



Watertown Public Schools

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Supporting Diverse Learners Handbook: **Watertown Curriculum Accommodation Plan**

What is a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan?

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38Q _ require the adoption and implementation of a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). Such plan is intended to guide principals and teachers in ensuring that all possible efforts are made to meet student needs in general education classrooms and to support teachers in analyzing and accommodating the wide range of student learning styles and needs that exist in any school. The statute also encourages teacher collaboration and parent involvement. Another statute, Chapter 71, Section 59C (Parent Councils), was amended to include involvement of the Parent Councils in the development, evaluation and continuing revision of the DCAP.

Development and Introduction

The Watertown Public Schools Curriculum Accommodation Plan, called *Supporting Diverse Learners Handbook*, was developed over a period of several months by a task force of principals, guidance counselors, special educators, and district administrators. Initial meetings with principals resulted in draft plans that outlined the circumstances of elementary, middle, and high school settings. Those plans were then reviewed by the Watertown Public Schools Curriculum Accommodation Plan (WCAP) Task Force and the Principals. The Task Force decided to write the plan as a handbook for teachers and administrators.

To assist in a clear understanding of appropriate accommodations for all kinds of learners, the Task Force compiled this extensive *Supporting Diverse Learners Handbook* for classroom teachers, specialists, and administrators at all grade levels. It includes the following sections: General Education Team Flow Chart; Child Study Process, Frequently Asked Questions, Common Accommodation Strategies, Accommodating Learning Differences, Accommodating Eligible Students, Parent Conference Tips, and Forms.

The *Supporting Diverse Learners Handbook* explains a process for moving from the identification of a concern through communications with parents, staff collaboration, articulation of strategies for accommodations or intervention, and periodic review and evaluation of student progress. It includes a flow chart that represents the pre-referral process that a General Education Team (GET) in each school follows before recommending special education services.

The *Supporting Diverse Learners Handbook* is the result of researching various model District Curriculum Accommodation Plans and adopting and adapting effective long-standing and innovative teaching and learning strategies. We would like to thank the following school districts and professional organizations for their work and their contribution to the Watertown Curriculum Accommodation Plan: Burlington Public Schools, Plymouth Public Schools, Salem Public Schools, Scituate Public Schools, Decatur Texas Independent School District, and The Council of Chief State School Officers Collaborative on Assessment and Students Standards.

Implementation and Training Plans

At the beginning of the 2007 school year Principals and Guidance Counselors introduced this current draft (November 2007) to all staff in building meetings at the elementary schools and through department meetings at the middle and high schools. This version was also shared with Parent Councils for their input. Finally, it was proposed to the School Committee and subsequently approved in December 2007.

The Watertown Curriculum Accommodation Plan as reflected in the *Supporting Diverse Learners Handbook* will continue to be adapted to the needs of our students in our schools. Throughout the 2007-2008 school year, district and school-based professional development is supporting the improvement of the teaching and learning strategies identified in the handbook. Classroom and special education teachers and specialists are learning about the handbook at grade level and department meetings, and using it at General Education Team and Special Education Team meetings.

During this summer, the handbook will be evaluated and revised by the WCAP Task Force and the Guidance Department. A more targeted and improved WCAP professional development plan, which is more explicit about "Response to Intervention" strategies, will commence for the 2008-2009 school year.

Please direct any questions or issues about this new *Supporting Diverse Learners Handbook* to either Ann Koufman-Frederick, Assistant Superintendent, or Elisabeth Schaefer, Director of Student Services.

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