

Gardner Public Schools

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan

2010-11

**Gardner Public Schools
Curriculum Accommodation Plan**

Table of Contents

Legal Requirements	2
Purpose of DCAP	3
Building Curriculum Accommodation Plans (BCAP)	4
District Plan: Services and Accommodations	4
Program Descriptions	10
Summary	22

Legal Requirements

Massachusetts General Laws (2006) require school districts to implement District Curriculum Accommodation Plans (DCAP) to help ensure all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in **regular education**. The plan should encompass efforts as follows:

- ❑ Analyses of diverse learning styles within the regular classroom.
- ❑ Accommodations to meet needs of the diverse learning styles within a regular education class.
- ❑ Provision of appropriate services and support within the regular education program.
- ❑ Direct and systematic instruction of reading.
- ❑ Services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning.

The language from the Massachusetts General Laws is contained below:

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan, Ch. 71, Section 38Q1/2 (DCAP):

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.

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, 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...

Purpose of DCAP

The purpose of the planning and development of the Gardner Public Schools' District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) is to assist school leaders in planning and providing a regular education program that is able to accommodate students' diverse learning needs and avoid unnecessary referrals to special education. The DCAP also is designed to assist teachers in analyzing and making necessary accommodations for students in the regular classroom by describing services and support mechanisms available within the regular education program.

It is the goal of the Gardner Public Schools to continually strengthen and improve the regular education program to meet the changing educational needs of all students. The DCAP addresses various strategies that will assist the district in meeting the needs of all students by providing:

- * Assistance to regular education staff through professional development that will help them to analyze and accommodate various students' learning needs and to manage students' behavior needs effectively.
Example: Staff development in progress monitoring and technology integration.
- * Support Services that are available to students through the regular education program, including services to address the needs of students whose behavior may interfere with learning.
Example: Consultation between regular educators, special educators, principals and directors concerning curriculum planning and delivery of instruction.
- * Direct and systematic instruction in reading for all students.
Example: Consultation and/or direct instruction from Reading Specialist or Special Educator in systematic reading strategies.
- * Encouragement of teacher mentoring and collaboration.
Example: District promotes and assigns mentors to new teachers.

* Encouragement of parental involvement in their children’s education.

Example: Ongoing communication between school and home via phone calls, conferences, written communication and email with a focus on student needs and how parents can assist in student progress.

Building Curriculum Accommodation Plans (BCAP)

Once a district’s Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) has been adopted, there is a new requirement for each building to develop an individualized school-based plan. To provide clarity, this plan will become the Gardner Public School’s BCAP. Each fall, the Principal will work in cooperation with school councils to adopt a Building Curriculum Accommodation Plan.

School Councils need to formulate specific Curriculum Accommodation Plans at each school building. As the School Councils develop these Plans, the following services and accommodation information in the District Accommodation Plan will be used.

District Plan: Services and Accommodations

1. Support Services for Students

- Title I
 - Waterford, HMS, Elm, Middle
 - ELA/Math
 - Before School/Summer Programs
- Harcourt Reading Interventions
 - Literacy/Reading/Fundations (K-3)
 - Grades 1-6
- Literacy
 - 3 Tier Model
 - Elm, Sauter
 - Individual literacy instruction
 - Tutors
 - Reading Recovery-like Interventions
- Wilson Reading, Fundations at WSS/HMS
- Reading Incentive Programs
 - Accelerated Reader
 - Reading Calendar (HMS)
- ELL/SEI Interventions
 - ESL Model
 - 3 Tier Model
 - English in a Flash (elementary)
 - Rosetta Stone (GMS/GHS)
 - Lexia

- Volunteers
 - Literacy-K
- MCAS Interventions
 - After School/Summer Programs
 - GHS, GMS, HMS(gr.3), ESS(gr.3)
 - In-School
 - ELA/Math
 - GMS, GHS
 - Study Island
 - Read Naturally
 - Galileo, Measured Progress, Lexia
 - SES
- Instructional Support Strategies
 - TASC (K-12)
 - REAP
 - Success Plans
 - Child Study
 - Tiered support
 - Outside Agencies
- Assessments
 - Intelligence Tests
 - WISC, Woodcock Johnson
 - Behavior
 - BASC
 - Career/Skills
 - AccuPlacer
- Student Success/Skills MCAS Analysis
 - COGNOS
 - Performance Improvement Mapping
 - Grade/Curriculum Meetings
- Common Assessments
 - Galileo (1-5)
 - Measured Progress (6-8)
 - Lexia
 - DIBELS
 - Grades K-3
 - Locally Developed
 - Math-Grades K-8
 - ELA-Grades K-8
 - Local Indicators of School Success
 - Grades 9-12
 - Standardized Tests

- PEER Mediation
 - GMS
- 504 Accommodations
- Student Behavior/Modeling
 - Second Step (K-8)
 - Bullying Awareness
 - School Policy Dissemination
 - Parental Signature
 - Behavior Plans
 - Code of Conduct
 - HMS, WSS, ESS
 - Character Education, Peaceful Playground (HMS)
 - Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Community Resources
 - HOPE House
 - Pals Club
 - Summer Support Programs
 - After School Programs
 - After School Pals Program (WSS)
 - Old English Village Homework Club
 - Homework Club
 - Jr. Achievement (HMS and ESS)
 - YOU, Inc.
 - Lipton
 - Community Police/Full Time Resource Officer
- School Resources
 - Guidance
 - Small Group (Anger mgt., Pro-social behavior)
 - Grief Support Group
 - Sex Education
 - Bullying
 - Nurses
 - Alcohol/Drug Awareness
 - Nutrition/Health
 - Health Plans
 - Transitions
 - Guidance
 - Meetings
 - Information Dissemination
 - School Visits

- Meetings
 - Grade Level (common planning)
 - Faculty
 - Team Meetings
 - Curriculum
 - Title 1 Staff
 - ELL Staff
- Groups
 - Project GO
 - Grades 6-12
 - Tech. Prep
 - Grades 9-12
 - Employment
 - School-To-Career
 - Job Corps
 - DARE
 - Grades 5-8
 - Fire Safety
 - Grades K-3
 - SAT Prep

2. Direct Instruction

- Full Day Kindergarten
- Options Program
- Lexia (K-8)
- Study Island (K-5)
- Kurzweil (3-5)
- Rosetta Stone (GHS/GMS)
- ELL
 - Support via Trained Staff
 - Sheltered English Immersion
- Performance Improvement Mapping
 - Grades 6-8, 9-12
- School Improvement Plans
- TASC Outcomes
- Grade Level Meetings-Outcomes
- Grade K-8 Math mapping
- Curriculum Mapping
- Local Expectations for Learning
 - Grades 9-12
- Collins Program (K-5)
- Evidentiary Reading (6-8)

3. Data Analysis and Curriculum Review

- Progress Monitoring
 - 3 Tier Model (HMS/Elm)
 - ELL Monitoring
 - FLEP
 - ELL Progress
 - IPT, Aprenda
 - MELA-O/MEPA
 - LAS Links
 - SPED Reports
 - COGNOS
 - Lexia
 - Study Island
 - Galileo
 - Accelerated Reader Reports (Grades 1-5)
 - Writing Portfolios (Grades K-5)
 - Student Portfolios (Grades K-5)

4. Program Planning

- School Council
 - Surveys
 - Meetings
 - School Improvement Plan (safety, budget, etc.)
- Title I
 - Parent Meetings
 - Surveys
- Technology
 - Technology Committee (school based)
 - Survey
 - Staff
 - Students
- Health
 - Surveys
 - Health Advisory Council
- SPED
 - Parent Advisory Council
- State
 - Data Gathering/Reports
 - MCAS
- Accreditation
 - NEASC
 - 9-12
 - Self Study
 - Student/Staff Survey
 - Parent/Community support

- NAEYC
 - Pre-K/K
 - Self Study
 - Community Input
- TASC Meetings/Work
- Needs Assessment Study
- Senior Surveys
- Performance Improvement Mapping

5. Communication with Parents

- MCAS
 - Parents Night
 - Printed Information/Letters Sent Home
 - Newspaper releases
- Parent Advisory Council
- Parent Leadership
- Title I
 - Parent Feedback Nights
 - Math/Literacy Nights
 - Letters Sent Home
 - Web Site
- ELL
 - Progress Monitoring
 - Program Input
 - Translation/Communications
- Financial Aid Night
- College Night
- PTO
 - Meetings
 - Programs
- Open House
- NAEYC Accreditation
- School Committee Meetings
- Pre-K Orientation
- Ambassador Program-Volunteers
- Homework Hotline
- One Call Now
- E-mail
- Invention Convention
- Newsletters
- Family Fitness Night
- School Calendar
- Art Exhibits/Art Night

- Teacher/Classroom Newsletters
- Local Cable Channel
 - Emergency Scroll
 - Bulletin Board Messages
- District and School Website
- EDLINE (GHS/GMS)
- Local Newspaper
 - Regular Column
 - News
- New Students and Parents Nights

Program Descriptions

Speech and Language Treatment Services

Speech and language services are provided to students at all grade levels. Services are provided according to the student's individual needs, and are provided as one-to-one, consultation, or in small groups. Services occur within the general or special education settings for walk-ins and students within the Gardner Public School system structure.

Early Childhood Speech and Language Services

The Early Childhood program provides itinerate speech and language services for children displaying speech and/or language difficulties only. The speech and language staff provides this service at Waterford Street School.

Alternative Education Programs

The Project Support classrooms in the Gardner Public Schools provide services to students through grades PreK-12, who are challenged by emotional and behavioral needs in the general education setting. The goal of these classes is to perform at a high level of academic achievement that is aligned with the state curriculum, while offering modified instruction and assessment. Students are considered as partial pullouts to the general education setting, and reintegrated into general education classroom when their individual emotional behavioral goals are met.

Regular Education Accommodation Plan

The REAP is viewed as a problem solving method and encourages other pathways, other than special education or 504 plans, in addressing student assistance that does not rise to the level of a disability. The purpose of the REAP is to identify and implement a plan of

action, which accommodates the differential need(s) of a student within the general education program. The REAP process is ongoing and can be incorporated into the TASC process. Input into its development and review of its effectiveness includes parents, teachers, and other involved persons and school personnel. The REAP plan will identify problem areas and reflect instructional strategies and accommodations applied to aid the student in their academic pursuits within the general education setting.

Title I

Title I, a regular education program, is one of the largest federally funded programs in the district. Gardner schools that benefit from Title I support have highest identified percentage of low-income families. The goal of the Title I program is to:

- ❑ Identify students who are at academic risk, including ELL students.
- ❑ Provide individual or small group instruction for the students identified. Instruction is generally delivered within the regular classroom setting. In Gardner, Title I services are also delivered before or after school.
- ❑ Provide instruction through a variety of teaching methods and materials.
- ❑ Work closely with school personnel to provide collaboration and consultation regarding the student's progress.

Title I tutors work closely with the literacy coaches and the classroom teachers. Special education teachers may also provide consultation to the Title I teachers in regard to instructional methods or materials.

The goals of the Title I program are achieved through a variety of initiatives depending upon the needs of each school. Each of our schools housing students in grades PK – 8 have school wide programs. Teachers in the Middle School rely on the assistance of a math coach and a literacy coach as well as 3.0 tutors. Supplemental Educational Services are provided to eligible students. Elm Street School has the support of a 3.0 tutors as well as SES; Sauter School has 1.0 tutor; Waterford St. School has 1.0 tutor and 2 (.5 fte) tutors. The students receive small group instruction within the classroom as well as before school. The 2 primary schools are serviced by a .5 Title I, 3 tutors, and a paraprofessional. Students receive small group support in the classroom and before school remediation.

During the summer of 2007, a Title I Summer Program was instituted to support students entering first through eighth grades. Small group instruction was provided in order to remediate school year skills in a relaxed environment.

Options program

The Options program is a specialized partial pullout program for children with Autism related disorders. Its theoretical foundation for providing specialty services to Autistic students is based on techniques of both ABA and GROUP strategies as well as borrowing from the work of Kaufman (1974). These methods are research based, and though long-term efficacy studies have not been conclusive for any of the methods, data collection in individual cases in a wide-range of student's supports that each method has aided children in progressing both academically and socially. The Options classroom looks to utilize these techniques along with data collection to chart effective interventions and growth in the applied programming. The classroom looks to utilize aspects of Kaufman's (1974) research in understanding the way Autistic students learn and offer an environment that utilizes a Montessori (1898) approach in adapting a learning environment that meets the student's needs. Educational strategies will also borrow from Bloom (1956), in creating a learning environment that supports learning at a higher level and is dependent on attained skills. This classroom will focus on the understanding Bloom's three educational objectives, which seek to examine and foster growth in cognition, affect, and psychomotor abilities. This focus will be co-joined with academic goals while developing individualized educational programming for each child.

✓ Relating to others

No matter what level of development a child is at, this classroom's philosophy is to help children connect deeply to the content of their studies and to build meaningful social skills and interactions. We will work with children to foster and generate an active interest and participation in human interaction so that your child initiates communication and interpersonal skills. A component of this goal will be to understand how your child will move beyond repetitive "stimming" behaviors without fighting against these behaviors. We believe that your child is capable of expressions of joy and caring, and we will work with you to learn their traits and show you how to encourage growth in the areas of identified need.

✓ Teaching goals and Motivation

The program works under two premises. Every child has a right to be educated by someone that believes in them. Parents want their child to be exposed to challenging education interests. In this exposure, parents want their children and to be able to express and take care of themselves. In this classroom, we will learn how to find your child's motivations and interests. Your child will learn how to turn these into effective learning experiences so that they can learn and acquire the skills necessary for success in school and in life—from self-care tasks to using strategies, to cooperating with others.

✓ Speech and language development

There are strategies that can help children to increase their communication skills in and out of the public school setting. Implementation of functional strategies for increasing verbal communication that will help your child interact, make requests and express himself is a key focus of the program and continuing goal for each child's development.

✓ **Collaboration**

Staff in the Options classroom will work together as a collaborative team that includes parents, and other school-based and community supports. In this program, recruitment, training, and supporting a team through professional development and professional consulting is an important fixture of the program. For parents, we can help you to utilize professional and educational supports, training and community services to maintain your program's effectiveness and success.

✓ **Optimal learning environment**

Your child is capable of great learning in an environment that is comfortable, safe and free from over-stimulation. We will look to identifying antecedent behaviors that can help all the individual team members understand the push-pull control interactions, distractions, and motivators that inhibit or support learning and growth that interfere with how children and adults interact. In this program, we'll work to identify what constitutes an ideal educational environment.

✓ **Decisive interactions and strategies in addressing challenging behaviors**

Initially, everyone struggles to understand certain things that their child does. We will work with your child to find different behaviors and useful ways of communicating. In addition, we will learn and collaborate on practical techniques for preventing these behaviors before they happen.

✓ **Capitalize on day-to-day learning opportunities**

Everyday activities allow students and parents opportunities at learning outside of the classroom. To borrow from educational philosopher John Dewey (1938), life experiences, shared in life settings are part of the educational experience. Education is not always linear and conventional in nature, the path leading to the goal requires navigation and planning around obstacles, and blossoms from the benefits of working and sharing with others to create the individual rather than mold him into an existing form. We'll learn to utilize these experiences for your child's maximum benefit.

✓ **Empowerment**

For many, having a child with developmental difficulties and participation in a program to help him/her can feel very challenging. However, we believe that parents and the school system are the most important forces in your child's life. These individuals need to work in collaboration to provide services and develop strategies together that will enhance a child's life. These strategies and techniques will require parents to practice and implement methods in the home and to utilize strategies to benefit the student outside of the school setting. Students will receive specialized, ongoing instruction in an atmosphere that fosters nonjudgmental interactions, optimism, and progressive.

Populations served by this classroom, but not limited to include:

Asperger's
Autism
Autism Spectrum Disorder/Corneilia De Lange Syndrome
Autism w/Hyperlexia
Autism, Subtype-Kanner
Autism, X-Y Exchange
Autism/Aspergers/PDD-NOS
Autism/Down Syndrome
Autism/Epilepsy
Autism/Selective Mutism
Autistic Tendencies/Tentative diagnosis of Cerebral Palsey
Bannayan Zonana Syndrome
Bilateral MCA Stroke in Utero
Cerebral Palsey/Microcephaly
Down Syndrome w/ ASD and/or Hirschprungs
Global Development Delay
Landau-Kleffner Syndrome w/ ADHD and Autism
Mental Retardation/ADHD
Neurological Problems associated with Autism
No Known Diagnosis, but may possess a R/O (Rule out) diagnosis of Autism
Prader-Willi Syndrome
PDD-NOS
PDD
PDD/Autism
Rhett's Syndrome
Septo Optic Dysplasia

The RISE Program

The RISE Program is a series of Gardner Public School classes that focus on the needs of students with disabilities relevant to cognitive deficits, Autism Spectrum related disorders, and social emotional issues. It is multi-modal in addressing these disabilities where practices focus on an individualized whole-child approach to learning. The classes address the whole child by moving to enhance life functioning skills and offering the least restrictive environment to learning. Some of this is accomplished by applying adaptive behavioral and trial techniques with integration into traditional curriculum and social experiences. The program offers a flexible learning environment to enhance individual skills while staying connected to traditional general education classes when possible.

This series of classrooms serves students in grades K – 12, and also includes a community-based program for students between the ages of 18 – 22. The goals of the classrooms are to align curriculum while addressing the intellectual development, social

skills, occupational abilities, and adaptive behaviors of those students that are significantly impaired. In the elementary and middle school settings, the classes focus on developing a strong foundation in curriculum while enhancing social skills, safety and health awareness, and fundamental community integration skills. As students progress through the system they will continue to be challenged with grade level curriculum expectations and work toward a greater understanding of their abilities relevant to activities of daily living, vocational interests and abilities, and life management functioning. Students enrolled in the high school and community based classes are exposed to, in school and community based vocational experiences with access to real life work situations, increased opportunities to interact socially with same age typical peers in natural settings, and an opportunity to practice community and work skills in a meaningful and appropriate setting in preparation for the transition to adult life. Students enrolled in the upper grade level classes will increase their personal independence through career exploration, community-based learning, work-based learning, and functional academics. Ongoing assessment, analysis, and evaluation of skills using systematic observational aids will help educators to identify strengths and target areas of weakness for further development in academics and vocational interests while addressing the needs of students with cognitive, autistic, and social emotional needs.

Teachers Assisting Students in Classroom (TASC)

TASC is a regular education initiative designed to allow teachers to receive support from professional peers when they have questions about a student's progress. Members of *TASC* include the Principal, a regular classroom teacher, a special education teacher, guidance counselor, nurse, and other building personnel determined by the Principal.

TASC members listen to the concerns of a teacher regarding a specific student. Instructional strategies are offered through a brainstorming format and then considered by the classroom teacher for implementation. Because of the varied expertise of the *TASC* members, instructional strategies often reflect alternative methods of instruction not yet explored by the classroom teacher. In-house consultation services are also an option to consider. The Reading Specialist, School Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, and Physical Therapist are resource personnel available to deliver consultation services.

Within 6 – 8 weeks, the *TASC* members reconvene to assess the student's progress. The classroom teacher has kept careful documentation of progress. The *TASC* members, at this time, determine if:

- ❑ The strategies are effective and student has made adequate progress, no longer needing the *TASC* process.
- ❑ The strategies are effective and there is evidence of some progress. The *TASC* process should continue, meeting again in 6 weeks, to carefully monitor progress.
- ❑ Strategies have not been effective and adequate progress is not evident. The *TASC* members suspect there may be a disability impeding the student's progress. The student is then referred for a special education evaluation.

English Language Learners

The Gardner Public Schools has an ELL Plan for Implementation, Support and Training of Staff. The goals of the plan are:

- Provide appropriate academic models and instructional support to assist English Language Learner (ELL) students in order that they may meet the same high academic standards required of all students.
- Build confidence and motivation in ELL students to learn and use English so that they will become proficient in speaking, reading, writing and understanding the language.
- Enhancing ELL students' abilities and opportunities to meaningfully participate in all aspects of the district.

All instruction is based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes (ELPBO). Students identified as ELL but whose parents decline enrollment in the program will still be monitored for adequate progress and provided with any necessary English language support. Support and supplemental instruction will be provided in the regular classroom. Effective instructional and support strategies, varied assessments and the use of a positive learning environment will be used in the regular classroom. Staff are provided with ongoing professional development and follow-up activities to assist in working with ELL students. ELL Plan: Program Initiatives are as follows:

Initiative #1: Identification of ELL Students

All incoming students are provided with a home language survey upon registration in the school district. Various assessment tools are used to evaluate, place, and monitor students. Assessments are given periodically throughout the year.

Initiative #2: Identification of Teachers to Work with ELL Students

Teachers are being trained in Second Language Learning and Teaching (Category 1) and in Sheltered Instruction (Category 2). Continued training will be provided. The Gardner Public Schools ELL Program is in the early stage of implementation.

Initiative #3: Identification of Effective Methods of Classroom Support

Locally, teachers (SPED, ELL, Title I, classroom) will collaborate to share best practices and exchange information about effective approaches to ELL support/instruction. Professional development will focus on meeting the learning needs of our ELL population. Additionally, available resources, including peer coaches, will be used to help support ELL students.

Initiative #4: Monitoring of ELL Student Progress

Monitoring of progress is vital to the program. Being able to respond to the changing needs of the students is very important to help our students meet with success. Planning and organizing of student assessments is another area that will be focused upon.

Initiative #5: Sharing of Information and Gathering Input

Increasing the communication with parents, teachers and administrators about ELL student needs, assessment results, and progress is a key aspect of the ELL plan. With the wide variety of assessment tools and student monitoring opportunities, it becomes very important for ELL staff to consolidate and communicate this with staff, parents and students.

Initiative #6: Provide Professional Development

Continued, high-quality professional development opportunities need to be provided. (Category 1, 2, 3, 4 trainings) Sharing and observing of best practices is another important part of the program.

Initiative #7: Continued Program Review, Feedback, and Revision

Each school has an ELL teacher or paraprofessional servicing our identified population.

Direct and Systematic Reading Instructional Programs

<p>Support services for students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Title I Reading, Writing, Math*• ELL Intervention/Monitoring*• Before & After School Tutorials and Homework Clubs*• English Language Arts and Mathematics Academic Success Programs – During School Day and After School*• MCAS Academic Support Gardner High School <p>*All student support services address specifics in individual Student Success Plans for intervention.</p>
<p>Direct instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of K-6 research-based reading series• Integration of study strategies and organizational strategies during the school day.• Use of MCAS test format in classroom assessments.• Use of MCAS vocabulary in classroom instruction and assessment.• All classes support core instruction.

Occupational Therapy Support Services

Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapists provide support services throughout the district (preschool through high school). Staff is available to participate in Student Support Team meetings, provide observation and direct consultation to teachers, to help children access the regular curriculum when sensory, motor, and perceptual skills are delayed or interfere with school performance. The Occupational Therapy Department has materials available to support pre-writing and hand skill development.

Behavioral and Emotional Support Services

The Adjustment Counselor and School Psychologists are available to provide consultation to staff and direct services to students who are experiencing social, emotional and behavioral difficulties. In addition, referrals are made to parent support groups to assist parents in working at home with their children and to provide them with information on parenting skills. School based personnel are able to complete a functional behavioral analysis for Special Education students who are having behavioral difficulties and to develop a behavioral plan to address a student's needs.

Staff development is also available on a variety of social, emotional and behavioral topics to assist teachers and staff to recognize and address the emotional concerns of their students, especially as they relate to classroom management issues.

Guidance Services

The purpose of the PreK-12 school counseling service is to provide an array of services that facilitate the development of all students and provide programs that contribute to the effectiveness of the total educational objectives and goals. In working with students, the guidance counselors evaluate the total picture in terms of intellectual and social development, parental attitudes and aspirations, family relationships, and most importantly, student input about themselves, their personalities, their problems and their needs. A major purpose of guidance services is to help students to better understand and adjust to their new school and environment so that they can make a smooth transition from one school or grade level to another.

The guidance counselors K-12 work diligently to design programs and activities that will assist all students learn social skills and identify personal attributes that will enable them to lead more productive and satisfying lives beyond their school years. An added function of the counselor is to organize and present findings from tests, which indicate strengths and weaknesses of the instructional program. Additionally, counselors are responsible for the screening of tests for bias and for assuring proper usage.

The educational and career component of the guidance services is designed to assist students to identify their own skills, competencies and preferences and thus expand their own self-awareness to establish a base of information about career alternatives.

The referral function provides students with access to a wide variety of services not found in the school. Referrals are based upon knowledge of available community human services resources and the individual needs of the student. We have available a network of referral resources which can help students and their families with problems that can impede the proper educational development of the student. In conclusion, the guidance program is a cooperative effort.

Adjustment Counselor

The School Adjustment Counselor provides a wide variety of services to students, their parents and to the staff. The Adjustment Counselor works with both typical and special education students.

School Adjustment Counselor provides direct services to students in the form of individual and group treatment. These groups would include social skills, anger management and insight-oriented therapy. For older students the individual and group sessions may also deal with vocational preparation, substance abuse and sexual harassment. The Counselor is available for crisis intervention.

The Adjustment Counselor provides ongoing consultation to administrators and staff on a variety of issues. These may include behavioral strategies, social and emotional concerns and information on developmental issues. The Counselor may participate in the TASC and Special Education evaluation teams. This person also works with building administrators, classroom teachers and psychologists when a functional behavioral assessments needs to be developed for a student. The Counselor may participate in the manifestation determination meetings for special education students. This person also coordinates the building's referrals to outside mental health services and participates in meetings with the consulting psychiatrists. The Counselor works with a variety of outside agencies such as DMR, DSS, DYS and DMH and coordinates services for students who are also under the auspices of these agencies.

Gateway Program

Gateway to College is a dropout recovery program administered by Mount Wachusett Community College and its partner, Gardner High School. The program provides an alternative path to complete a high school diploma and earn college credits toward a college certificate or an Associates degree.

Gateway currently services 108 students with the goal of expanding to 300 students by the fall semester of 2008. During the first semester of the program, the student completes developmental classes and the following semesters include college-level classes with the general college population. The developmental classes are in reading, writing, and mathematics in addition to an academic lab each week.

Students are primarily supported by resource specialists who provide study skills, career research assistance, mentoring, and counseling to assure each student's success. Once development classes are completed the resource specialists assist each student

through the college course selection process. Gateways to College students also have access to all the support services of Mount Wachusett Community College.

Individual Student Success Plans

The district identifies students at all grade levels that have scored below level two on the MCAS.

When MCAS data becomes available early in the school year following the MCAS administration, under the aegis of the Director of Curriculum, principals and with the assistance and input of the Pupil Personnel Services Director, the process of identification of students at risk of MCAS failure is begun.

When final test data definitively confirms MCAS passes and failures, information is analyzed by teachers in the district regarding how that data should influence decisions about curriculum and instruction. Teachers then work in grade level and building-based meetings to make revisions and refinements of curriculum and methods of delivery for students.

Using the template for ISSPs that the Gardner Public School district has developed, those responsible for competing ISSPs at the various grade levels will have a range of options to consider regarding supports that may be offered to at-risk students. Such supports might include (1) those used in the classroom, (2) those provided through classroom intervention or augmentation, (3) those provided through after-school or out-of-school tutoring or extra help sessions, and (4) those provided through parental training and support at home.

At the elementary level, the primary keeper of the plans is the building principal. At the secondary level, the primary keeper is the student's teacher(s).

Educational Proficiency Plans

An Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) will be developed for the subject matter area(s) in English language arts and mathematics in which students in the graduating class of 2010 did not meet or exceed a scaled score of 240.

At a minimum the EPP requires:

- a. a review of the student's strengths and weaknesses, based on MCAS and other assessment results, coursework, grades, and teacher input;
- b. identification of the courses the student will be required to take and successfully complete in grades 11 and 12; and
- c. a description of the assessment(s) the school will administer on at least an annual basis to determine if the student is moving toward proficiency, or has become proficient on the grade 10 standards.

Professional Development with a Student Focus

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train K-5 staff in Lexia• Implement Literacy Centers• All staff continue training in Differentiated Instruction and Differentiated Assessment• ELL Cat. 1-4 trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentors assigned for all new staff to ensure adherence to frameworks standards• Training for all staff in modifications and accommodations for regular education.
--	--

Mentoring Program

A priority of the Gardner Public Schools is to support new teachers through a mentoring program. Beginning teachers are provided a mentor with whom they meet with regularly, engage in peer observations, review professional development plans, and attend professional development offerings together.

Expected learning outcomes for the beginning teacher include:

- Development of a thorough understanding of school policies and procedures.
- Use of a range of student preassessment and assessment tools to adjust instructional practice to meet diverse learning needs of all students.
- Align instruction to local and Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks Standards.
- Use of appropriate classroom management strategies.
- Assess and reflect upon areas of weakness as a result of peer observations

Expected learning outcomes for the mentor include:

- Demonstration of understanding of the mentor's role in providing instructional, professional, personal support to the beginning teacher.
- Provision of support and peer observation focused on assisting the beginning teachers in addressing developmental areas.
- Reflective journal designed to offer strategies and point out areas for growth of new teacher.

The effectiveness of this mentorship program will be monitored carefully through surveys, interviews, and review of records and data collected.

MCAS Summer Preparation/Review Program

In an effort to ensure successful achievement on the grade ten MCAS exam by all students, Gardner Public Schools provides at risk students with a DOE funded summer MCAS preparation/review program. Eligible students include those entering ninth grade through post-twelfth grade who received failing or warning scores on their most recent Math and/or ELA MCAS exams.

The program runs through the month of July, nine hours per week for a total of thirty-six contact hours. If a student is enrolled in one subject only, he/she receives thirty-six hours of instruction in that subject area. If a student is enrolled in both Math and ELA, his/her time is split each day to complete eighteen hours in each subject area by program completion.

The course is designed to review test-taking strategies and strengthen identified areas of students' Math and ELA skills. Through data analysis of MCAS results and pre-assessment results, teachers determine the needs of each student and place them in a group of students with similar needs. With a staff consisting of highly qualified Math and ELA teachers, students receive the individualized instruction necessary to improve Math and/or ELA confidence and performance.

Women in Technology

Women in Technology (WIT) is a program to prepare female students for non-traditional Information Technology and Engineering careers. This program allows young women from area high schools to work with Engineering and Information Technology departments to develop hands-on skills that may benefit them in their future career paths.

The Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce, Fitchburg State College, Tyco Simplex/Grinnell, and Tyco Safety Products currently sponsor this program for female students from area high schools. This year's participants are from Gardner High School, Narragansett High School, Leominster High School, and Montachusett Regional Vocational/Technical High School. The students attend Tyco Simplex/Grinnell and Tyco Safety Products twice a month and are working on real-time Information Technology, Engineering, and Manufacturing projects.

The overall goal of this program is to encourage women to set higher educational goals and to pursue careers in non-traditional areas such as Information Technology, Engineering, and Manufacturing.

Employment statistics as of 2005/2006 indicate:

- 60% of low-wage workers are women
- 62% of working women earn half or more of their family's income.
- A woman with a bachelor's degree earns 75% more than one with a high school education.
- Women constitute 45% of the workforce in the U.S.
- In the past 10 years the employment in U.S. computer and software industries has tripled.
- 75% of tomorrow's jobs will require the use of a computer.

Summary

This representation of existing Curriculum Accommodations is by no means all-inclusive. In the spirit of seamless service and ongoing professional development, support services continue to evolve, guided by the needs of students. As School Councils formulate their individual curriculum accommodation plans, it is important to review and recognize the strong curriculum supports already in place.