



Athol-Royalston Regional School District

Special Education Office @ the Ellen M. Bigelow School

129 Allen Street, Athol, MA 01131

The Athol-Royalston Regional School District is committed to providing challenging educational experiences that inspire students to acquire the knowledge and skills to become responsible citizens in the global community.

Assessing Instructional Needs and DCAP (District Curriculum Accommodations Plan)

“General education is the door to learning through which all students are expected to enter; it should be the **goal** of every school district to make the general education environment the appropriate placement for all students.

Special education should not be a separate program, but rather should be one aspect of a continuum of supportive services and programs that are provided to ensure that the general education environment is a responsive environment.

Special education is intended to provide services to students who have disabilities, and who, because of those disabilities, need help to make progress in the general education program of the school.

Special education is intended to address the effect of the disability on the student’s progress and to mitigate any barriers or problems that arise because of the disability.

Special education is a program of services to provide, as much as possible, access to services so that students with disabilities have the best chance to receive the full educational benefit of the district’s programs.”

“An effective **District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)** may provide for one or more of the following, to help meet the needs of diverse learners in the general education environment.

- increased support services and instructional delivery options available within general education;
- more effective educational policies and practices, such as reduced class size policies;
- responsive, flexible curriculum presentation in general education;
- multiple instructional support strategies;
- staff time for professional collaboration and problem solving;
- availability of standardized and criterion-referenced assessment data as one measure of student learning and indicator of student needs;
- referral services to provide child care, or health care services; and
- information services for parents to understand school programs and options available for their children.”

The above text and table below were copied from the DESE publication “Is Special Education the Right Service?” and can be accessed in full through the link on the Special Education page of the ARRSB website.

TABLE 2 Questions That May Help Guide the Assessment of Student Instructional Needs

Questions	Assessment Strategies
<p>How does the student perform within/outside of the classroom and in structured and unstructured activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mastery of basic academic and social skills • functioning in small group/whole class activities • peer relations and teacher/adult relations • strengths/weaknesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic Observation of student • Student work products • Teacher reports • Anecdotal records • Curriculum-based assessment • Formal/informal test result • Interview with the student and family
<p>Are there gaps in the student’s school history? Frequent changes in schools? Erratic school attendance?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the school history/record • Family interview
<p>Is the student from a linguistically or culturally different background?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proficiency in oral/written tasks in English and the primary language of the home • understands directions in English • primary language of casual conversation • experience with different types of learning tasks • child and parent attitude toward primary language • student comfort with school culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language assessment by assessor fluent in student’s primary language • English proficiency assessment • Family interview/home visit • Interview with student • Student work products • Classroom observation • Teacher reports • Diagnostic teaching
<p>Are outside factors influencing student’s performance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family trauma/crisis • physical care • involvement of outside agencies • employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family interview/home visit • Interview with student • Interview with others with assessment information
<p>What types of effective teaching strategies are used in the classroom?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear teacher expectations • opportunities for multisensory input/output • a range of instructional materials offered • effective behavior management • teaching style matched to student need • prompt teacher feedback • ongoing assessment • uses assessment to guide instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic observation of settings in which the student has difficulty and success • Student work products • Anecdotal records • Teacher reports • Curriculum-based assessment • Formal/informal test results • Consultation with parents on effective ways to learn or demonstrate learning
<p>Is the curriculum broad enough to meet the needs of diverse learners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developmentally appropriate • accommodates learner diversity • experientially based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic observation • Teacher reports • Curriculum-based assessment • Formal/informal test results
<p>Do school conditions provide the learner with needed resources and supports?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • availability of support services • up to date instructional materials • availability of instructional technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic observation of the school environment • Review of instructional materials • Student work products