Abington Public Schools

Description of Student Support Services

Counseling Services
Section 504
Student Support Team
Response to Intervention
Transition Support
Title I Services
Academic Support
Consultation/Support/Intervention Service
District Curriculum Accommodation Plan
Counseling Services

Elementary School
At the elementary level counseling is provided formally and informally in group and individual settings and includes prevention and intervention of health and learning problems, crisis intervention, and social skills training. In addition, counseling includes consultation and collaboration with teachers, parents and outside resources. Counseling is provided by the school psychologist or social worker interns for special education and 504 students. The guidance counselor provides informal counseling to regular education students.

Middle School
At the Middle School counseling is provided to students addressing social-emotional issues. Counseling is provided to regular education students (with 504 Accommodation Plans) by the guidance counselor, school psychologist or social worker interns and to special education students by the school psychologist. Counseling may also be provided to regular education students on an as-needed basis for crisis intervention, status checks, safety assessments, and/or other matters as deemed necessary by staff (including administration and/or parents). Counseling may be delivered in either a small group or individual format and at varying frequencies depending on the particular needs of the student.

High School
Individual and group social/emotional support services are available to students at the High School. The guidance counselor and school psychologist provides support services to enhance students’ emotional and educational needs in order to help students succeed at the high school. Individual services are provided on a short or long term basis while groups run for the entire year. The primary responsibility of the school psychologist is to provide support services for regular education and special education students. The weekly group addresses issues such as social skill development, anger management, stress reduction, drugs and alcohol, anti-social behavior, teen dating violence, harassment as well as issues of somatic concerns. When appropriate and with a release, the staff communicates with clinicians working with students outside of school to share relevant information. The school psychologist also serves as an informational resource for parents, students and staff. The school psychologist establishes relationships with social, medical, mental health and welfare agencies for collaboration and for the facilitation of referrals to such programs and specialists when appropriate. In addition, the school psychologist provides crisis intervention, when students present with suicidal ideation or plans, cutting, alcohol and drug misuse, sexual misconduct, family turmoil or losses.

Section 504
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. Students eligible for 504 assistance are those who: (1) have a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) have a record of such impairment or (3) are regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself and performing manual tasks. Some students with disabilities may qualify for accommodations in the classroom through a 504 plan. Any student or parent/guardian having a question, concern, or complaint is invited to contact the school principal, guidance department, adjustment counselor and/or school psychologist.
**Student Support Team**

Each building has a Student Support Team (SST) that consists of the principal and/or assistant principal, nurse, school psychologist, guidance counselor(s), regular education teacher specific to the student as appropriate, specialists and as needed, a special education teacher. Staff refers students to the building intervention team by completing a referral form indicating their concerns and interventions tried. During the SST meeting students are reviewed and if appropriate an intervention plan is developed. The interventions are tracked and the student is monitored by the SST.

**Response to Intervention**

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a block where students are working in small groups, that target specific instructional strategies. Each group has a designated block of time where students are grouped for necessary skill instruction or enrichment activities based on meeting their individual needs and strengths. We utilize the expertise of our classroom teachers, specialists and special education teacher to form and guide these groups. These flexible groups change several times over the course of the year.

**Transition Course**

The Transition course is for high school students in a regular and special education program who are identified as needing improvement in their study skills and time management. The course places an emphasis on reading, writing, and math skills, organization, and test taking strategies. Students become aware of their own learning style and develop new strategies for learning. Placement in this support service is by recommendation of the Student Support Team or a guidance counselor.

**Title I Services**

Title 1 services are provided to students that do not reach grade level benchmarks in reading in grades 1-3. The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and the Qualitative Reading Assessment (QRI) are used to check student proficiency in oral reading and comprehension. Other measures are used in addition such as MCAS scores, Gates, Terra Nova, and teacher referral. The neediest students are placed in small groups of 1, 2, or 3 according to their reading level. Groups are tailored to the individual needs of the students based on analysis of the testing. For instance, some groups may focus more on comprehension than oral reading, while other groups may focus more on phonics. Phonics may include instruction with the Wilson Reading System. Groups meet every day.

Reading lessons are designed to include the following components:

- Familiar reading
- Phonics/word work with magnetic letters/hearing and recording sounds/writing
- Skills and strategies
- New text reading
- Comprehension of new text

All students are tested at the beginning of the school year. Title 1 students, as well as those referred by their teachers, are tested throughout the year. If students attain grade level benchmark, they are
released from Title 1 services. The groups are flexible with students being released and new ones coming in depending on the needs. As students grow in their reading ability, groups may change to reflect the needs of the students. Throughout the year, data is collected for each grade level. Charts are constructed that include the test scores achieved during the year. This information is shared with classroom teachers as well as administrators. Parents are informed of their child’s assessment scores on quarterly report cards. Phone calls, email, Title I parent meetings, and parent conferences keep parents informed of any concerns and of progress made.

**Academic Support**

This support opportunity provides specially designed instruction as outlined in each students Individualized Educational Program. The support is designed to assist with the acquisition or maintenance of basic academic skills and compensatory strategies using curricula content. Students are encouraged to understand their learning style, to become independent learners, to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and to use specific strategies to compensate for their disabilities. By emphasizing personal responsibility, students build self-esteem and self-confidence and acquire the life skills necessary for a successful school experience and prepare to transition to his/her post secondary goals. These skills may include previewing/reviewing material, writing an essay using a process approach, using test-taking and reading strategies, planning long-term assignments with an emphasis on study skills, and developing organizational skills.

**Consultation/Support/ Intervention**

- **School Psychologist**
  Teacher consultation, support and training, parent/family consultation direct service to students (individuals or small groups), Functional Behavioral Assessments, Behavior Intervention Plans, member of Student Support Team

- **Guidance Counselor**
  Liaison between home and school, parent consultation, teacher support, student support, 504 plans, file managers, member of Student Support Team 504 plans

- **Principal/Assistant Principal**
  Articulation and modeling of vision and principles, supervision and evaluation of staff, fostering of accommodation philosophy, support to teachers on social/behavioral issues, behavioral interventions with students, scheduling accommodations, member of Student Intervention and Student Support Teams

- **Reading/Math specialists**
  Teacher consultation for curriculum accommodation and modification, screening and informal assessment, academic support for struggling students, support for teachers, analysis of assessment data, ongoing professional development

- **School Nurse**
  Consultation to parents, students and staff, direct service for individual students, health instruction, services students with concussions, manages health plans, member of Student Support Team, member of Wellness Committee
• Speech and Language Pathologist
  Teacher consultation for curriculum accommodation and modification, screening and informal assessment, teacher training, direct services to groups or individual students

• Occupational Therapist
  Teacher consultation, classroom observations of students, informal screening

• Physical Therapist
  Teacher consultation, classroom observations of students, informal screening

• Librarian / Media Specialist
  Support for student research, teacher and student consultation about curriculum and instructional resources

• ELL Specialist
  Support for ELL students, teacher consultation, classroom observations of students, informal and formal screening and assessments, direct service

• Administrative Team
  Support to teachers on academic, social, and behavioral issues, behavioral interventions with students, scheduling accommodations, articulation and implementation of vision and principles, supervision and evaluation of staff, fostering a philosophy of high achievement

• Student Support Team
  Review of teacher referred cases

• Crisis Management Team
  Resource for staff, students, and parents, regarding emergency and unique situations, each member trained in Crisis Prevention Intervention
DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACCOMMODATION PLAN

The Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38Q1/2, requires the adoption and implementation of a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). This plan is intended to guide principals and teachers and support staff in ensuring that all possible efforts have been 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 development and evaluation of the DCAP.

The Abington Public Schools’ DCAP was reviewed and revised over a period of several months. The process of review and revision serves as part of the district’s strategic planning process.

The revised DCAP is disseminated and explained to staff in faculty meetings at the elementary, middle and high school levels. It is shared with the School Committee as well.

Included is an annotated list of the school-based programs as well as the personnel who are available to assist and support classroom teachers in analyzing and accommodating the individual needs of students. In addition, there is a list of sample strategies and other actions from which teachers and collaborating staff may select appropriate concerns about academic progress as well as strategies and interventions intended to resolve social and behavioral issues.

The DCAP describes both formal and informal routes. In some instances, communication between parents and teachers will be effective in identifying issues and agreeing upon strategies to be implemented. In other situations, Student Support Teams (SST) will develop a more formal intervention plan. There is a Student Support Team at each building. When a teacher is concerned about a student’s progress, that teacher makes a written referral to the SST and follows the procedure process. Again, parent involvement is an important part of the process. Concerns that cannot be resolved by these routes, or where there is a lack of progress, may result in a recommendation for a formal initial evaluation to determine if a disability exists through the special education referral process.

Teachers continuously monitor student progress, looking for opportunities to make accommodations to facilitate learning and fostering understanding. The district is committed to early intervention and addresses learning issues in a timely fashion based on a team approach. The district’s goal in this regard is to meet the needs of every child.
### Physical
- Arrange preferred seating
- Incorporate stress-release activities
- Use visual/auditory aids
- Experiment with use of space
- Consider a better student/teacher match
- Remove distractions
- Structural Change levels
- Organizational Flexible scheduling
- Rotate the students’ schedule
- Reduce the student’s schedule

### Behavioral
- Behavior charts
- Mentors
- Provide a set of rewards
- Parent programs
- Adjust classroom management
- Use simple corrective measures
- Provide on-going positive reinforcement
- Arrange alternative programs
- Consult with support staff
- Refer parents to outside agency

### Remedial
- Invite parental assistance
- Arrange parent workshops
- Frequent progress reports
- Develop alternate assignments
- Provide assistance with note taking
- Offer after-school support
- Schedule counselor meetings
- Consistent parental communication
- Find a buddy reader
- Arrange peer tutoring
- Provide extra review and practice
- Title I supports
- Assign mentors
- Visual and tactile activities
- Transition cues
- Utilize agenda books
- Personal electronic devices or school iPads
- Provide modified study guides
- Create flashcards
- Break down tasks
- Shorten assignments
- Arrange small group instruction
- Provide individual help within the classroom
- Reduce workload
- Make contracts with students
- Provide wait time
- Provide reference tools Use graphic organizers
- Teach test-taking strategies
- Reading comprehension strategies
- Study skill strategies
- Assistive instructional technology
- Provide calculators
- Utilize listening centers
- Books on CD/tape
- Kurzweil

### Instruction/Assessment
- Differentiate instruction
- Vary teaching strategies
- Identify student’s learning styles
- Encourage peer tutoring
- Provide hands on learning experiences
- Utilize manipulatives
- Give extended time on tests & assignments
- Allow oral testing/assessments
- Use alternate assessments

### Teams
- Student Support Team
- Student Crisis Team
- Curriculum Team
- Professional Development Team
- Leadership Team
- Joint Labor Management Team