provide study guides/outlines for lectures and tests; describe the format and content of tests.
- Post materials on web-lab for easy reference

*** CONTINUALLY CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING**

- Provide periodic summaries during lecture.
- Randomly check student understanding throughout the lesson.
- Give interim assessments.

*** ENCOURAGE THE USE OF ADAPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES**

- Word processor, spell-checker, calculator, textbooks, books on tape, etc.

*** ASSESS WITH VARIED TECHNIQUES**

- Consider: oral tests, written tests, performance evaluations, portfolios, and test taking in a different setting.
- Allow students to clarify or rephrase a test/exam question in their own words to check for understanding.
- Provide extra time for test completion as needed; reduce the number of questions for certain students; write a 30-minute test for a 50-minute period; allow students to finish the test after the period is over in one of the Academic Centers (including Tutorial and Learning Centers).
- Explain directions and vocabulary that may be confusing and lead to incorrect responses.

*** PROVIDE SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH IEPS/504PLANS**

- Review IEPs and 504 Plans.
- Consult with liaisons.

IV. Implementing the BHS Curriculum Accommodation Plan:

A. Teachers Use Accommodations, and Consult with Department Chairs on Students Not Making Good Progress

1. Teachers use accommodations as part of their good teaching practice to promote the highest level of achievement for all students. Teachers may employ specific regular education accommodations for a particular student when they perceive a gap between the student's understanding, ability, and/or work ethic, and his/her performance in class. The list of Regular Education Accommodations at BHS (above) may help teachers in this process.
2. Department Chairs will consult with and support teachers in their use of regular education accommodations with students who present academic challenges for the teacher. Ideally, this consultation will promote the use of effective accommodations so that further individualized interventions are not necessary.

B. Moving Toward a More Formal Accommodation Plan for Some Students

1. Deans/Program Coordinators work with teachers and Department Chairs if a more formal approach to regular education accommodations seems appropriate. The Deans/Program Coordinators have an overview, across subjects, of student academic performance, and they determine whether a trial "Individual Curriculum Accommodation Plan" (iCAP) should be written for a particular student.
2. Before exploring a trial iCAP, the Dean/Program Coordinator determines if better academic habits -- consistent attendance, regular homework completion, and pursuit of extra help -- will contribute to improved performance. The Dean/Program Coordinator team works with the student, teachers, and the student's family toward increased academic responsibility.
3. The Dean/Program Coordinator, in consultation with teachers, parents, the counselor, and other involved academic support staff, writes the iCAP, for a trial period of nine weeks, usually during a full quarter of the school year. The trial iCAP lists the accommodations to be tried with a student.

C. Monitoring the iCAP

1. Teachers provide feedback to the Dean/Program Coordinator on the effectiveness of the iCAP, in the middle, and at the end of the trial period, or more often if needed.
2. If extra time on assessments is a component of the trial iCAP, logistics must be included in the plan. Designated sites -- such as specific Academic Centers, Tutorial Centers, and After-School Homework Centers -- must be identified. Also, the recommended amount of extra time should be indicated. Extended time does not mean unlimited time! Extended time may be 10 to 20 minutes on a 45-minute assessment. Flexibility in timed testing makes sense when 1) it enables a student to more accurately demonstrate his/her learning, and 2) speed is not the skill being assessed.
3. At the end of the trial period, the Dean/Program Coordinator's team communicates with the parents, teachers, and student (in a meeting, or by e-mail), and decides to maintain, modify, or discontinue the iCAP. An iCAP can be written for all disciplines, or for one or two only, depending on the student's needs. The decision to formalize a student's accommodations in an iCAP is based on the effectiveness of the accommodations in improving the student's performance in school, and the desire to codify the accommodations for subsequent years.

D. If the iCAP Doesn't Work: If the iCAP does not contribute to improved performance, and the student is not making "effective progress" as defined by law, the Dean/Program Coordinator's team refers the student to The High School's Student Support Team (SST) for additional consultation, support, and/or a formal diagnostic evaluation.

*A parent who requests an evaluation, or who presents the school with outside testing, may opt to pursue a trial iCAP instead of following the eligibility process for an IEP or 504 Plan.