MASS ACADEMY OF MATH AND SCIENCE

DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMODATION PLAN

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 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.

What does a DCAP do?

Massachusetts laws require school districts to implement a curriculum accommodation plan to help ensure all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in a general education setting. The purpose is to offer options for those individuals who are presenting with academic challenges but do not have (and are not suspected of having) a disability. This document is designed to inform parents and serve as a resource for educators.

The plan should encompass efforts as follows:

- Analysis of diverse learning styles within the general classroom;
- Accommodations to meet needs of the diverse learning styles within a general education class;
- Provision of appropriate services and supports within the general education classroom;
- Services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning;
- Encouragement of parental involvement in their children's education;
- Encouragement of teacher mentoring and collaboration;
- Assistance to general education staff through professional development and collaboration.

Educational Program

Mass Academy is a highly selective, accelerated two-year program designed to prepare students for university study as seniors in high school. All juniors follow the same curriculum, with sections grouped by language selection and level (Advanced Spanish, Intermediate Spanish, Advanced French, and Intermediate French). Instruction is also differentiated in Physics (Calculus/non-Calculus), Computer Science (students may pursue independent advanced projects), and Math Modeling (students may pursue an advanced track term 3 or 4).

While Mass Academy students are academically advanced, the faculty and staff recognize that students join our program from dozens of different schools. Additionally, we understand that students learn in different ways. The curriculum and instruction of the Mass Academy program are designed to meet the needs of students with various backgrounds and learning styles while maintaining high standards for all. The Mass Academy curriculum is interdisciplinary, inclusive, and project-based. With a heavy focus on collaboration, teachers provide meaningful learning opportunities for students through choice and real-world applications. Teachers continually evaluate and modify their curriculum to ensure it is relevant, innovative, and provides the best opportunities for students. While each course has its own set of content standards, all courses also assess students' progress toward meeting Mass Academy's habits of mind. Students are provided feedback on these content standards and habits of mind each term through scaled ratings on report cards.

Teachers differentiate instruction, often through the principals of universal design for learning, while maintaining Mass Academy's high academic standards for all students. Teachers use rubrics and timelines for larger or longer-term projects to ensure students understand what is expected of them. Teachers offer conferences and/or provide individualized feedback after assessments to provide students with opportunities to continue to learn and grow.

Educational Support Services for All Students

The following services are available to serve all students as part of the regular program:

- School counseling services (college planning, academic testing)
- School wellness counseling services (skills-based lessons, wellness checks, and mental health support with licensed social worker)
- Faculty advising
- School nursing services
- College essay writing support

Resources for Educators

The following resources are available to support teachers:

- Consultation with school counselor or school wellness counselor to identify appropriate support for students
- Consultation with school director to discuss and/or identify appropriate student engagement strategies or curriculum revisions
- Weekly faculty meetings to discuss student concerns, brainstorm instructional strategies, and discuss challenges

- Peer collaborations
- WPI's Academic Technology Center (ATC) for support with classroom technology, curriculum design, student engagement, and more
- Mentoring for new teachers

Accommodations

Accommodations should minimize barriers that interfere with a student's ability to successfully access the curriculum. Such strategies are considered appropriate when they change how the student learns without compromising the standards of the curriculum. The instructional practices listed below may be implemented to promote students' academic success:

Instruction:

- Differentiate instruction
- Provide choice on process and product
- Incorporate collaborative learning opportunities
- Use preferential seating
- Provide targeted and timely feedback
- Clarify directions
- Exercise culturally relevant teaching strategies
- Provide frequent check-ins
- Provide additional resources to reinforce skills and/or address learning gaps
- Use graphic organizers
- Provide direct instruction of content-specific reading strategies
- Use content-specific strategies to support language development (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc.) including listening logs, research notebooks, vocabulary journals, writing journals
- Provide individual or small group instruction
- Model desired processes and strategies
- Use technology to support learning
- Use wait time
- Provide access to learning materials and grades in Canvas
- Conference with individual students
- Provide additional summer work for incoming students who lack requisite background knowledge, particularly in math

Assessment:

- Provide choice on process and product
- Provide a variety of assessments
- Modify the language of the assessment to match student's English proficiency level
- Use an alternative setting for assessments
- Provide rubrics to communicate clear expectations
- Incorporate opportunities for student reflection and self-assessment
- Provide exemplars

Behavioral/Executive Functioning:

- Use preferential seating
- Teach organization skills
- Explicitly teach study skills and test-taking strategies
- Promote the use of timelines or Gantt charts for long-term projects
- Permit motor breaks (allow students to stand, move about room, quick bathroom break)
- Provide fidget aids
- Use and model time management tools (Google calendar, Canvas, timers, post deadlines on board, etc.)
- Establish classroom routines
- Incorporate mindfulness activities into lessons

Explicit Reading Instruction

Mass Academy students are academically advanced; the very design of this program is to provide students with above-grade-level coursework. At times, however, students may struggle with reading the complex texts that are required in the curriculum, particularly in the Humanities and STEM classes. When needed, students are provided with additional support through conferencing and one-on-one sessions with the teacher to develop reading strategies including close reading and annotating text.

When the reading difficulty is determined to be the result of a gap in English language development for a multilingual learner, Mass Academy may choose to coordinate with the student's sending school to identify appropriate supports and/or resources to be implemented at Mass Academy.

Junior Academic Progress Reporting

Juniors and parents are provided narrative feedback and scaled ratings after their first term of study. These reports focus on habits of mind and progress toward meeting content standards. In addition, parents are invited to schedule a conference with the entire team of teachers to discuss their individual student's progress. A quarterly progress report is provided (B term with letter grades and scaled ratings, C term with letter grades and scaled ratings, and D term with final grades) for the remaining terms. Class expectations are clearly articulated with rubrics (on projects/long-term assignments), and the small class sizes create an environment conducive to feedback and collaboration.

Student Success Plans

Students who are struggling to meet the academic demands of Mass Academy or need any remedial instruction develop a student success plan with SMART goals or have the option to return to their sending school. Student success plans are developed with the support of a faculty advisor and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). Any student (junior or senior) may develop a student success plan to help with areas that need improvement.

Mentoring/Advisory

Mentoring is provided in both junior and senior years. A daily thirty-minute advisory allows juniors access to teachers for additional help. Additionally, students may access their teachers for help during the weekly flex block, before school, and after school from 2:45-4:30 PM.

Mass Academy faculty members serve as resources for students needing information, extra help, and advice. The faculty understands the difficulties students face, respects their privacy, welcomes their perspective, and provides overall support. Homeroom advisors are responsible for distributing and collecting information and forms, clarifying Mass Academy policies and procedures, helping

students adjust to their new environment, and serving as general resources and personal connections for students. Juniors also work with their STEM teacher who serves as their STEM I advisor to guide them through the independent research process. Students meet regularly with their STEM advisor throughout terms A, B, and C. Any student who is on a student success plan (see above) will also have a faculty advisor monitoring the student's progress.

Each senior is assigned a faculty advisor who holds weekly advising meetings with the senior to discuss academic progress at WPI, as well as progress toward college applications, their senior project (SISP), physical education and community service requirements, and any other topic relevant to student success. Senior advising forms are used to track progress.

All students are provided with skill-building lessons throughout the year to address such topics as time management, prioritization, working as part of a team, stress management, antibullying, etc. These lessons are provided by the school wellness counselor and/or the school director.

Senior Progress/Grade Reporting

Each term, requests are sent to WPI professors for comment on senior progress, and parents are sent a mid-year report on progress toward Mass Academy's graduation requirements. Seniors also have access to term grades on the WPI grading portal, Workday, as well as coursework progress through Canvas.

Parental Involvement

The philosophy of Mass Academy is to develop independent learners who can self-advocate; therefore, communication flows from teachers to students to parents, unless there is a need for intervention. Parents accompany their students to the new student/family orientation in the spring after being accepted to Mass Academy. In September, parents are invited to attend "parents' academy," a half-day event where parents experience what it's like to be a Mass Academy student. Senior parents are invited to a college planning workshop hosted by the school counselor.

The Parent Support Group (PSG) holds monthly meetings to help parents learn more about the program and network with other parents. Each meeting includes a presentation on a timely and relevant topic (what to expect from the report card, financial aid information, how to support your student at home, etc.) as well as time for parents to connect with each other.

Junior parents receive grade reports once per term and meet with the faculty for a parent-teacher conference after the first term has concluded. Senior parents receive a mid-year report including WPI grades along with updates on the SISP, attendance, and community service hours.

Student Support Team

Faculty meetings are held each week and include the teachers, school counselor, school wellness counselor, and director. A significant portion of each weekly agenda is dedicated to discussing student concerns. This is also an opportunity for the team to identify trends and determine if there are follow-up action steps required for individuals, groups of students, or the entire grade.

If a student is suspected of having a disability, the director and school counselor may contact the student's sending school and director of special education to coordinate testing and/or next steps.

Academic Support at WPI

Seniors have access to WPI support services including MASH (Math and Science Help), the Writing Center, and individual office hours provided by professors.

MASH tutoring sessions are offered each term for select math, science, and computer science courses that are critical for student success. No appointment is needed to attend MASH sessions. Students are encouraged to attend as many sessions during the term as they wish. Each session is different as new material will be covered and new questions posed. Students are encouraged to bring their class material (class notes, practice problems) and their questions.

During MASH sessions, an Academic Resource Center tutor facilitates and guides the review of problems and concepts. Students attending the session work with their peers who are taking the same course to problem solve and navigate through concepts together, compare notes, and enhance their study skills.

The mission of the Writing Center is to work interactively with WPI students to improve written, oral, and visual communication. Trained writing tutors provide individual and group peer tutoring on a range of projects including course papers, presentations, dissertations, and job-related documents. The Writing Center hopes to provide an approachable peer resource for students seeking assistance with their communication projects.

DISABILITIES SERVICES

The school counselor monitors IEP and 504 plans and communicates these needs accordingly to faculty.

For seniors, the college counselor facilitates contact with the WPI Office of Accessibility Services. The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) coordinates accommodation services and support to assist students with documented physical, learning, sensory, psychological, and developmental disabilities during their time at WPI.

OAS strives to foster an environment that supports and encourages self-advocacy, independence, and personal growth. OAS currently works directly with 800+ students throughout the year to support accommodation services covering all aspects of academic and campus life. OAS staff also collaborates with faculty, students, and staff to encourage an open and accessible campus community through programming focusing on physical access, universal course design, community awareness, and student peer-support and personal growth.

HOME AND HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mass Academy is a two-year high school program, where juniors take all their courses at the Mass Academy school building and seniors take all their courses at WPI. The home and hospital services protocol for each grade level is listed below:

Junior year:

1. Upon receipt of a physician's written order verifying that any junior enrolled at Mass Academy must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons for a period of not less than fourteen school days in a school year, the Director and School Counselor arrange for the provision of educational services in the home or hospital. Such services are provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue their educational program, as long as such services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. Such educational services are not considered special education unless the student has been determined eligible for such services, and the services include services on the student's IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan.

2. Due to the nature of project-based and/or team-based work, students may be provided with alternate assignments. A long-term absence may mean extending the school year into the summer or recommendation may be made for the student to return to their sending school if it is in their best educational interest.

Senior year:

1. Upon receipt of a physician's written order verifying that any senior enrolled at Mass Academy must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons for a period of not less than fourteen school days in a school year, the Director and School Counselor will meet with the student and family to determine the best course of action and related services. The services will be provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue their educational program, as long as such services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. Such educational services are not considered special education unless the student has been determined eligible for such services, and the services include services on the student's IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan.
2. At WPI, because of the nature of the academic calendar (7-week terms), a long-term absence may mean dropping a class/classes and extending the school calendar to the next term or the next year.
3. **WPI Medical Institutional Leave of Absence:** A Medical Institutional Leave of Absence (LOA) is appropriate when a student's psychological or physical health impairs the ability to function successfully or safely as a student. Under the terms of a Medical LOA, a student must wait a minimum of 30 days before requesting to return from LOA and complete the prescribed course of medical and/or mental health treatment before being considered for return. A student cannot register again at WPI until s/he has been medically cleared to return. Students may request to return for A-term, C-term, or E-term. https://www.wpi.edu/offices/registrar/policies-procedures/withdrawal-or-leave-of-absence