



District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)

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## Purpose

- Massachusetts General Law requires districts to create and implement a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)
- Per the law, the DCAP aims to better support students in general education by providing appropriate supports and interventions
- We in Somerville Public Schools (SPS) see a direct link between the DCAP and the intention of MTSS: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- This DCAP aims to fulfill the legal requirement while also serving as a practical blueprint for MTSS implementation and improvement
- The pages that follow highlight for school leaders, teachers, and parents the baseline programs, supports, and structures available to all SPS students
- The DCAP is iterative and will be updated annually to reflect current research and best practices

## District Vision & Mission

We envision a student-centered learning community where every student – honoring their unique strengths and background – is empowered to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally through tailored supports and equitable access to opportunity.

Our primary mission is to cultivate independent and inspired learners who are equipped to make a positive impact on the world. We achieve this by fostering rigorous and joyful learning environments where students, families, staff and community partners collaborate with a shared commitment to academic excellence and well-being

## SPS Core Values

- Empowering every child to realize their potential to become leaders and achieve **academic excellence** through academic rigor, a commitment to consistent, high standards, and access to caring and attentive adults.
- Embedding **equity and access** into every aspect of our school culture and community by maintaining a multicultural, multilingual, and inclusive school community, and disrupting and eliminating roadblocks to quality outcomes through strategic systems and practice.
- Prioritizing the **whole child**, recognizing that their social, emotional, mental, developmental and physical health are foundational pillars for academic success.
- **Using data to drive decision-making** to inform strategic initiatives, measure progress, and continuously improve student outcomes.
- Cultivating robust partnerships and **engagement with families** and community stakeholders, prioritizing the essential need for collaboration, family partnership, and shared accountability.
- **Sharing responsibility** across staff, students, families and community members to promote a culture of collaboration, transparency, and mutual respect.

## SPS Vision for Excellent Instruction

Positive Classroom Culture	Student-Focused Planning and Preparation	Access to Grade Level Standards for All Students	Student Agency and Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whole child, asset-based mindset</li> <li>- Strong, trusting relationships between teachers, students, and families</li> <li>- Culturally and linguistically responsive practices</li> <li>- Principles of restorative justice</li> <li>- High expectations for all students communicated explicitly and implicitly</li> <li>- Internalized routines and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rigorous student tasks that require content knowledge and critical thinking</li> <li>- Clear content and language objectives with aligned success criteria and exemplars</li> <li>- Students' funds of knowledge connect to learning</li> <li>- Application of learning to new, real-world contexts</li> <li>- Intentional use of data and formative assessments to inform instructional decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Universal Design for Learning</li> <li>- Precise language and content-specific vocabulary</li> <li>- Intentional flexible grouping that includes whole group, small group, partners, etc.</li> <li>- Differentiation based on student need (ex: content, process, product, choice)</li> <li>- Strategic scaffolds that support deeper learning</li> <li>- Frequent, specific feedback for students to deepen understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students as active learners</li> <li>- Teachers as facilitators of learning</li> <li>- Student voice and choice</li> <li>- Student discourse and classroom discussion</li> <li>- Student self-assessment</li> <li>- Teachers guide students to refine or extend thinking through productive struggle</li> <li>- Students engage in collaborative and independent learning</li> </ul>
<p><b>HIGH QUALITY, EVIDENCE-BASED CURRICULA</b>  <b>EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL</b>  <b>RESOURCES, SUPPORTS, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL STUDENTS</b></p>			

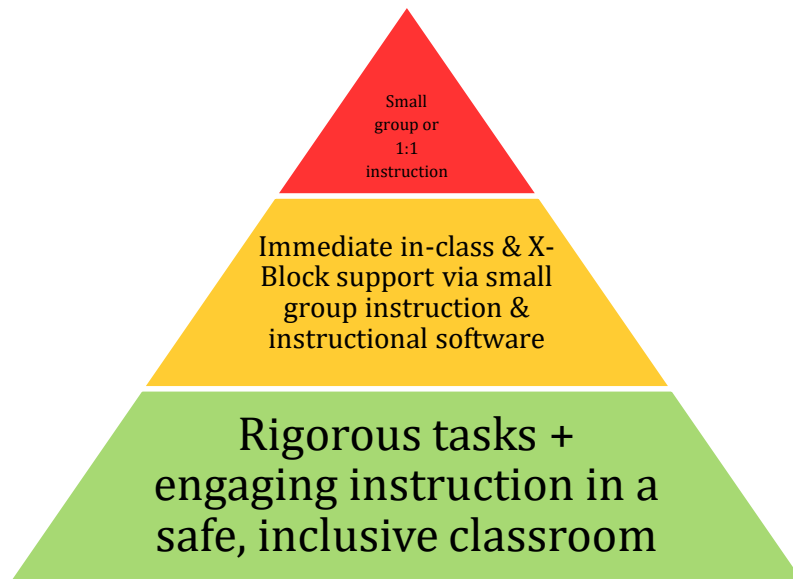
## Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

The phrase Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) describes a framework used to implement model a data-based, problem solving approach (the system) to provide academic and behavioral instruction and intervention (the supports). The integrated instruction and intervention is delivered to students in varying intensities (the multiple tiers) to meet the needs of all students to support student growth.

SPS's approach to MTSS is codified in the visuals below. For academic supports, we provide 3 "tiers" of support:

- Tier 1 (universal): instruction aligned with our Vision for Excellent Instruction (above)
- Tier 2 (targeted): immediate in-class support via X-Block (more below), small group instruction and personalized learning software
- Tier 3 (intensive): intense individual or small-group instruction provided by teachers with specialized training, typically outside of the classroom.

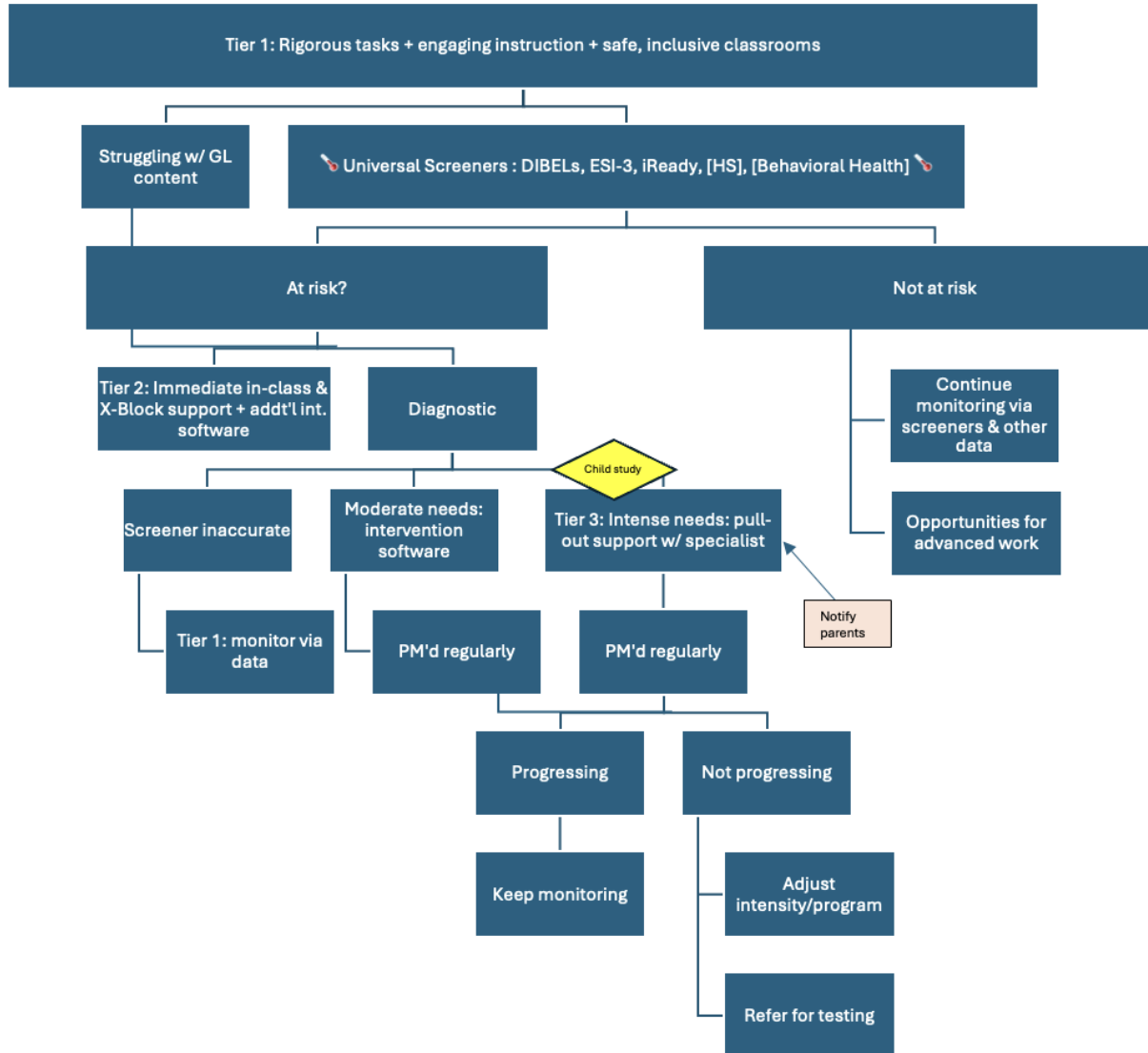
### Academic MTSS Triangle



### Social/Emotional MTSS Triangle



MTSS Referral System ([link to original](#))



### Student Support Team (SST) System

The school-based Student Support Team is responsible for identifying students who have behavioral, attendance, and/or social-emotional needs, and developing and implementing actions steps and interventions to address these needs. The SST composition will vary by school, but generally consists of administrators, school counselors, adjustment counselors, social workers, deans/redirects, school nurses and supervisors of attendance.

Examples of issues to be addressed during SST meetings include, but are not limited to:

- Excessive absenteeism/school avoidance
- Mental health crises
- Abuse/neglect concerns (51A)
- Bullying investigations
- Custody concerns
- Significant behavioral concerns
- Health/medical needs
- Referrals to school-based social worker

Student Support Team (K-8)/Community (SHS) meetings take place weekly and are facilitated by Assistant Principals. Meeting agendas should be created prior to each meeting, including the names of students to be discussed, as well as topics related to the needs of the school/community as a whole. Agenda items are submitted by team members. Some schools have additional processes by which teachers and other school staff can directly request that students be added to the agenda. Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, all PreK-8 schools will be using the common SST tracker template.

In order to ensure there is time at each SST meeting to discuss all agenda items, it is important to set a time limit for each item. This can be standard for all meetings or can be based on the number of agenda items for each particular meeting. A timekeeper should be designated for each meeting, on a permanent or rotating basis. If more time is needed to discuss a case in greater depth, a case conference should be scheduled outside of the regular SST meeting time.

Notes from all discussions about students at SST should be captured in Student Insights (in SY25-26 we will begin transitioning to Open Architects). It is advised that this documentation take place in real time, during the meeting, to ensure consistency and accuracy. A team member should be designated to do this, either on a permanent or rotating basis. Particularly sensitive notes can be marked as “restricted,” and will only be visible to members of the team.

**Table 1: General Academic Accommodations**

*This is not an exhaustive list of accommodations.* Rather, it provides examples of commonly used strategies to support diverse learners. Educators should consider individual student needs and collaborate with support staff to determine appropriate accommodations beyond those listed here.

Presentation	Response	Timing and Scheduling	Setting and Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilize explicit presentation to intentionally name materials or actions.</li><li>• Provide enlarged print or high-contrast materials</li><li>• Use audiobooks and text-to-speech for grade level texts</li><li>• Highlight key information in reading materials</li><li>• Offer graphic organizers, visual aids, or manipulatives</li><li>• Present directions orally and in writing</li><li>• Simplify language or rephrase complex instructions</li><li>• Use color coding to differentiate information</li><li>• Provide step-by-step written or picture-based directions</li><li>• Use closed captioning for videos</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use responsive scaffolding to support or extend learning</li><li>• Embed authentic choices that align with learning goals</li><li>• Allow verbal or dictated responses instead of written responses</li><li>• Provide sentence starters or writing templates</li><li>• Allow use of speech-to-text software or scribe support</li><li>• Offer multiple ways to demonstrate learning (oral presentations, videos, projects)</li><li>• Permit use of a calculator, multiplication chart, or math manipulatives</li><li>• Reduce the length of assignments while maintaining content standards</li><li>• Allow students to circle answers instead of filling in blanks</li><li>• Offer graphic organizers for written responses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow extended time on assignments and assessments</li><li>• Provide breaks between tasks to support attention and focus</li><li>• Offer tests in shorter sessions or over multiple days</li><li>• Adjust assignment deadlines as needed</li><li>• Allow flexible scheduling for challenging subjects</li><li>• Provide a structured daily routine with visual supports</li><li>• Use a timer or checklist to help with task management</li><li>• Break longer assignments into smaller, manageable chunks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide preferential seating (close to teacher, away from distractions)</li><li>• Reduce visual and auditory distractions (e.g., study carrels, noise-canceling headphones)</li><li>• Allow small group instruction</li><li>• Offer access to a quiet space for independent work or for self-regulation.</li><li>• Provide sensory tools (fidgets, weighted lap pads, alternative seating)</li><li>• Use visual schedules and behavior charts</li><li>• Offer movement breaks or alternative seating options</li></ul>





**Table 2: Universal Screeners & Data Collection Tools**

General	Literacy	Math	Social Emotional (SEL)
<p><b>ESI-3 (Early Screening Inventory) Mandated under Child Find</b>, in early fall, all PK and K students are screened using the ESI-3. The ESI-3 screens for developmental delays in key areas such as motor, language, and cognition. It is used to determine the need for further evaluation.</p>	<p><b>PELI (Preschool Early Literacy Indicator)</b> - In PK, four-year-olds are screened in literacy using the PELI. The PELI, administered three times a year, measures progress in four foundational literacy areas: Comprehension, Vocabulary-Oral language, Alphabet Knowledge and Phonological Awareness. The data is used to plan for instruction.</p> <p><b>DIBELS 8</b> - We use the DIBELS 8 as our universal screening measure for early literacy. This is administered three times a year for students in grades K-5. When students score below core or core plus, we use a variety of other assessments to gather more information and to plan for instruction.</p> <p>For more detailed information about early literacy screening in reading see the <a href="#">Early Literacy and Dyslexia Action Plan</a></p> <p><b>iReady</b> -In grades 3-8 we use iReady in math and in reading. iReady is administered three times a year.</p>	<p><b>iReady</b> - In grades 3-8 we use iReady in math and in reading. iReady is administered three times a year.</p>	<p>The district is currently developing an SEL screener tool to help us proactively identify students who may benefit from additional support.</p>

**Table 3: MTSS Meeting Structures**

Leadership Team	Grade-Level Teams	Problem-Solving Teams (CST & SST)
<p><b>Purpose:</b> Guide and oversee the implementation of MTSS at the school and district level</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> District/school administrators, lead teachers, specialists</p> <p><b>Key Focus:</b> Allocating resources, designing professional development, reviewing data to guide system-level decisions</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Strengthen Tier 1 supports and develop Tier 2 interventions for students</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> Teachers, coaches, support staff, school admin</p> <p><b>Key Focus:</b> Analyzing grade-level or class-wide data, identifying trends and gaps in Tier 1 instruction, brainstorming and sharing strategies to improve core instruction and Tier 2 supports</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Focus on identifying and addressing specific academic, behavioral, or social-emotional concerns for individual or small groups of students.</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> School admin, teachers, counselors, specialists, special educators, other relevant staff</p> <p><b>Key Focus:</b> Analyzing student data, assigning targeted interventions and monitoring their effectiveness, adjusting interventions as needed</p>

**Table 4: List of Tiered Supports**

	<b>Elementary School: PK-5</b>	<b>Middle School: 6-8</b>	<b>High School: 9-12</b>
<b>Tier 1 Universal</b>	High-quality core curriculum	High-quality core curriculum	High-quality core curriculum
<b>Tier 2 Targeted</b>	X-Block* Personalized learning software PK & K: Small group instruction	X-Block* Personalized learning software	X-Block*
<b>Tier 3 Intensive</b>	Intervention specialists	Intervention specialists	Intervention specialist

**Table 5: X-Block Guidance**

X-Block is built-in time during the instructional day in Grades 1 – 8 that allows teachers and specialists to provide students with the targeted support they need to be successful – without disrupting their access to the general education curriculum.

- Grade-Level Teams use data to identify groups of students for targeted support during X-Block.
- Teachers use small group instruction to provide targeted support.
- Students engage with personalized learning software to support their growth.
- Currently, X-Block support focuses primarily on remedial instruction in math and literacy for students who need support to achieve proficiency. Somerville is working to build teachers' capacity to also support learners who need additional challenge beyond proficiency standards.

### **District-Approved Core Curriculum**

SUBJECT	Elementary School: PK-5	Middle School: 6-8	High School: 9-12
Literacy	District created curriculum. In 2025-2026 3-5 will implement new HQIM IN 2026-2027, K-2 will implement new HQIM	Fishtank	
Math	Illustrative Math	Illustrative Math	
Science	District-developed in collaboration with BU	STEMScopes (Committee reviewing other options)	
Social Studies	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> - district created units, 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> TBD; 5 <sup>th</sup> -Investigating History	6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> Investigating History, 8 <sup>th</sup> Civics Curriculum	

Writing	<p>Currently:</p> <p>District created units, and Handwriting Without Tears, K-3</p> <p>In 2025-2026 3-5 will implement new HQIM</p> <p>IN 2026-2027, K-2 will implement new HQIM</p>	Fishtank (reading and writing are integrated)	
Technology	[curriculum in-development]	[curriculum in-development]	
SEL	Second Step®	Second Step®	
ESL	<p>1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> SEI-1: Reach</p> <p>K-5<sup>th</sup> Gen Ed: See above</p>	<p>6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> SEI-1: English 3D</p> <p>6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Gen Ed: Fishtank</p>	[curriculum in-development]
PK	SEE Every Child, Building Blocks Math, Handwriting Without Tears, Second Step® Early Learning		

### Structures to Support Teachers and Families

Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly early-release days for <a href="#">Common Planning Time</a> and PLC meetings</li> <li>• <a href="#">Mentoring</a> for new Educators, Paraprofessionals, and Administrators</li> <li>• New Educator Professional Development Series (Years 1-3)</li> <li>• Opt-in instructional coaching</li> <li>• School-Based and Department-Based Professional Development sessions (18 hours per year)</li> <li>• “Choice PD” and Peer-led PD workshops via the <a href="#">Annual PD Catalog</a> (minimum 6 hours of Choice PD per year)</li> <li>• District Professional Development sessions (6 hours per year)</li> </ul>
Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust family engagement department including:</li> <li>• Early Childhood programming – playgroups, parent support groups, workshops</li> <li>• Early Childhood Special Education services and support provided on-site at SPYC Community Partner Centers.</li> <li>• Early Childhood Early Literacy Home Visiting program</li> <li>• 14 Multilingual Family liaisons across the district to connect families to community resources</li> <li>• Multilingual Services Office offering translation and interpretation for families</li> <li>• Basic Needs and Housing Resources Office for families and unaccompanied minors</li> </ul>

- SPS Volunteer Program
- Parent English Classes
- Parent workshops in conjunction with SPS departments
- Parenting support/mental health counseling through Cartwheel in conjunction with Student Services
- Close collaboration with City and Community Partners to support parents

## MTSS Forms

## Somerville Public Schools

[Date]

### MTSS Parent Notification Letter

Dear [Parent/Guardian Name],

At Somerville Public Schools, our multi-tiered systems of support ensure (MTSS) that every student has the tools and support they need to thrive academically and socially. As part of this commitment, we regularly review student progress to identify opportunities for additional support. Based on our observations and assessments, we have identified that **[Student's Name] may benefit from additional support in [specific area(s), e.g., reading, math, behavior, social-emotional development]**.

Our determination is based on the following data:

Assessment	Results
Explanation:	

This means that while your child has incredible strengths, such as [list strengths], we also recognize areas where they can continue to grow and thrive.

Research shows that **timely, targeted interventions can be highly effective** in helping students build confidence and skills, and we want to ensure that your child has every opportunity to succeed.

To best support your child, we would like to implement the following intervention:

Intervention	Frequency
Explanation:	

We value your partnership and **would love to meet with you** to discuss these supports in more detail, answer any questions, and collaborate on the best path forward for your child. Please contact us to schedule a time that works best for you.

Thank you for your ongoing support. We look forward to working together.

Sincerely,  
[Your Name]  
[Contact Information]

